

# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF HEALTH-PROMOTING SCHOOL POLICIES IN NOVA SCOTIA



## BACKGROUND

Childhood and adolescence are crucial periods that influence future health and well-being outcomes. Actions focusing on these early developmental periods can help prevent non-communicable diseases, promote good mental health, support academic outcomes and enhance resilience among populations.

HPS calls to action partners with a stake in improving learning and health outcomes for children. HPS moves beyond traditional ideas of changing individual students' health one by one to a vision of developing healthy, inclusive and vibrant school communities where the climate and culture, policies, practices, opportunities and design enables everyone to learn, grow, thrive and succeed.

This project aimed to identify, categorize, and broadly describe the policy environment in NS to identify changes across two time points (2010 and 2020) in the nature of policies that might support or hinder the adoption of policies of relevance to a HPS approach



### Policy Scan Steps:



Identify and define health promotion topics of relevance to HPS



Search online to identify all publicly available policies of potential relevance in NS



Consult with key stakeholders in NS to obtain feedback; check for overlooked policies, and confirm policies are still active

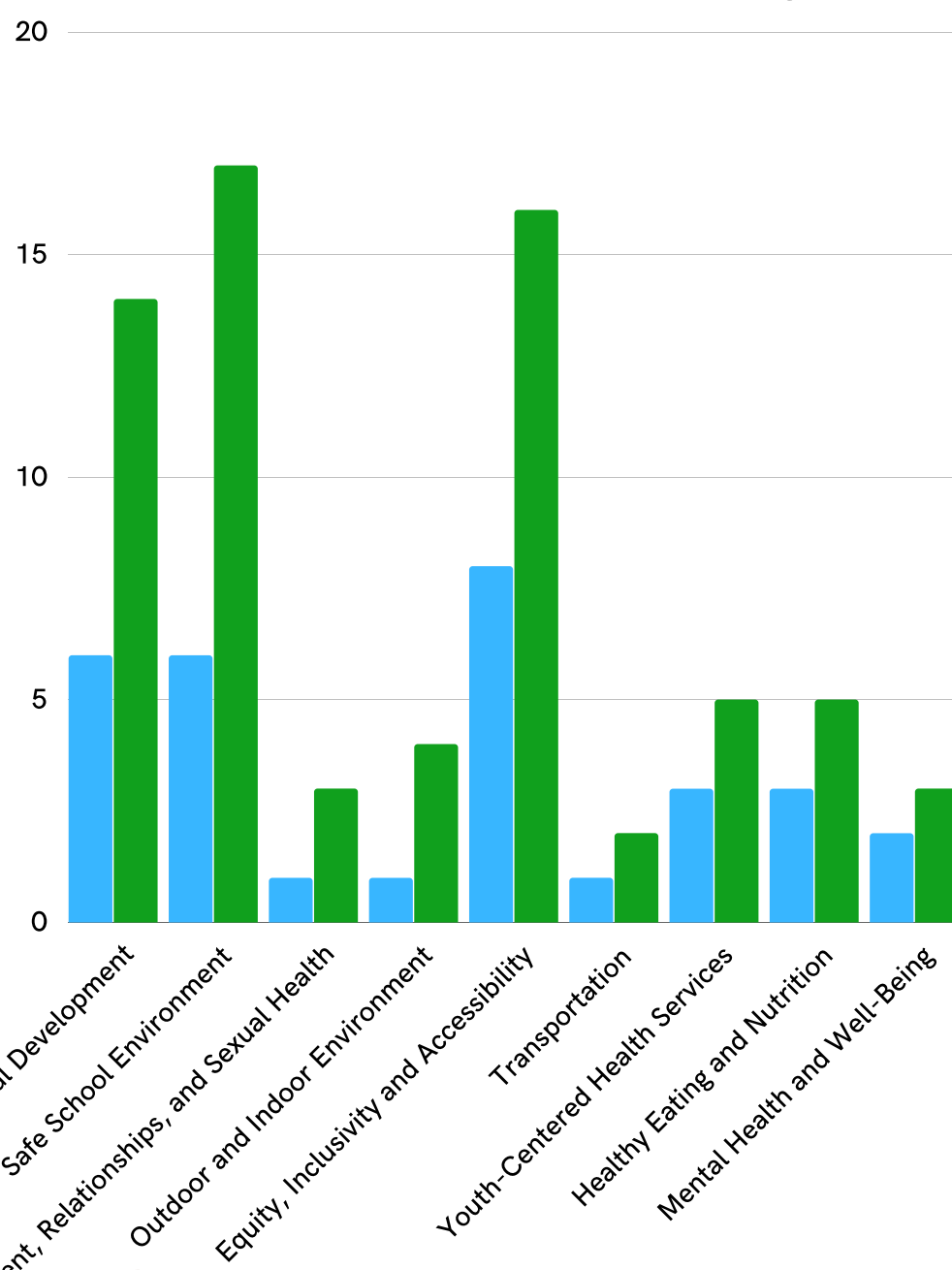


Review of all relevant policy documents to confirm relevance and categorization

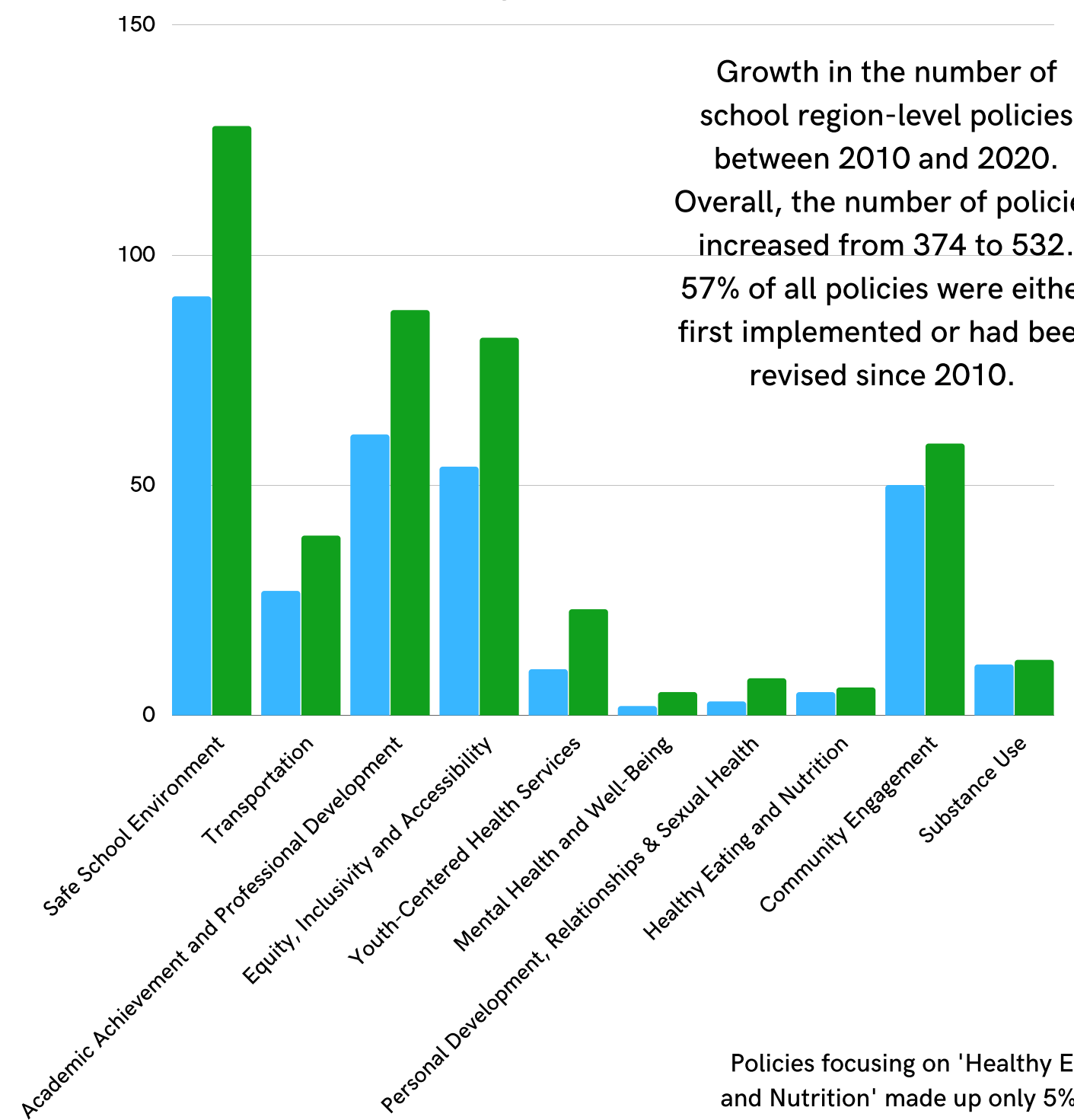


### Policies were examined according to the health promotion topic(s) they aligned with

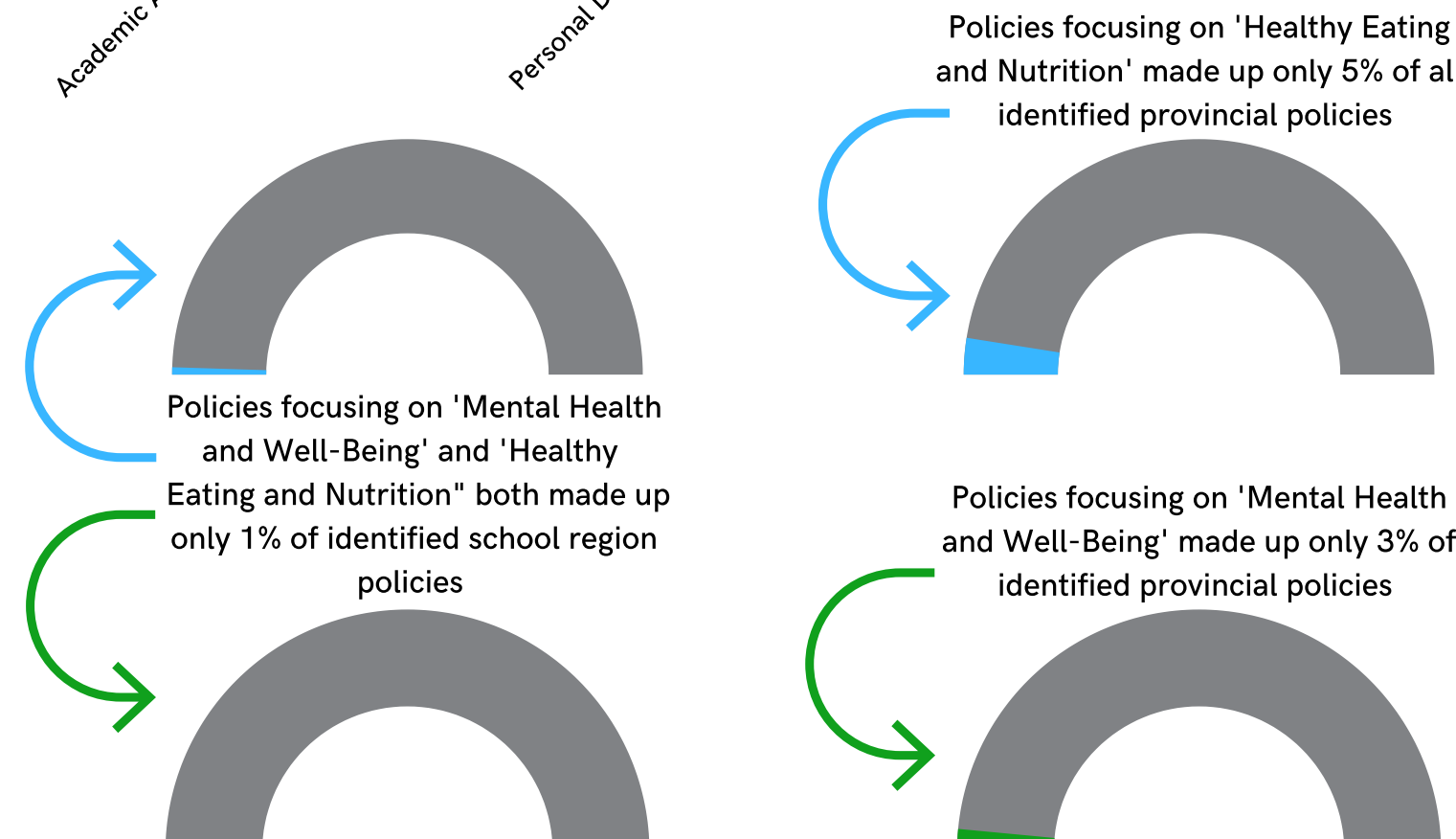
Growth in the number of provincial-level policies between 2010 and 2020. Overall, the number of policies increased from 35 to 81. However, many policies had either been first implemented or revised since 2010.



Growth in the number of school region-level policies between 2010 and 2020. Overall, the number of policies increased from 374 to 532. 57% of all policies were either first implemented or had been revised since 2010.



Policies focusing on a 'safe school environment' were most common; those addressing mental health and well-being, physical activity, nutrition and healthy eating, and substance use were among those least commonly identified.



Findings highlight the complexity of HPS policy and the value or regular review and evaluation of such policies to ensure coherence and to support health and learning outcomes.