



Center for Public Health Systems Science

GEORGE WARREN BROWN  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



Washington University in St. Louis

# Assessing the Quality of Local-Level Obesity Prevention Policies

Lessons from Measuring the Strength and Comprehensiveness  
of Policy Language

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AMERICAN  
EVALUATION  
ASSOCIATION

EVALUATION 2013:

**Evaluation Practice in the Early 21st Century**

October 14-19, 2013 | Washington, DC

# Policy

A **policy** is described  
government, private  
"Statement of Inter  
important organiza

# Quality Matters



# Impact



# H&AC projects

H&AC projects

What we assessed

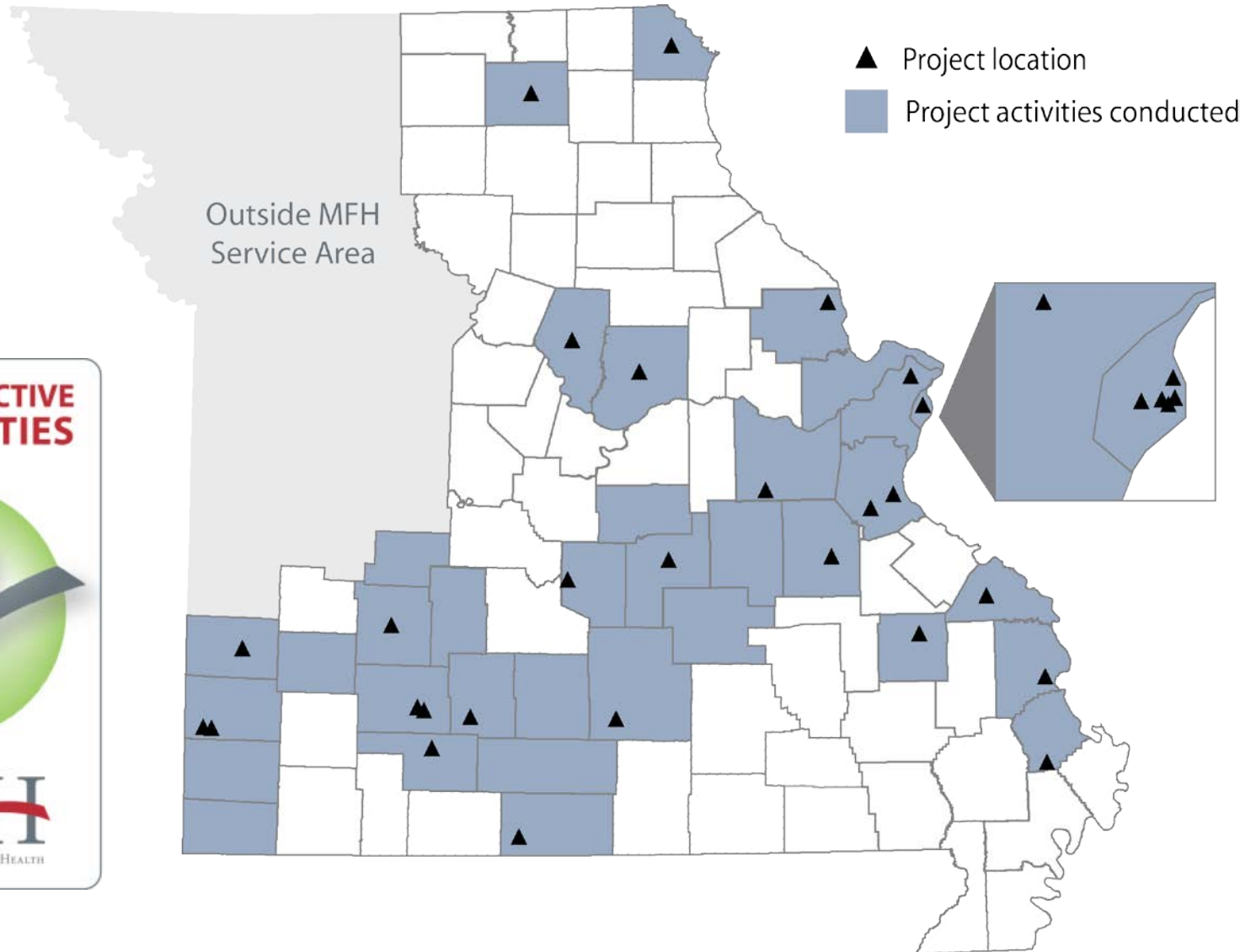
H&AC projects

What we assessed

What evaluators can do



# H&AC projects





# H&AC projects

## **Access/Environment**

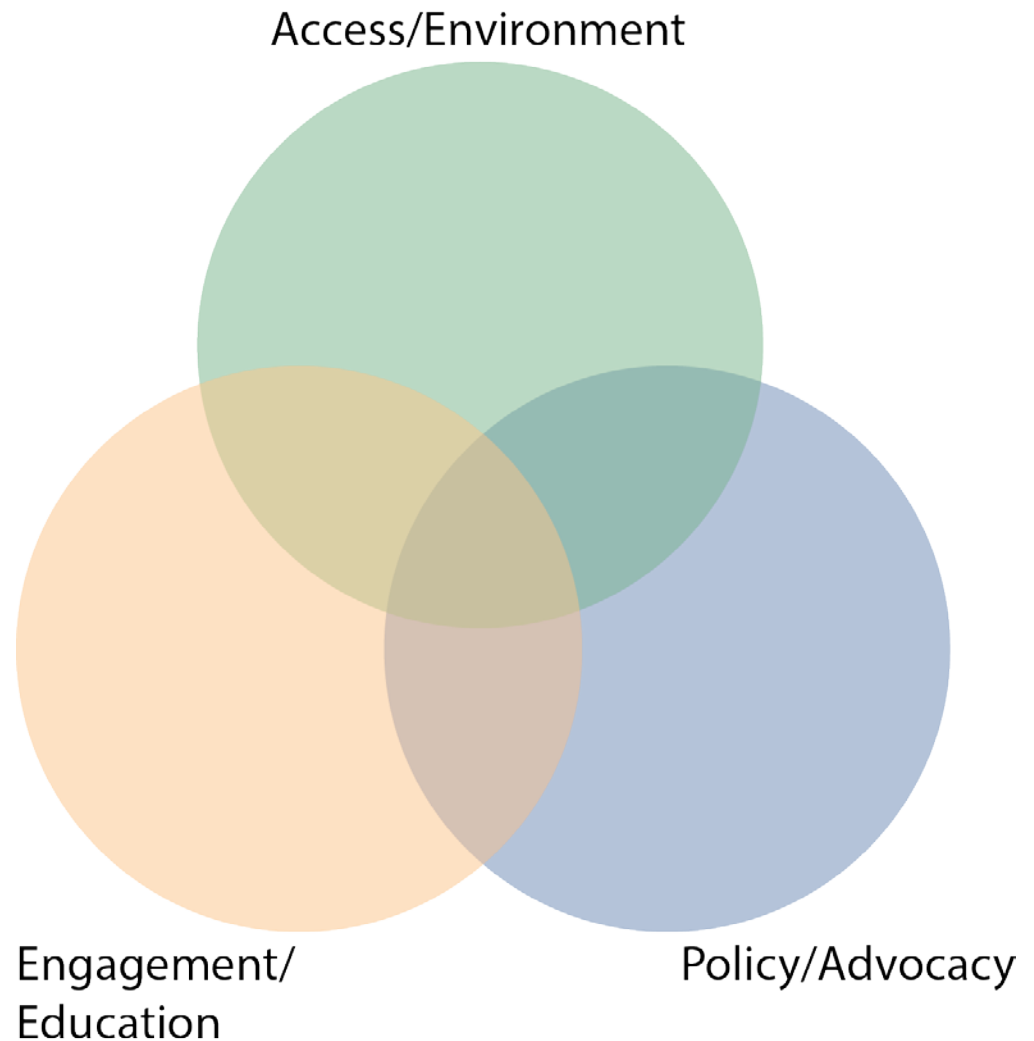
Creating a healthy physical environment

## **Engagement/Education**

Developing outreach and communication strategies

## **Policy/Advocacy**

Advocating for and adopting healthy eating and physical activity policies



# H&AC projects

## Access/Environment

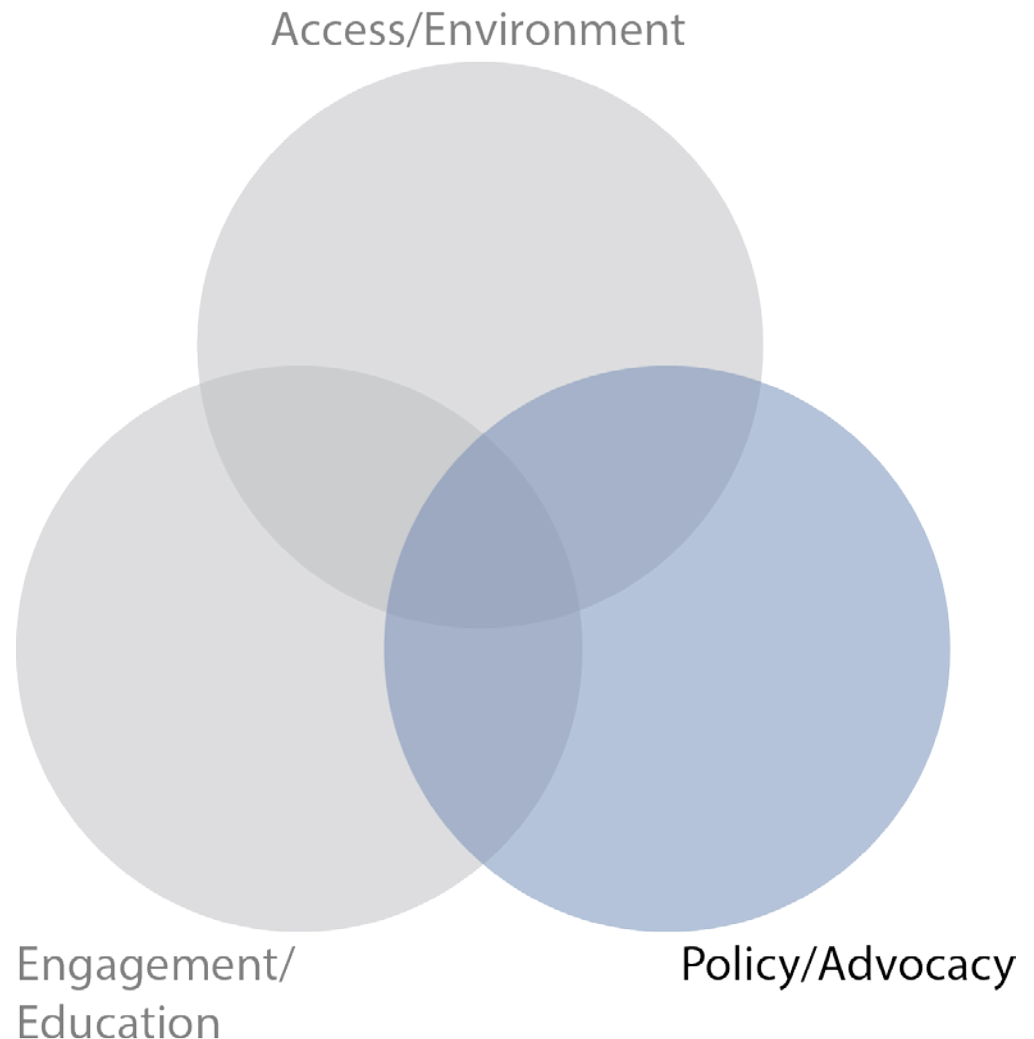
Creating a healthy physical environment

## Engagement/Education

Developing outreach and communication strategies

## Policy/Advocacy

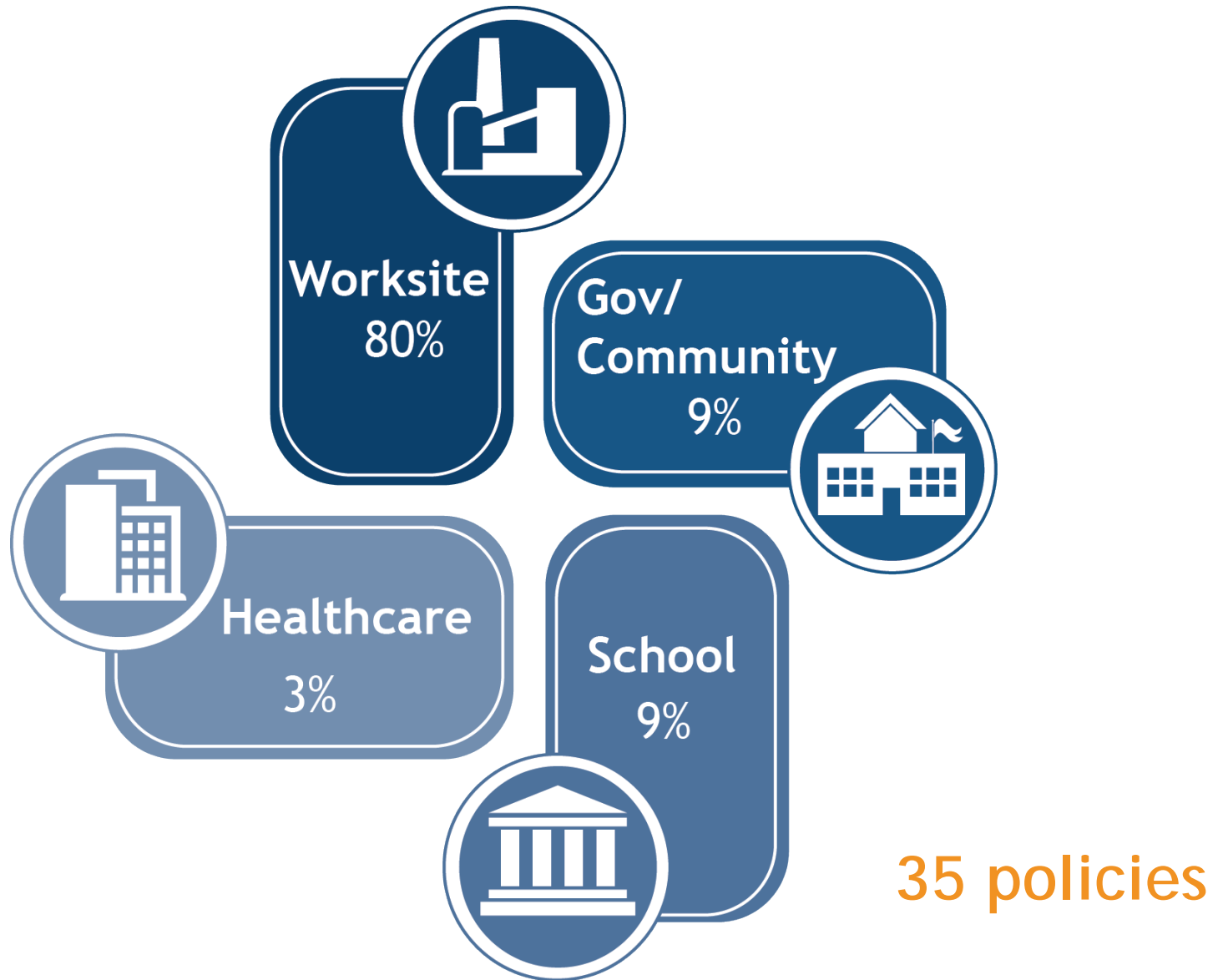
Advocating for and adopting healthy eating and physical activity policies



H&AC projects

What we assessed

# H&AC policies



Policy Lift > MFHSurvey

ASSESSMENT TOOL

WORKSITE

Administrative Support/General

**Physical Activity Opportunities**

Physical Environment Related to Physical Activity

Healthy Eating Opportunities

Physical Environment Related to Food/Nutrition

Health Promotion

VIEW FULL REPORT »

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES

- 0 (language not mentioned in policy)
- 1 (language is mentioned but is 'weak')
- 2 (language is mentioned and is 'strong')

**This policy includes language that states:**

1. Allows flexible work/break time for employees to more easily engage in health promotion and physical activity during work hours:

- 0  
 1  
 2

2. Supports active meeting options promoting physical activity by participating in group active work

- 0  
 1  
 2

# Comprehensiveness



# H&AC comprehensiveness

Items addressed

Not addressed

**School**  
3 policies



**Worksite**  
28 policies



**Gov/Community**  
3 policies



**Healthcare**  
1 policy





# Strength



# Strong language

allow must  
prohibit  
require  
permitted

# Weak language

consider  
as appropriate  
**encourage**  
when possible  
may

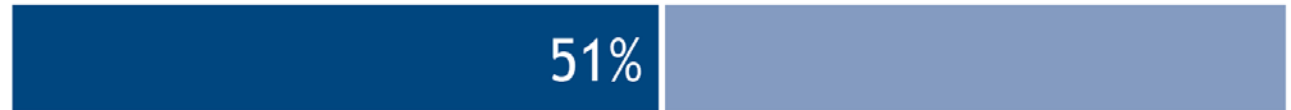
# H&AC strength

Strong language

Weak language

## Worksite

28 policies



## School

3 policies



## Gov/Community

3 policies



## Healthcare

1 policy



H&AC projects

What we assessed

What evaluators can do

# What evaluators can do



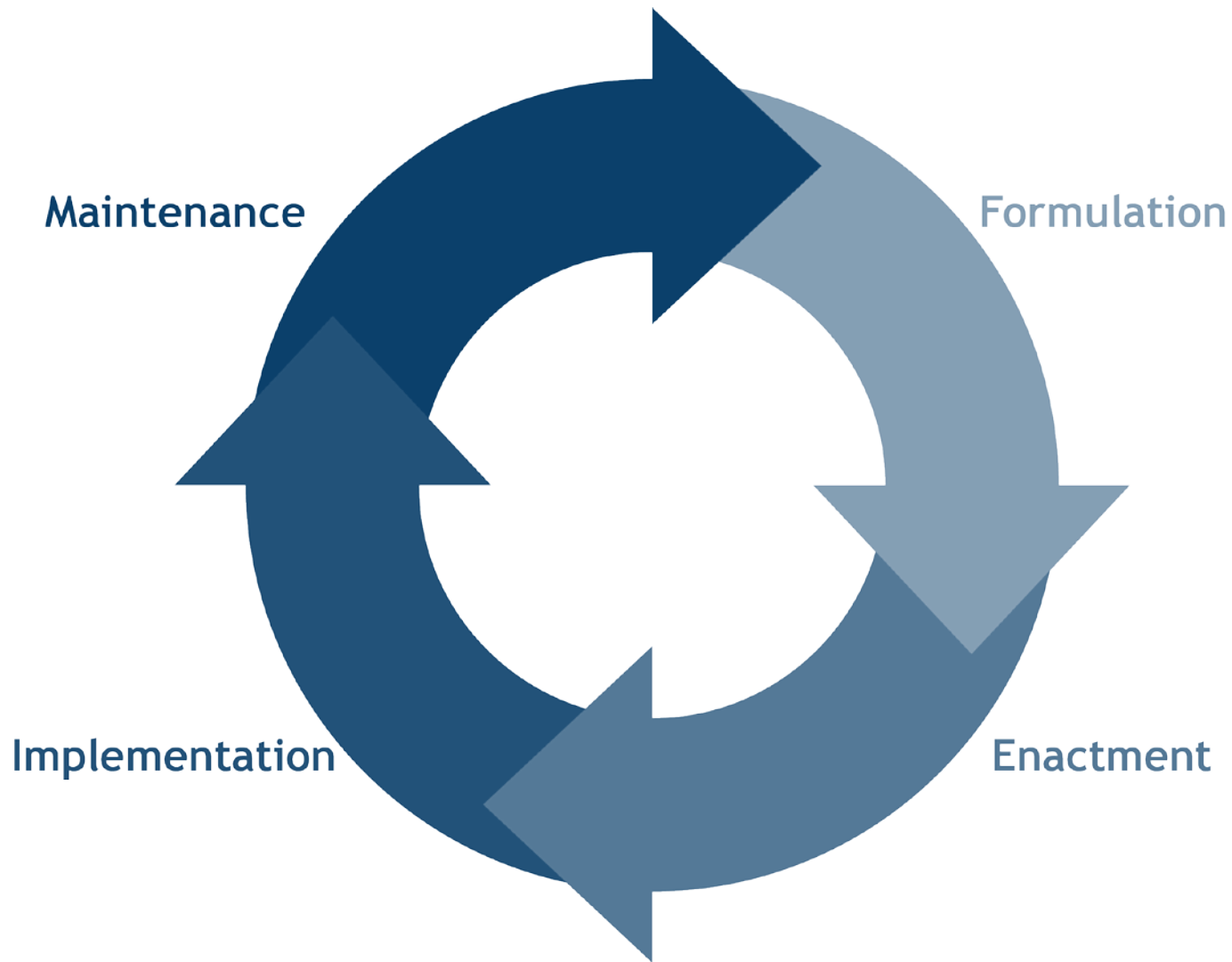
1

Examine  
the entire  
policy  
process



1

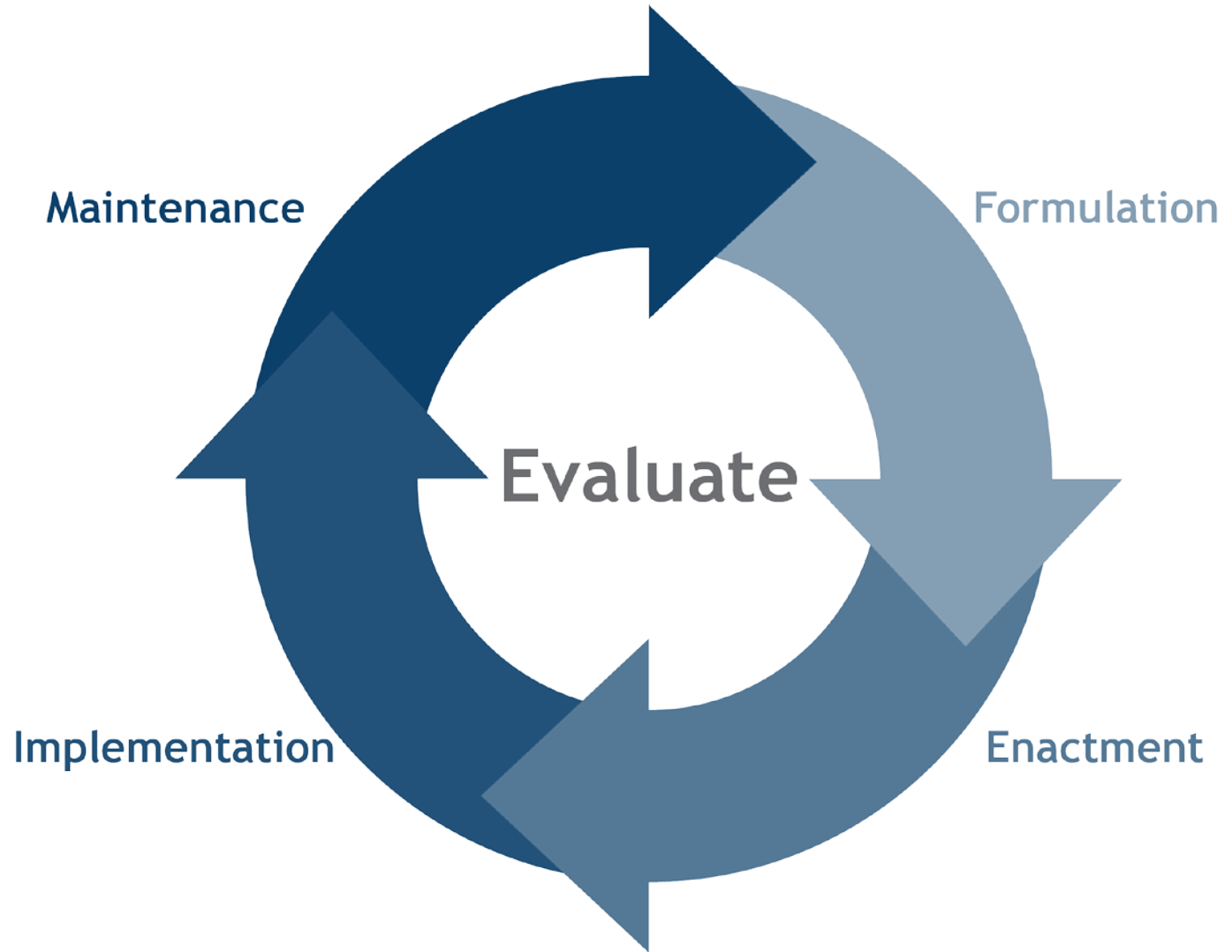
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Leeman J, Sommers J, Vu M, Jernigan J, Payne G, Thompson D, et al. An Evaluation Framework for Obesity Prevention Policy Interventions. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2012;9:110322.

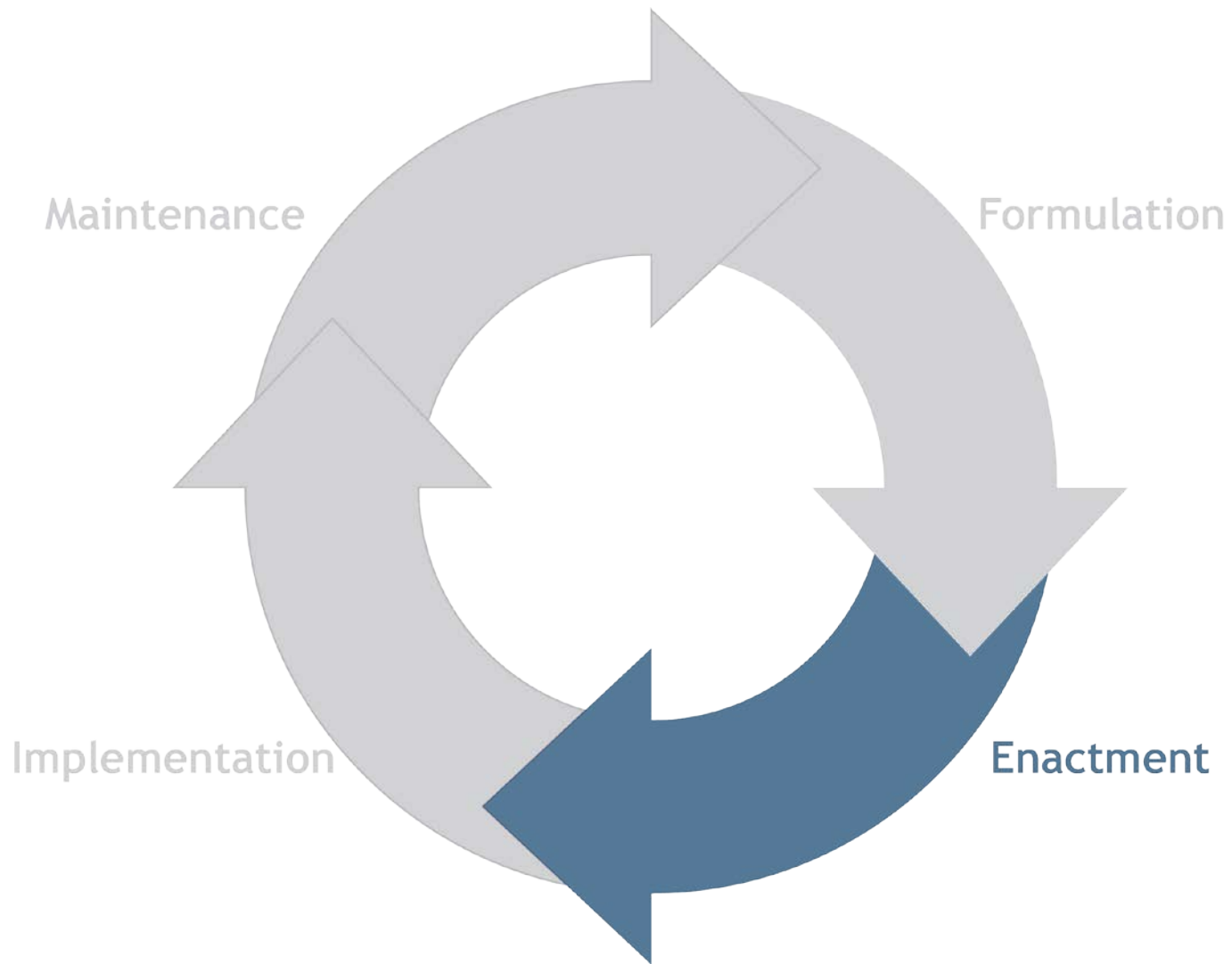
1

Examine  
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1

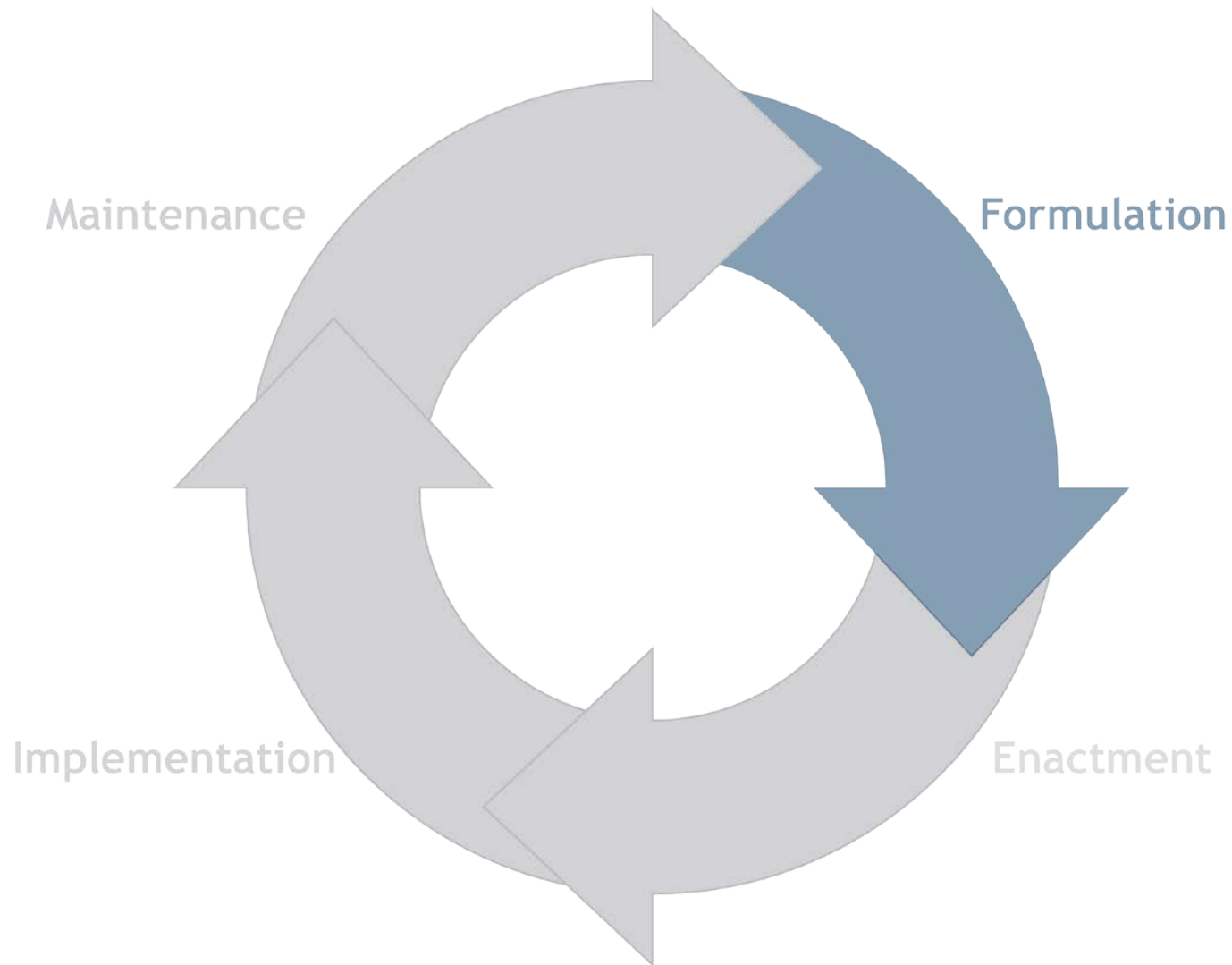
Examine  
the entire  
policy  
process



35 policies

2

Assess  
content  
prior to  
adoption



35 policies

2

Assess  
content  
prior to  
adoption



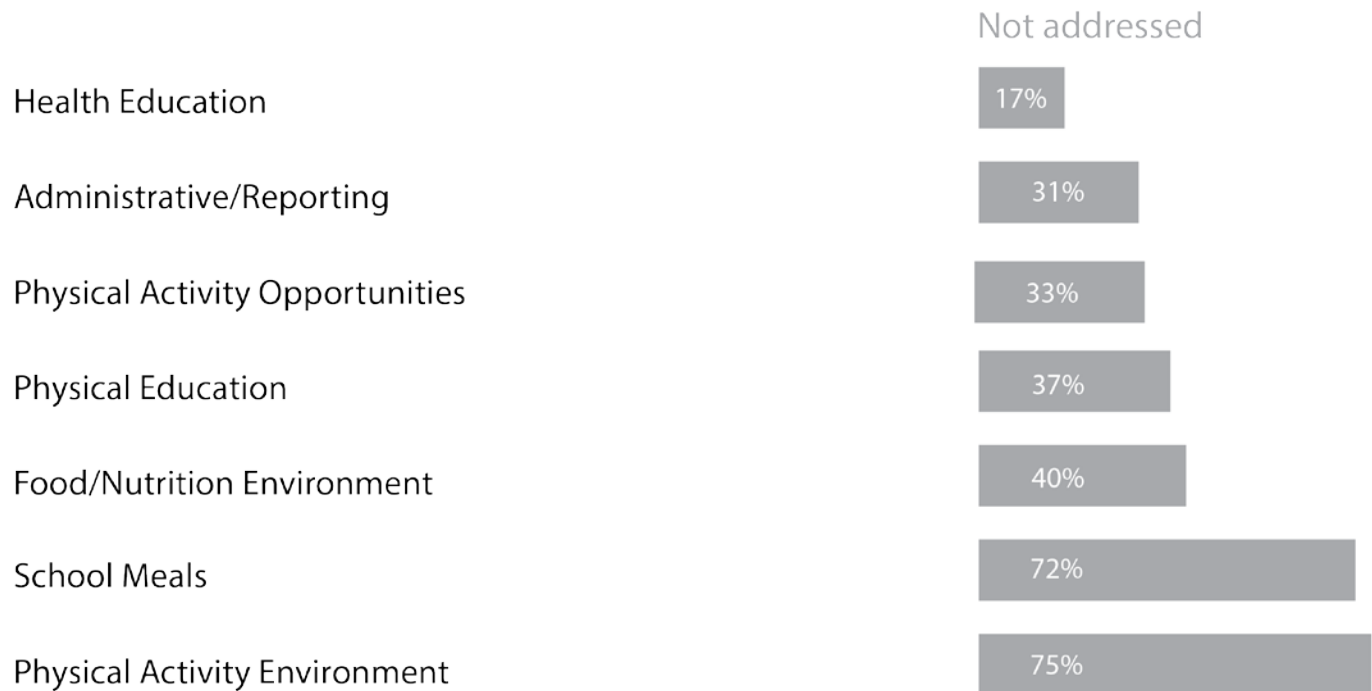
3

Share  
results



# To policy developers

## Sample School Wellness Policy Results



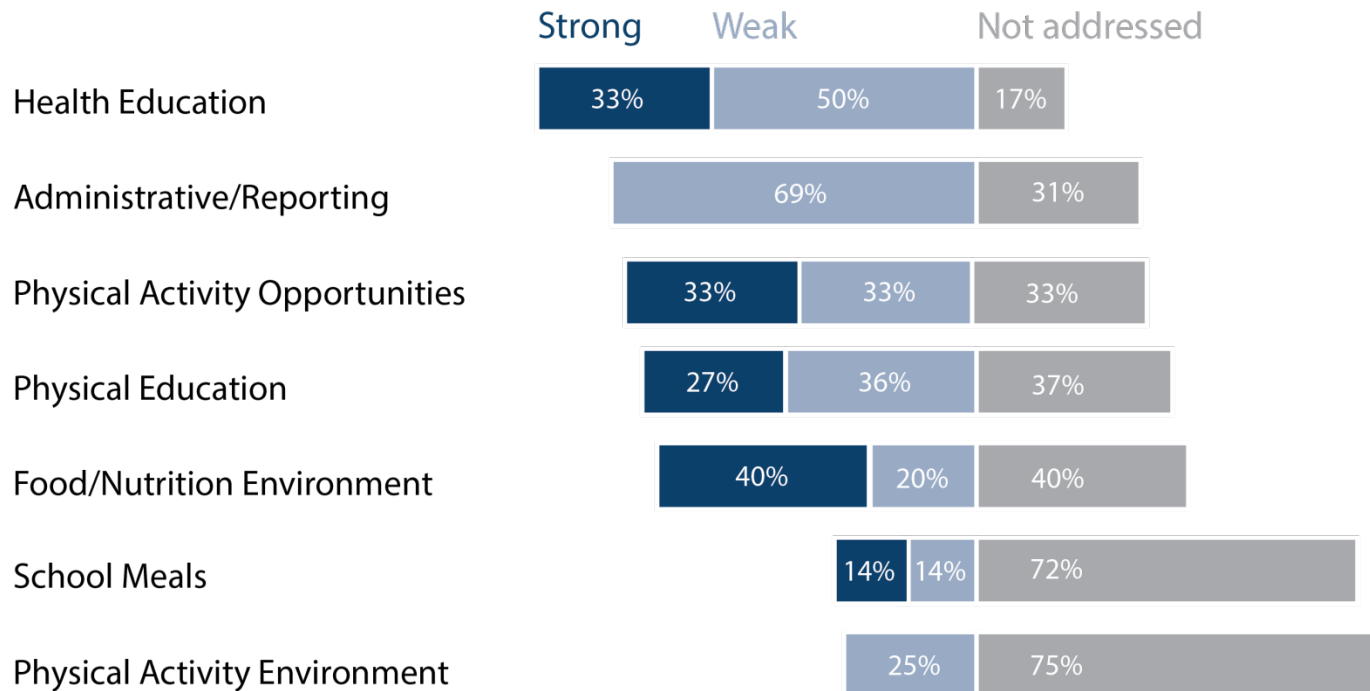
Share  
results



# To policy developers

Share  
results

## Sample School Wellness Policy Results



3

# To policy supporters

## All School Wellness Policies

Food/Nutrition Environment

Not addressed

33%

Health Education

39%

Physical Activity Opportunities

39%

School Meals

48%

Administrative/Reporting

49%

Physical Education

61%

Physical Activity Environment

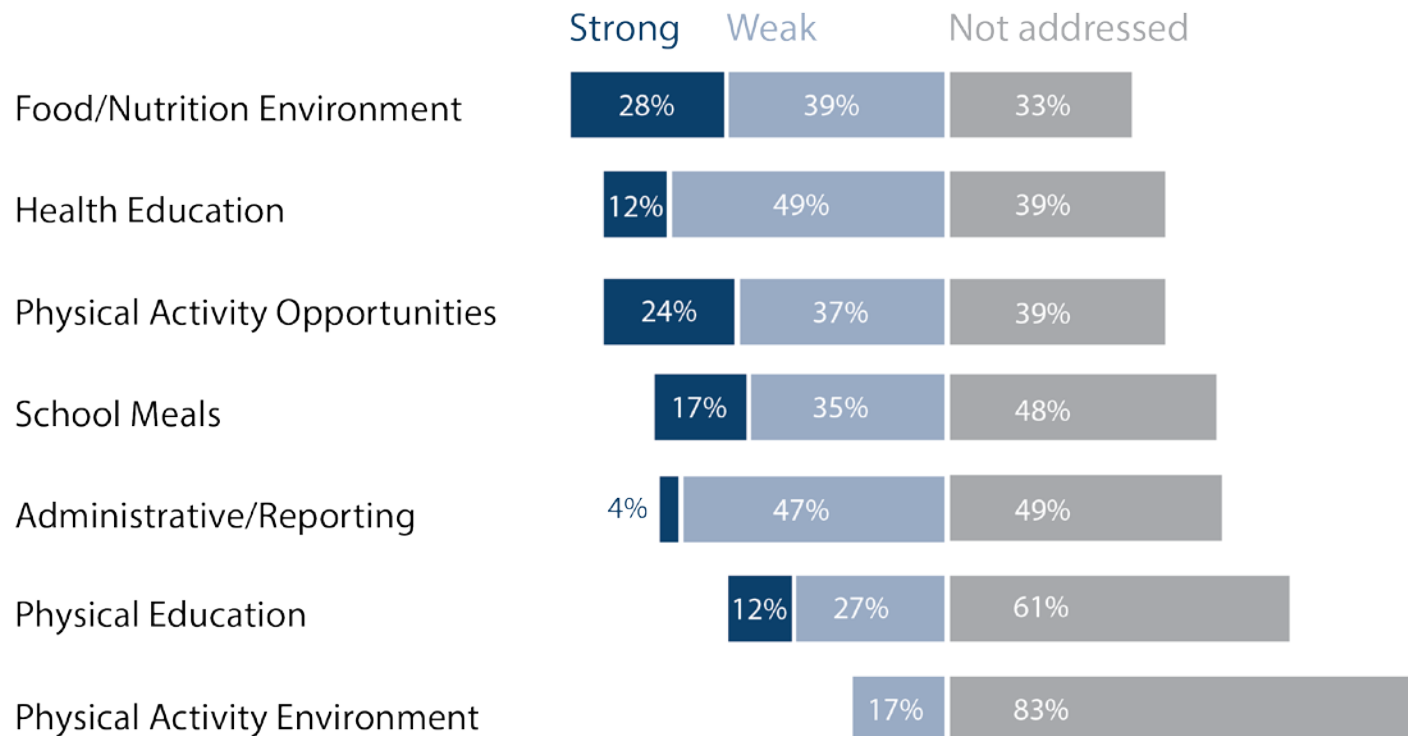
83%

Share  
results

# To policy supporters

Share  
results

## All School Wellness Policies



# What evaluators can do

- 1 Examine entire policy process
- 2 Assess content prior to adoption
- 3 Share results

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# Impact



# Special thanks to

**HEALTHY & ACTIVE  
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Healthy & Active Communities grantees

Project Team:

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