Safe and Supportive Schools (S3)

GRANT DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

S3 Grantee Profile | California Department of Education

Highlights

The primary school climate improvement goal of California's four-year[1] Safe and Supportive Schools (CA S3) grant was to reduce high rates of drug- and violence-related behavior in 58 high schools across 26 school districts. From baseline to final year, 90 percent of schools with fully implemented interventions and sufficient data reported a decrease in student alcohol use; 55 percent reported a decrease in harassment or bullying on school property; 83 percent reported improved school safety scores; and 41 percent reported a reduction in the number of suspensions due to violence without serious injury.

How Did They Do It?

CA S3 empowered students and engaged the community by supporting the implementation of more than 30 different programs, facilitating student "fishbowl" discussions[2] at school sites and developing briefs and tip sheets on a range of critical school climate topics. CA S3 worked with the participating districts and schools to use annual school climate survey data, as well as discipline, incident, and other administrative data, to choose and implement interventions tailored to those districts' and schools' specific populations and needs. Additionally, CA S3 successfully addressed challenges related to increasing stakeholder awareness on the relevance of school climate, building staff buy-in, and engaging parents. CA S3 took advantage of California's preexisting reliable and high-quality data system, the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Surveys (Cal-SCHLS), and focused on increasing school climate survey response rates, data analysis capacity, data-based decision-making practices, and program implementation fidelity in some of the State's highest need high schools. One of CA S3's major achievements was producing an easily accessible, robust Web site for school climate data and resources (see http://californias3.wested.org/). The construction of this comprehensive statewide resource platform in conjunction with planned webinars, symposia, and trainings enabled CA S3 to focus on capacity building in targeted high schools.

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[1] While the S3 grant funded all of the grantees for four years, grant activities extended into a fifth year. This profile summarizes activities reported by grantees across all years in which they were actively working with participating districts and schools to improve school climate. However, the Results section presents data only on schools that achieved "full implementation."

[2] See Strategies: Student Voice section for detail.

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School Participation

CA S3 selected participating school districts (also referred to as local education agencies [LEAs][3]) and schools serving students at high risk of educational failure. The grant opportunity was initially offered to 95 districts with at least one persistently lowest achieving school (PLAS)[4] and represented 23 percent of the State's public school enrollment. Sixty-two districts accepted the invitation, representing 20 percent of the State's public school enrollment. Unfortunately, a few districts dropped out, and the final participating school count was 58 (18 percent of total student enrollment). The list of the S3 districts is available on the CDE Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/ssdistricts.asp. After the collection of baseline data using the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) in 2010, 58 high schools from 26 districts with the lowest school safety score based on the CHKS data were selected to receive the S3 grants.

CA S3 Grant Year 4 Demographics (School Year 2013–14)

This section provides descriptive information about participating districts and schools and the demographics of the students they served. See also Appendix A for a list of CA S3's participating districts and schools.

Number of districts served: 26 districts

Number of schools served: 58 high schools

School size: Range: 99–3,249 students; average: 1, 600 students

Total number of students served by CA S3 schools: 92,798

Participating schools' student demographics

Race and ethnicity:[5]

- 15 percent White
- 10 percent Black
- 62 percent Hispanic
- 10 percent Asian/Pacific Islander
- 1 percent American Indian/Alaskan
- 2 percent two or more races

Other student demographics:

- 70 percent free- and reduced-price-lunch eligible
- 11 percent with individualized education programs (IEPs)[6]

Source: NCES Common Core of Data (CCD) (http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/index.asp)

Key Partners

CA S3 forged partnerships that were essential to the implementation of the S3 grant. These partnerships complemented the work of grant staff by promoting collaborations across interrelated student service divisions and with community partners. CA S3 had many partners that played an integral role. These included:

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[3] Grants were awarded to State education agencies (SEAs), and S3 States partnered with a selection of local education agencies (LEAs) or school districts and participating schools. In these profiles, consistent with grantees' use of terminology, we use the term *districts* (in lieu of *LEAs*).

[4] PLAS are defined as those that do not meet annual yearly progress (AYP) goals under No Child Left Behind. See https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/no-child-left-behind/schools-and-districts-need-assistance-sinadina for more information.

[5] Percentages were calculated by dividing the reported number of students in a given demographic by the total reported enrollment. Due to data reporting inconsistencies, totals may not equal 100 percent.

[6] The percentage of students with IEPs is based on S3 district-level statistics as this detail was not available in CCD at the school level.

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- **California Healthy Kids Resource Center**, which provided materials and a resource lending library for schools, giving them the opportunity to research and review programs related to improving school climate before purchasing their selected programs.
- **CA Department of Health Care Services**, which provided funding to help support the Cal-SCHLS data collection infrastructure.
- **WestEd** and **Duerr Evaluation Resources** (**DER**), which developed and administered the California Healthy Kids Survey for students and the California School Climate Survey for staff since 1997. Both companies provided technical and evaluation assistance as well as in-person trainings and webinars to CA S3 districts and schools.
- **Youth Development Network**, which provided technical assistance and facilitated Listening to Student Circles at grantee high schools in central California. The Youth Development Network also conducted a student panel at one of the School Climate Symposia.

Project Components

Infrastructure Development

To the extent possible, S3 grants built upon existing State student support efforts while also funding significant operational and infrastructure development. Over the course of the grant period, CA S3 enhanced its infrastructure in a number of ways:

- Upgraded the databases supporting the Cal-SCHLS measurement system to integrate legacy data, improve data collection and management, and streamline report production, greatly improving the data quality and reducing turnaround time for report generation. These infrastructure improvements enhanced access to data, made data easier to understand, and built capacity for data-based decision making;
- Created an index score (School Climate Index [SCI]) to measure and monitor school climate using the CHKS. The SCI has now been made available as a data metric for all schools in California that use the Cal-SCHLS (see the School Safety Scores section for more information on the SCI);
- As a direct result of the CA S3 grant, school climate is a State priority and the CA S3 schools have become models. California's new strategy for funding schools, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), specifically mentions school climate as one of the eight core strategies that must be addressed in school expenditure plans. The LCFF became effective during the 2014–15 school year (see the Sustainability and Scaling Up section for more information);
- Developed a data-use action planning model under S3. This model is now available to support districts to meet the stakeholder involvement and data-driven process to create the LCFF action plan; and
- Increased State capacity to support districts in school climate improvement.

School Climate Measurement

CA S3 was a data-driven effort that utilized administrative and survey data to focus school climate improvement efforts, decide where to concentrate resources, and help select appropriate interventions. These data also were used to develop school safety scores to monitor change over time. The following describes CA S3's measurement tools.

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Administrative Data

Administrative data on enrollment, statewide assessments, and incidents were furnished through the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (Cal PADS), a California Department of Education (CDE) online data submission system.

Surveys

CA S3 collected data through the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey (Cal-SCHLS) system annually each spring from 2011–14.[7] CA S3 used the following modules:

- California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS)—Core and School Climate Modules;
- Cal-SCHLS California School Climate Survey (CSCS) for staff; and
- Cal-SCHLS California School Parent Survey (CSPS).

The student and parent surveys were made available online and in paper/pencil format. The staff survey was only available online. The parent survey was translated into 26 different languages, including Spanish.

School Safety Scores

The **school safety score** is a figure calculated based on a formula that uses survey data, incident data, and other data representing factors known to influence student and school success. The scores are used to facilitate comparisons between schools in the same State and for individual schools over time. The following summarizes CA S3's school safety score.

- *Name of score*: School Climate Index (SCI)
- *Formula:* The SCI is calculated by computing the weighted average of three domains: (1) supports and engagement (45 percent); (2) violence, victimization, and substance use at school (45 percent); and (3) truancy incidents (10 percent).
- *Hyperlink:*
  - SCI Construction Methodology: http://californias3.wested.org/resources/SCI_Methodology071712b.pdf
  - Individual School Level School Climate Report Cards (SCRC) containing SCI reports: http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/CSRC/searchname.aspx
- *Change over time:* Change in school safety scores are reported in the Results section with other Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) data.

Interventions: Frameworks, Programs, Practices, and Strategies

Key interventions used by schools were determined by needs identified from Cal-SCHLS survey data collected each spring along with the most recent administrative data. The specific frameworks, programs, practices, and strategies were tailored to the needs of each school and district. Schools were required to select evidence-based strategies that addressed both general populations and their at-risk groups. Furthermore, schools were required to develop a student referral process, utilize youth development strategies to engage and empower their students, and engage parents. For a complete list of programs and strategies used by CA S3 schools, see http://surveydata.wested.org/resources/S3StrategySummary_2013.pdf. See Table 1 for a summary of interventions used most frequently across CA S3 schools.

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[7] All surveys were administered in 150 schools, 58 of which were CA S3 intervention schools. Schools were required to achieve at least a 60 percent response rate on the student and staff surveys and at least a 20 percent response rate on the parent survey in order for their data to be considered for analysis.

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Table 1. Intervention frameworks, programs, and practices

Frameworks
• Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies (PBIS) (8)

Programs
• Challenge Days (12)
• Link Crew (24)
• Olweus Bullying Prevention (6)
• Peer Leading Uniting Students (PLUS) (6)
• Safe School Ambassadors* (6)
• Student Assistance Programs (SAPs) (18)

Practices
• Afterschool activities (18)
• Antibullying workshops (32)
• Breaking Down the Walls (2)
• College prep/support (application assistance and field trips) (9)
• Conflict resolution and mediation (16)
• Early intervention and counseling (46)
• Family and community engagement (36)
• Freshman orientation (10)
• Freshman transition (5)
• Gang violence prevention/intervention (5)
• Mentoring (20)
• Peer-helping (mediators, Safe School Ambassadors, Link Crew) (51)
• Restorative justice/discipline (8)
• Student workshops (14)
• Support groups (11)
• Truancy and discipline intervention (4)
• Tutoring (7)
• Youth Development[8] (28)

Note: * indicates a program that is classified as an evidence-based program (EBP), meaning it is found on the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) or the What Works Clearinghouse; the number of schools using each intervention is noted in parentheses.

Engagement Strategies

In addition to frameworks, programs, and practices, CA S3 implemented a number of strategies to engage different groups affected by school climate.

- **State, district, and school leadership** was engaged through regional meetings, webinars, newsletters, annual school climate symposia, and conference presentations. Several lobby displays on various school climate topics were set up in the CDE lobby.
- **Staff** were involved through the Single School Culture training, annual school climate symposium, and collaborative work on topics such as school discipline. The Single School Culture training allowed school teams to develop shared norms, beliefs, values, goals, and results in agreed-upon processes and procedures that produce consistency in practice. It resulted in a positive school climate and prepared staff for a more systemic school improvement process that required buy-in from a large number of staff.
- **Student voice** was empowered specifically through Student Listening Circles (SLCs), also known as student "fishbowl" discussions." Each grantee high school selected six to eight

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[8] Youth Development comprises all peer-related programs (e.g., peer mentors such as Link Crew and peer mediators) and student-led activities or programs.

students of diverse backgrounds and four to six staff members representing administrators, teachers, and counselors. Students shared their thoughts while staff listened, then broke into small groups to discuss the action items. This process empowered students by giving them a voice in improving school climate and created a sense of ownership from students. The California S3 model had a strong focus on youth development. Many CA S3 participating schools incorporated multiple strategies to engage youth and involve them in school climate planning through World Café, Link Crew, peer training, and youth courts.

- *Family and community partnerships* were promoted through annual school climate symposia. Some S3 grantees conducted home visits and parenting workshops and utilized parent liaisons to improve communications with and supports for family involvement.

Training, Coaching, and Technical Assistance

Professional development supports such as training, coaching, and technical assistance (TA) let staff know that school climate is a priority. Training helps staff develop the skills needed to understand the issues, use data to guide their work, and effectively implement intervention(s) with fidelity. Coaches can provide a range of supports such as keeping school climate and student support materials up to date, mentoring staff about policies and practices, or conducting observations and performance-feedback sessions. Technical assistance—provided by members of the school climate team or contractors—can support communities of practice among coaches or school staff, help outline training plans, conduct research to support the work, or help school climate teams address issues such as the need for adaptations to interventions.

Training

CA S3 held the following trainings for a range of audiences including staff, teachers, administrators, and students:

Webinars

- S3 Grantee Orientation Webinar, which was presented on October 12, 2011, by the CDE superintendent of education, to provide an orientation for CA S3 participating districts.
- The School Climate Report Card, which was presented on October 19, 2011, by WestEd's Thomas Hanson. The webinar described the CA School Climate Report Card and provided tips on how to use it effectively to identify areas of school climate in need of improvement.
- S3 Cal-SCHLS Survey Administration, which was presented on March 15, 2012, by Cal-SCHLS Regional Coordinator Susan Cragle. The webinar provided background information on the Cal-SCHLS survey tools and outlined technical and logistical details for survey administration including improving strategies to improve parent participation.
- S3 Sustainability: Understanding the LCAP, which was presented on February 27, 2014. The webinar explained how CA S3 projects can be sustained as part of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), which provided tips on how school and district staff can work together in LCAP planning and the integration of useful CA S3 resources into those plans.

Additional information on CA S3 webinars can be found on the CA S3 Web site Training and Support page.

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Workshops

The following workshops were developed as part of the CA S3 project and, as a result of the CA S3 effort, are now being offered through the Cal-SCHLS TA Center as a custom service by a group that served as S3 coaches. For details, see http://californias3.wested.org/training-support/workshops/.

- **Fostering a Climate for Success**: Provides an overview on the importance of a positive school climate and culture and lessons learned from the S3 project.
- **Data Use Action Planning Workshop**: This one-day, on-site workshop assists schools in a data-driven decision-making process focused on school climate improvement.
- **Listening to Students "Fishbowls"**: Explains how to facilitate and respond to Student Listening Circles (SLCs).
- **Implementation Coaching**: Personalized technical assistance helps schools monitor progress in meeting goals, refining them, and navigating implementation challenges and roadblocks.

Regional Trainings

Five regional workshops were held in 2015 to train school teams on adopting the Single School Culture approach to creating a positive school climate through shared values, norms, and goals.

Symposia

During the course of the grant, CA S3 held two symposia, sponsored by CDE and conducted by WestEd.

- **California S3 Symposia 2012** (November 15–16): Attended by staff from 58 CA S3 high schools as well as 15 middle schools participating in a Middle School Grades School Climate Alliance.
- **California S3 Symposia 2013** (November 20–21): The symposia provided training on numerous topics including vision for school climate leadership; student social, emotional, and mental health; restorative and trauma-informed practices; peer helping programs; student voice; family engagement; single school culture; school culture and student achievement; and climate-work sustainability.

Coaching and Technical Assistance Model

CA S3 provided TA at the statewide and site levels; CA S3 staff were available for TA via phone, email, regional meetings, and monitoring visits. CDE contracted with WestEd to assign technical assistance specialists (TAS) to each school to provide training and technical assistance. They had 12 coaches to serve the 58 participating schools (1:5 ratio). The TASs were trained extensively by the CDE and WestEd. The TASs participated in monthly conference calls to discuss issues and maintain quality across all CA S3 sites.

The TASs provided individual, on-site, and telephone consultation to each grantee in order to identify school safety needs, facilitate data-driven dialogues, examine fidelity of implementation, and build capacity. Each school received two monitoring visits each year from CDE or TASs to ensure programmatic interventions were on track and met implementation requirements. The monitoring visits involved interview questionnaires developed by WestEd and Duerr Evaluation Resources to identify implementation issues, challenges, barriers, and solutions. Information from these visits allowed the TASs to customize the type of support provided for each school.

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Product Development and Dissemination

To support training, technical assistance, and program implementation, S3 grantees developed many unique products. These included theoretical and logic models, administrative guides, reference manuals, toolkits, videos, reports, Web pages, briefs, workbooks, fact sheets, rating forms, readiness and implementation checklists, and peer-reviewed journal articles. In addition, grantees developed and offered many training presentations and webinars. These resources were shared broadly among participating districts and other districts that took an interest in the work being done. Key products generated by the CA S3 grant include:

Documents, Reports, and Guides
- California Safe and Supportive Schools Web site, which is an extensive resource that will be sustained after the culmination of the grant as a resource for schools throughout the nation. The Web site contains links to CA S3 products, webinars, and stories from the field. It provides general background on the grant as well as details about specific challenges and successes.
- Quick Lessons Learned, which summarizes 10 essential elements for improving school climate as learned from CA S3 project implementation. Topics include data-driven decision making, leadership, stakeholder involvement, and building relationships, among other key school climate topics.
- Workbook for Improving School Climate (2nd edition), which was developed by the CDE in partnership with school staff throughout California and is intended to help school communities interpret and use data from the Cal-SCHLS surveys. CA S3 schools utilized this guide as a companion for conducting the Cal-SCHLS surveys.
- Making Sense of School Climate: Using the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey (Cal-SCHLS) System to Inform Your School Improvement Efforts, which provides an overview of eight dimensions of school climate and an outline for each of the three Cal-SCHLS surveys. This tool was designed as a companion reference guide to the School Climate Workbook.
- S3 Factsheets, which present background research on eight school climate subdomains and related findings from the analyses of CA S3 student survey data.
  - Teacher Support: High Expectations and Caring Relationships
  - Opportunities for Meaningful Participation in School
  - School Climate and Academic Performance Across California High Schools
  - Are School-Level Supports for Teachers and Teacher Collegiality Related to Other School Climate Characteristics and Student Academic Performance?
  - School Connectedness and Academic Achievement in California High Schools
  - Positive School Climate: A Hallmark of Academically Successful Schools
- What Works Briefs, which provide summaries of subject-specific practices, strategies, and programs for improving school climate.
  - Caring Relationships and High Expectations
  - Case Study of San Juan High School
  - Family Engagement
  - Harassment and Bullying
  - Improving Staff Climate
  - Lessons Learned
  - Opportunities for Meaningful Participation
  - Perceptions of Safety
  - Physical and Emotional Violence Perpetration
  - Physical and Emotional Violence Physical and Emotional Violence Victimization
  - Proactive and Inclusive School Discipline Strategies
  - School Connectedness

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- o [Social Emotional Learning](#)
- o [Substance Use at School](#)
- [Climate Connection Toolkit](#) (2nd edition), which includes no- and low-cost, practical, hands-on activities for engaging staff, students, and other school community members in school climate efforts. The activities, which are described step by step, are designed to extend the utility of the What Works Briefs and were inspired by the success of the CA S3 grantees.
- [Fidelity Assessment Tools](#), which provide fidelity rating forms for 17 different programmatic interventions that were used by CA S3 grantees. The fidelity rating forms instruct the user to assign a rating of low, moderate, or high for one or more "fidelity elements" across the six fidelity dimensions.
- [CA S3 Coordinator Quick-Start Guide](#), which presents the CDE's objectives and anticipated outcomes set at the beginning of the CA S3 grant to help subgrantees with startup; the guide also details the role and obligations of the S3 project coordinators at each site.
- [S3 Implementation Brief](#), which outlines principles of evidence-based implementation practice that will help ensure a successful effort. Brief reviews the six typical stages of program implementation, some of the pitfalls that may be encountered on the way, and strategies that will help avoid these pitfalls.
- [Parent Surveys: Tips for Success](#), which presents tips from the field on improving the parent survey response rate.
- [Stories from the Field](#), which offers detailed accounts and success stories from CA S3 grantees. Topics and practices include creating an antibullying PSA, student action, restorative justice, emotional health, student leadership, drug and alcohol workshops, and truancy intervention.

Videos
- [Student Perspectives on Safe and Supportive Schools](#), which documents a student panel at the fall 2013 CA S3 School Climate Symposium. The video presents the importance of student voice and students' involvement in and ownership of school climate in their schools.

Results
Monitoring and evaluation activities examined all the data that had been collected in order to determine how CA S3's efforts affected school climate in participating districts and schools. Outcome data included survey data, behavioral incident reports and other disciplinary action data, attendance data, and student academic performance. S3 grantees performed a variety of analyses to demonstrate the results of their work. The following sections provide details on reporting requirements as well as additional analyses or evaluations that were performed.

Government Performance and Results Act Results
The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) requires all federal grantees to demonstrate their effectiveness on a grant-specific set of indicators. S3 grantees reported annually on four GPRA measures. S3 GPRAs included the percentage of S3 participating schools implementing interventions that, over the four years of the grant, experienced:

An increase or decrease in the percentage of students who reported:
- Student-reported alcohol use in the past 30 days (GPRA measures a and b); and
- Student-reported harassment or bullying on school property (GPRA measures c and d).

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Improvement or worsening of:
- School safety scores (GPRA measures e and f).

An increase or decrease in the number of:
- Suspensions for violence without injury (GPRA measures g and h).[9]

GPRA Performance Summary

At the end of the grant period, the 58 participating schools that had fully implemented[10] their selected interventions reported the following successes (see also Figure 1):
- Ninety percent reported reductions in student-reported alcohol use;
- Fifty-five percent reported a reduction in harassment or bullying on school property;
- Eighty-three percent improved their SCI school safety score; and
- Forty-one percent reported a reduction in student suspensions for violence without injury.

Figure 1: California GPRA result baseline (2010–11) to final year (2013–14)
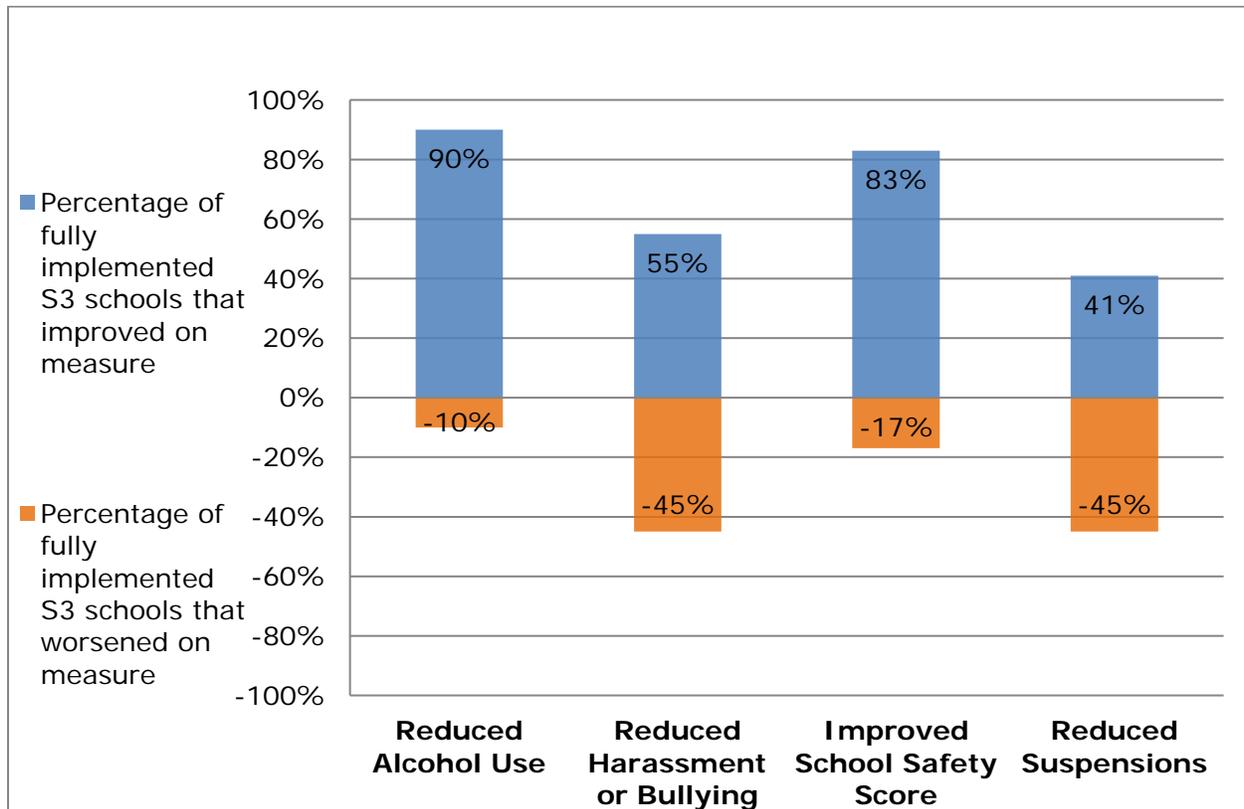
Note: Suspension data were not available from seven schools. Detail may not sum to 100 percent due to schools that experienced no statistically significant change or that had missing data.

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[9] Readers should note that suspension data, in particular, might be affected by changes in State policies during the course of the S3 grant period that may be unrelated to S3 programming.

[10] A school was considered "fully implemented" if the majority of programmatic interventions in the school were fully implemented as planned and the remainder of programs were close to being implemented and/or would be finished by the end of the school year.

CA S3 reported that decreases or worsening on GPRA indicators was likely attributable to:

- The rise in harassment and bullying in these schools could be partly explained by the increased attention being paid to bullying, causing more students to feel comfortable reporting it; and
- Schools had an increase in student suspensions over the course of the grant period even though, toward the end of the S3 grant, California enacted several laws to discourage student suspensions, triggering a drop in suspensions statewide. The increase for CA S3 schools might be attributed to a high turnover in school administrators with a concomitant desire to establish authority.

Additional Analyses

In addition to GPRA analyses, CA S3 performed two other important studies: a comparison of School Climate Index (SCI) scores between treatment and control schools and a survey of staff and parents about their opinions of components of the S3 program.

Comparison of School Climate Index Scores

Evaluator: WestEd

Analysis approach: Using SCI data through the 2013–14 school year, changes in scores (outcomes) between participating (treatment) and nonparticipating (control) schools were compared. The goal of the analysis was to estimate the impact of program efforts in the S3 schools compared with (a) all other schools in the S3 districts and (b) all schools in districts that applied but did not receive funding.

Summary of findings: Over the four years of the grant, nongrantees' SCI scores increased by nine points, while the S3 grantees' SCIs improved a statistically significant 28 points, suggesting a strong impact of the S3 program. Deeper analyses suggested that the S3 program was more successful in improving the Low Violence, Victimization, and Substance Use (VVS) subscale of the SCI than the Supports and Engagement (SE) subscale.[11] The strongest effects were found for two components of the VVS subscale: reduced self-reported violence perpetration and lower reported violence victimization.

See the Reports about Analyses section for further details on methodology and findings of these analyses.

Year 5 (2013–14) Staff and Parent Surveys

Evaluators: Duerr Evaluation Resources (DER)

Analysis approach: The goal of this study, conducted at the end of the grant (2014–15 school year), was to obtain opinions of parents and staff from S3 participating schools about which school climate components targeted for intervention were most important or most successful. The study utilized a telephone survey as well as information from site visits to S3 schools in prior years, including interviews with key staff, focus groups, and a review of program activity progress.

Summary of findings: Telephone interview respondents reported the following:
- Schools primarily focused on improving **supports and engagement** during the final year of the grant, and a large number of staff were participating in related programs such as Breaking Down the Walls and Challenge Day. Eighty-nine percent of staff

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[11] VVS subscales measure school violence perpetration, violence and emotional victimization, harassment/bullying, and substance use; SE subscales measure high expectations, caring relationships, perceived school safety, school connectedness, and opportunities for meaningful participation.

reported that school connectedness and caring relationships were the most important school climate elements.

- **Strong systems** were in place to identify, refer, and monitor students at risk. Link Crew was the most frequently adopted program used to mentor and engage freshmen.
- Fifty-six percent of staff identified addressing aggression, violence, harassment, and bullying as critical to improving school climate, and nearly all sites made **policy and rule changes** on such issues. New approaches were used to avoid or delay out-of-school suspension and focused instead on remediation and restorative justice.
- District and school leaders were described by staff and parents as showing enthusiastic **leadership** in promoting school climate. Schools almost uniformly maintained high levels of **communication** to inform and encourage parents, staff, and students about improving school climate. One in three staff members surveyed had received school climate **training**.
- Many S3 program elements were **sustained and integrated** into the school culture. Most schools had leveraged assistance from community agencies, obtained district supports, and leveraged funding from California's new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), which requires that districts address school climate, pupil engagement, and parental involvement in their Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

Staff commitment to the goals and activities needed to build a better school climate improved over the course of the grant, and only one in five respondents felt that "competing priorities" remained a challenge. Almost three-fourths of staff reported that parent engagement in school life improved with the S3 program to a "moderate," "large," or "very large" extent. Information from parents strongly suggested that the S3 schools were more successful with family engagement during the final two years of the grant, with 50 percent of parents in the 2014–15 school year reporting there was a "dramatic increase" in how the school tried to involve parents.

See the Reports about Analyses section for details on methodology and findings of these analyses.

Reports about analyses:
- 2014–15 Evaluation Report
- 2013–14 Evaluation Report
- 2012–13 Evaluation Report
- 2011–12 Evaluation Report
- Improving School Climate and Academic Achievement in California (a report from the two-year point in the grant)
- Beating the Odds Report (describing schools that consistently outperformed demographically similar, or peer, schools over a four-year period)

Lessons Learned

As with any pilot program, CA S3 experienced its share of implementation challenges and learning opportunities. The following notable issues may be of interest to others:

- **Incorporate student voice in the program.** The Student Listening Circles (SLCs) were essential to opening avenues of communication between students and school staff. For many schools, this was the first time staff had ever asked students what they thought would improve their schools and what was important to them. This program created buy-in from students and empowered them to make changes,

reinforced the message that strong relationships are integral to a positive school climate, and helped build the foundation for CA S3 projects targeted at student engagement.

- **Communicate high expectations for students and provide supports to help students meet them**. To engage youth in youth development programs, recruit students as peer mentors in Link Crew, train them as peer mediators, or involve them in a restorative justice program, youth court, or other antibullying program such as Safe School Ambassador.
- **Prioritize needs.** Use data to identify a few key problems that have a high level of staff buy-in and will make the most difference if fixed and tackle these first.
- **Engage staff and create buy-in in the very beginning.** Staff interactions with students every day largely determine whether the school experience is positive or negative. Challenges in implementation included a lack of administrator participation in some schools and high rates of school administrator turnover. CA S3 used constant reminders and strongly urged administrators to participate in trainings.[12]
- **Implement strategies to engage parents early on.** Once this was identified as a common challenge for many schools, S3 coordinators shared a written compilation of tips on increasing parental engagement with grantees.
- **Include training follow-up activities as mandatory in the annual evaluation.** Training requirements encourage schools to follow through after trainings and report on their progress.
- **Provide extensive technical assistance when utilizing teachers as program coordinators.** While teachers, in comparison to outside partners, have a certain level of influence at the school, many were not experienced in grant management, work plan development, or budgeting. CA S3 responded to this challenge by offering increased technical support delivered with patience.
- **Ensure staff support for and awareness of program implementation when utilizing outside partners as program coordinators.** While outside staff who were contracted by some schools were experienced in program coordination, they did not always have the support of other school staff or the school community. These schools found that there needs to be strong administration support to make sure programs are not implemented as a "separate program" and that there is a schoolwide commitment to improving climate.
- **Post surveys, especially foreign language surveys, online**. CA S3 experienced a boost in parent response rates and positive reception of survey dissemination after making the Spanish version available online.
- **Do not be overly aggressive with interventions.** Implement only a few programs, but fully implement them with fidelity and recognize the importance of district support to long-term, sustainable success.
- **Integrate school climate improvements fully into daily operations**. In lieu of making school climate work an isolated effort, integrate it into the overall school improvement process to increase long-term sustainability.

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[12] In most cases, this strategy worked; CA S3 had consistently close to 95 percent school administrator participation in the annual symposium and 50 to 60 percent administrator attendance in the regional meetings.

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Sustainability and Scaling Up

By the close of the grant, CA S3 left the State in a strong position to continue school climate improvement efforts. Specifically:

- CA S3 created a comprehensive Web site that houses a diverse set of useful resources, trainings, and reports related to the success of CA S3 schools. Toward the end of the grant, the Web site was refined to be less grant specific and more accessible for non-CA S3 grantee audiences (for more details on the Web site content, see the Product Development and Dissemination section).

- In the 2014–15 staff survey, 73 percent of staff reported that they had identified other sources of funding to sustain their S3 program. The funding source most often cited (33 percent) was community agencies or organizations that provided services free of charge to the school.[13] Other commonly mentioned funding sources were Title I, school organizations and clubs such as parent teacher associations (PTAs) or boosters, and grants such as 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs).

- The new school Local Control Funding Formula/Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCFF/LCAP; see the Training section for a webinar on this subject) essentially required that some school funding be directed to school climate. Evidence from the WestEd and Duerr Evaluation Resources 2014–15 evaluation report suggested that many CA S3 districts understood the importance of this requirement and in many cases were already enthusiastic about the growing importance of school climate in California.

- As a direct result of the CA S3 project, evidence shows that there are now many "enthusiastic school climate 'Idea Champions' who may work hard to maintain the emphasis on these new [school climate] approaches."[14]

Special Feature
Integration of School Climate in Statewide Policy—California Local Control Accountability Plan

In 2013–14, California's policymakers enacted a new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and accompanying Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) that require all CA schools to include school climate as a key priority in their budgeting and planning. Focused on reducing finance system complexity, the LCFF better meets the needs of schools by funding them based on demographics and data-informed accountability requirements. Required climate indicators include suspension and expulsion rates and student and parent engagement as well as other local measures assessing safety and school connectedness. (For more information, see Assembly Bill 97 or Senate Bill 91.)

While the passage of this policy occurred separately from the CA S3 grant, its timing was serendipitous, particularly in swaying the political will around embracing school climate improvement efforts.

Through its own hard work and with the support of the new policy, CA S3 has demonstrated that school climate matters, is measurable, can be improved through both "quick fixes" and systematic changes, and costs relatively little and that relationship building and engagement are key to any school reforms.

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[13] These included services for counseling, alcohol and drug abuse, mental health, violence prevention, afterschool programming, and antibullying.
[14] As reported in the final year findings report prepared by Duerr Evaluation Resources and WestEd in June 2015.

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Contact Information

For more information about CA S3, please refer to the information below.

Grant holder: California Department of Education (CDE)
Web site: http://californias3.wested.org/
Project director: Hilva Chan, educational programs consultant, hchan@cde.ca.gov

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S3 Grantee Profiles were prepared for each of the 11 S3 grantees as part of the S3 Descriptive Study (S3DS). The profiles provide detailed information about how each S3 grantee approached and executed their grant, including how intervention schools were selected, key data collection tools and activities, use of programmatic interventions and related supports, products created, findings from their data, lessons learned, and plans for sustainability of their school climate improvement work. The 11 S3 grantee profiles and a cross-grantee executive summary can be accessed here: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/state-grantees/safe-and-supportive-school-s3-grants.

Grantee profile published on June 4, 2018.

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Appendix A: List of California Participating Districts and Schools

Participating Districts	Participating Schools
1. Colton Joint Unified School District	1. Bloomington High School 2. Colton High School
2. Fontana Unified School District	3. Fontana High School 4. Fontana A. B. Miller High School
3. Grossmont Union High School District	5. El Capitan High School 6. Mount Miguel High School
4. Kings Canyon Joint Unified School District	7. Reedley High School
5. Klamath-Trinity Joint Unified School District	8. Hoopa Valley High School
6. Konocti Unified School District	9. Lower Lake High School
7. Lynwood Unified School District	10. Lynwood High School
8. Madera Unified School District	11. Madera High School 12. Madera South High School
9. Monterey Peninsula Unified School District	13. Seaside High School
10. Mt. Diablo Unified School District	14. College Park High School 15. Mt. Diablo High School 16. Ygnacio Valley High School
11. Oakland Unified School District	17. Oakland High School 18. Oakland Technical High School
12. Oxnard Union High School District	19. Channel Islands High 20. Hueneme High School 21. Pacifica High School
13. Palo Verde Unified School District	22. Palo Verde High School
14. Pasadena Unified School District	23. John Muir High School 24. Pasadena High School
15. Patterson Joint Unified School District	25. Patterson High School
16. Perris Union High School District	26. Heritage High School 27. Paloma Valley High School 28. Perris High School
17. Pomona Unified School District	29. Garey High School 30. Pomona High School 31. Ganesha High School
18. Round Valley Unified School District	32. Round Valley High School
19. Sacramento City Unified School District	33. Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School 34. Hiram W. Johnson High School 35. John F. Kennedy High School
20. San Diego Unified School District	36. Madison High School 37. San Diego MVP Arts
21. San Francisco Unified School District	38. Phillip and Sala Burton Academic High School 39. Raoul Wallenberg Traditional High School

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Participating Districts	Participating Schools
22. San Juan Unified School District	40. El Camino Fundamental High School 41. Encina Prepratory High School 42. San Juan High School
23. Stockton Unified School District	43. Cesar Chavez High School 44. Edison High School 45. Stagg Senior High School
24. Victor Valley Union High School District	46. Silverado High School 47. Victor Valley High School
25. Visalia Unified School District	48. El Diamante High School 49. Golden West High School 50. Mt. Whitney High School 51. Redwood High School
26. West Contra Costa Unified School District	52. De Anza High School 53. El Cerrito High School 54. Hercules High School 55. John F. Kennedy High School 56. Richmond High School
School District Unknown⁻	57. Mariana High School 58. Monere High School

⁻ *School district information is not available using existing documents and records.*