Safe and Supportive Schools (S3)

GRANT DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

S3 Grantee Profile | Louisiana Department of Education

Highlights

The primary school climate improvement goal of the four-year[1] Louisiana Safe and Supportive Schools Initiative (LSSSI) was to reduce high rates of drug- and violence-related behavior in 42 schools across eight school districts.[2] From baseline to final year, 83 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; 45 percent reported improved school safety scores; and 29 percent reported a reduction in the number of suspensions due to violence without serious injury.

How Did They Do It?

The LSSSI worked with participating districts and schools to use annual school climate survey data, as well as discipline, incident, and administrative data to choose and implement interventions tailored to those districts' and schools' specific populations and needs. The LSSSI used a model called Positive Approaches for Safe and Supportive Schools (PASSS), which was designed to improve learning conditions related to alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and violence. PASSS also enhanced support programs for students to address mental health needs, family needs, and academic performance. This comprehensive approach to measurement and assessment increased capacity by establishing a sustainable system of data use to drive interventions aimed at addressing the most high-need areas of the school environment.

School Participation

Participating school districts (also referred to as local education agencies [LEAs])[3] were selected based on an analysis of district- and school-level data on graduation rates, attendance rates, test scores, discipline data, and hardships caused by the 2010 Gulf oil spill. More specifically, priority was given to districts with graduation rates below 60 percent, high percentages of overage ninth graders, and suspension and expulsion rates higher than the State average. Data collected via the Communities That Care Youth Survey (CCYS) were

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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] Four schools that were served by the LSSSI grant closed during the five-year grant period.

[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*).

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compared with discipline data at the State level to assist in school selection into LSSSI before the project started.

LSSSI 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 LSSSI's participating districts and schools.

Number of districts served: 8 districts

Number of schools served: 42 schools

- 1 PK–12 school
- 1 K–12 alternative school
- 36 high schools (five schools are grades 6–12, 7–12, or 8–12)
- 2 junior high schools
- 2 academies for career preparation

School size: Range: 45–2,256 students; average: 969 students

Total number of students served by LSSSI schools: 40,691

Participating schools' student demographics

Race and ethnicity: [4]

- 39 percent White
- 49 percent Black
- 7 percent Hispanic
- 3 percent Asian/Pacific Islander
- 1 percent American Indian/Alaskan
- 1 percent two or more races

Other student demographics:

- 63 percent free- and reduced-price-lunch eligible
- 10 percent with individualized education programs (IEPs) [5]

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

Key Partners

The LSSSI 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. The LSSSI had many partners that played an integral role. These included:

- **Louisiana Governor's Office**, which provided staff who served on committees that assessed CCYS data to identify areas for improvement such as alcohol and drug use and responded collectively to provide resources and training to high-need schools. The governor's office also provided supports for schools on data analysis, goal setting, and training in evidence-based programs and practices to prevent or reduce alcohol and drug use.
- **Louisiana Attorney General's Office**, **School Safety Office**, which conducted school safety assessments to evaluate the well-being of school campuses, students, and employees. In addition, it helped schools develop plans to address any necessary improvements or changes to improve school safety.
- **Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals** (DHH), **Office of Behavioral Health** (OBH), which partnered with LSSSI staff under an interagency agreement to

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[4] Percentages were calculated by dividing the reported number of students in a given demographic by the total reported enrollment.

[5] 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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administer the CCYS in schools. OBH provided training in evidence-based programs (EBPs) and implementation support for participating LSSSI schools at no cost under a training contract with community providers.

- **WestEd**, which provided technical assistance (TA) including survey data analysis, site visits, intervention implementation data collection, statewide workshops on school climate and student voice, leadership trainings, data use trainings, and conducting needs assessments. WestEd also performed local and statewide evaluations of the LSSSI project.
- **Louisiana Department of Education, Network Teams**, which worked with State infrastructure to develop a sustainability plan that was designed to ensure that LSSSI school climate activities would continue after S3 funding ended.
- **Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) Consortiums**, which were funded by LDE, provided ongoing, no-cost training, TA, and coaching for LSSSI districts relative to PBIS implementation and evaluation. The consortium facilitators also provided ongoing classroom management training for all schools in the State.
- **Community Mental Health Agencies**, which enabled districts to obtain mental health services and support for students and families through a State contract with Magellan Health.
- **Child Welfare and Attendance Programs**, which worked with school districts to review discipline data, address discipline issues, and provide supports and technical assistance to keep youth in school.

Special Feature
Jefferson Parish Community Partnerships

The importance of building relationships with community organizations could not be emphasized enough. Ms. Valls, the school climate coach for Jefferson Parish, worked diligently with schools and community agencies to ensure that school climate improvement efforts were provided for all students. This work involved meeting individually with agencies to discuss how their services fill gaps in services to the schools and how agencies can maximize resources. To do this, Ms. Valls sat at the table at regular community meetings with agencies, including the district attorney's (DA's) Juvenile Diversion team, the coroner's office, the Children's Hospital Audrey Hepburn Care and Children's Advocacy Center, Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority, and Healing Hearts for Community Development. Valls explains "I go to a lot of meetings…make a lot of connections and talk about what we are doing in our schools every chance I get. Through these experiences, I have been able to build some great relationships that work towards helping our students be successful, safe, and get the care they need." As an added bonus, the majority of the services provided by community groups were provided at no cost to the district and were sustainable when the LSSSI program ended.

For example, the Jefferson Parish Public School System (JPPSS) used a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) in which students receive universal (prevention), selective (early intervention), and indicated (targeted intervention) supports depending on their needs. Community agencies provide services for each of the tiers. For example, the Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority assisted health teachers in implementing the Tier 1 (universal) Life Skills curriculum and provided Life Skills workbooks to each student. In return, teachers conducted a pre/post survey to inform the agency and the teachers about how well students understood and integrated information from the program into their lives. The Children's Hospital Audrey Hepburn Care and Children's Advocacy Center provided the curriculum Teen Sex and the Law, also a universal

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strategy, at no cost to the district. The coroner's office and DA's Juvenile Diversion team collaborated to teach this curriculum in the classroom.

The district also worked with the DA's Juvenile Diversion team to implement restorative practices. Through the LSSSI and Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies (PBIS) consortium, several JPPSS school staff were trained in restorative practices by the Center for Restorative Approaches (CRA) and the Community Conference Center from Baltimore, Maryland. The DA's office also has a restorative practices coordinator available to work with staff in schools utilizing restorative practices. Restorative practices provide opportunities for students involved in harmful behaviors to reflect on their behavior, how it affected others, and how others felt with the goal of building relationships and accepting responsibility for maintaining a safe environment at school. Restorative practices are typically classified as Tier 2 (selective) interventions.

In addition to its involvement with restorative practices, the DA's Juvenile Diversion team also trained school staff on the Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) program. This program, a Tier 2 (selective) support, taught responders how to assess a mental health issue, provide immediate help, and refer to appropriate mental health care opportunities at school or in the community.

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, the LSSSI enhanced its infrastructure by:

- Purchasing additional computers for schools to increase survey response rates and streamline the survey administration process;
- Requiring schools to use a discipline referral tracking report, which fed into the central Student Information System (SIS). See more details on this system and requirement in the Administrative Data section;
- Regularly reviewing discipline and referral data and funding targeted interventions;
- Providing coaching and training to assist schools in developing proactive measures to increase school safety and support; and
- Linking district projects with the LDE networks for additional support and technical assistance.

School Climate Measurement

LSSSI's grant was a data-driven initiative that utilized administrative and survey data to focus school climate improvement efforts, decide where to concentrate resources, and help select appropriate interventions. These data were also used to develop school safety scores to monitor change over time. Districts were funded by LSSSI to use the survey systems to conduct student, staff, and parent climate surveys.

Climate coaches used data to:

- Host meetings with school teams, principals, and school staff to share survey results;
- Identify areas of needs indicated by survey results and other school level data;
- Work with school-level PASSS team members and other school leadership teams to prioritize needs and develop action plans;

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- Identify evidence-based interventions that targeted identified needs;
- Use the data and selected interventions to create school and district level reports;
- Monitor progress on program interventions; and
- Determine where program adjustments were needed, identify training and professional development needs, and address gaps in programs and services.

The following describes LSSSI's measurement tools.

Administrative Data

Administrative data on attendance, enrollment, suspensions, and expulsions were furnished from the Student Information System (SIS), a Web-based information system that is available to all districts and schools. Additionally, administrative data on referrals, suspensions, and expulsions were provided in monthly reports from school coaches. Schools were required to use a discipline referral tracking report, which fed into the central monitoring/tracking SIS to identify students in need of targeted interventions. These data were made available starting July 2012.

Surveys

The LSSSI administered a modified version of the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey (Cal-SCHLS) annually each spring from 2011–14. The LSSSI offered the following tools, each tailored for different stakeholders.
- For students: Louisiana Healthy Students Survey;
- For teachers: Louisiana School Staff Survey; and
- For parents: Louisiana School Parent Survey.

All surveys were administered electronically. Survey data were collected on a Web-based system called the Safe and Supportive Data Collection Web Application, developed by the LDE Information Management Application team. Responses from surveys were collected in a SQL Server database for the purpose of reporting and analysis. All server hardware and software to execute this application were provided by the LSSSI project and were hosted at the State Division of Administration data center.

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 score is used to facilitate comparisons between schools in the same State and for individual schools over time. The following summarizes LSSSI's school safety score.
- *Name of score*: School climate score
- *Formula:* The school climate score was generated based on four unique factors assessed through the LSSSI Student Survey and school-level incident data collected from the Student Information System: (1) supports and engagement; (2) rates of violence, victimization, and substance use[6]; (3) attendance rate; and (4) discipline rate.
  - The broad domain of "supports and engagement" measures how safe and supportive students perceive their school environments to be and how engaged they are in school activities. Included in this domain are four subdomains:

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[6] Data were provided by the State's Student Information System (SIS) to the State LSSSI data analyst. The data were used in the development of school climate scores. The data did not contain any student-specific identifiers. The data could only be used for internal analysis and could not be released to the public by the LSSSI staff. Any request for data from external or internal users had to be submitted directly to the SIS Office.

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1. *High expectations and caring relationships*: Measures students' perceptions of adult support at school;
2. *Opportunities for meaningful participation*: Measures students' perceptions of their ability to provide input at school and in the classroom;
3. *Perceived safety*: Measures students' perceptions of how safe they feel in the school environment; and
4. *School connectedness*: Measures students' perceptions of how socially and emotionally connected they feel in the school environment and to those in it (i.e., teachers and other students).

o The formula for calculating the score is as follows:
  ▪ Supports and engagement (40 percent);
  ▪ Violence, victimization, and substance use (40 percent);
  ▪ Attendance rate (10 percent); and
  ▪ Discipline rate (10 percent).

o Domain and subdomain scores range from 0 to 100, with high scores representing higher levels of supports, engagement, and attendance and lower levels of violence, victimization, substance use, and disciplinary infractions.

- *Hyperlink:* http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/data-center
- *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 decided based on data-driven discussions with school staff, teachers, administrators, and families. The LSSSI used survey data collected each spring and its most recent administrative data to inform the selection and implementation of a variety of interventions and approaches (see Table 1). The specific frameworks, programs, practices, and strategies were tailored to the needs for each school and district.

Table 1. Intervention frameworks, programs, and practices

Frameworks
• Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) (42)[7]
Programs
• Alcohol Edu* (4)   • Alcohol & Drug True Stories (4)   • Capturing Kids Hearts* (2)   • Character Counts* (5)   • Character Development & Leadership (3)   • Check and Connect (9)   • Circle of Friends / Each One Save One (1)   • I-Time Curriculum (1)   • Life Skills Training (LST)* (22)   • Lion's Quest Skills for Action* (2)   • Olweus Bullying Prevention (3)   • PeaceBuilders* (5)   • Peaceful Alternative to Tough Situations* (1)

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[7] Louisiana schools are required by law to implement PBIS.

- Peers Making Peace (2)
- Positive Action* (1)
- Project MAGIC (Making a Group and Individual Commitment)* (1)
- Project Northland Class Action* (5)
- Project Wisdom (1)
- Rachel's Challenge (5)
- Ripple Effects* (41)
- SADD/Project Step* (1)
- Safe & Civil Schools Products (23)
- SAPE Support Group (6)
- START on Time! (10)
- TAP/TEG Protection & Risks* (1)
- Teen Intervene* (4)
- Teen Leadership (2)
- Teen Life Counts (6)
- The Leadership Program's Violence Prevention Project* (4)
- Too Good for Drugs and Violence* (11)

Practices

- Mental health services (count not reported)

Notes: * 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, LSSSI implemented a number of strategies to engage different groups affected by school climate.

- **State, district, and school leadership** was engaged by LSSSI staff in a process of reviewing existing discipline policies to ensure that the policies adequately and effectively addressed school safety. LSSSI staff facilitated ongoing review of office referral and school climate survey data with administrators, which prompted productive discussions about changes needed in State- and district-level policies and procedures (e.g., the need for a bullying policy). Additionally, participating superintendents and principals gave written commitment to support the implementation of the LSSSI framework.
- **Staff** were involved through participation in ongoing trainings that were tailored to their specific roles in the LSSSI programmatic interventions. Staff participated in data analysis training, data dives,[8] leadership skills-building training, emergency readiness training, and multiple sessions on selecting and implementing interventions effectively.
- **Student voice** was empowered through numerous methods, including:
  - Teen Leadership Summits and training sessions hosted by districts to engage disengaged youth;
  - Youth tracks held during the annual School Climate Institute to engage student voices and to build leadership skills. For example, districts such as Jefferson, Lafourche, and Lafayette Parishes established Youth Climate Teams that were responsible for looking at data, making suggestions to improve school connectedness and student engagement, and creating positive school climates by making changes on school campuses;
  - Student Listening Circles, which engaged students by training and involving students in the data collection, analysis, and presentation process as well as hearing students' views on what was important in terms of school climate. All

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[8] Data dives were a process of digging through data to discover hidden connections and predict future trends.

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district PASSS coaches were trained by WestEd staff on how to observe and conduct listening circles in their districts. During the circles, students discussed questions and issues related to school climate while adults listened. Students were prepared before the listening circle to respond by framing their answers as solution-based rather than complaints without ideas for creating change. Adults and students had the opportunity after the listening circle to engage in conversations to identify common themes that emerged, solutions, timelines, and adults who would be responsible for follow up; and

o   Additionally, students were deemed survey "champions," tasked with conveying the importance of measuring school climate to their parents in order to increase survey response rates.

- *Family and community partnerships* were promoted through targeting community youth development programs and community mental health agencies as key partners. Additionally, specific schools utilized approaches including social media Web sites, monthly breakfasts for parents and community members, and fishbowls to engage school alumni.

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.

LSSSI provided a range of training, coaching, and technical assistance supports. These activities aimed to maximize district- and school-level understanding of school climate issues generally as well as build specific skills around engaging stakeholders, data collection and analysis, and implementation frameworks, programs, and strategies.

Training

The LSSSI conducted the following trainings for LDE staff:

1. Four annual School Climate Institutes held in June 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015. The institutes explored issues that influence conditions for learning including school safety, behavioral health, the relationship of school climate work to supporting social and emotional competencies,[9] and bullying.

2. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training (summer 2014) for all LSSSI districts, but other districts and community partners were also invited.

3. Trainings hosted by the eight PBIS Consortiums across the State.

4. Training facilitated by the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) staff on Common Core State Standards and school climate and also scaling up the LSSSI initiative (June 4–5, 2014).

5. In-person trainings for coaches and staff on the specific interventions being implemented at their schools.

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[9] See, for example, the linked text above to a presentation by WestEd, which provides a comprehensive overview of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) core competencies, then concludes by linking the LSSSI School Climate Index constructs to these competencies.

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6. Data training workshops for climate coaches and PASSS team members (both in person and additional sessions held during each annual School Climate Institute and by webinars).
7. Data use workshops for school staff on how to interpret survey, discipline, and referral data and how to use the data to develop concrete action plans (dates not provided).
8. Trainings for school climate coaches on helping school personnel understand the connections between teacher evaluations, Common Core State Standards, school climate, and improving academic outcomes. WestEd and internal data analysts provided webinars to the coaches about these topics. The coaches then provided TA to the schools to help interpret their school data and make programmatic decisions.
9. Safe Plans school faculty training (offered through the U.S. Department of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) technical assistance center, which addressed school safety and discipline, victimization/harassment, and perceptions of safety at schools.
10. Workshops and trainings in Year 5 (postintervention) aimed at improving skills among students and staff working to improve school climate at their schools. WestEd provided these trainings at the Leadership Day in Lafayette and at the School Climate Symposium.
    * Topics for students included interpreting survey data and using them to create messages for change, leadership skills, marketing the messages, and crafting messages that were solution-based; and
    * Staff were trained in how to "take a backseat" in the school climate efforts and let students use their leadership skills with guidance from the adults.

Coaching and Technical Assistance Model
The LSSSI utilized the PASSS model as a foundation for its approach to technical assistance. Each intervention school established a PASSS Team that comprised the district climate coach, PASSS team leader, discipline personnel, and PBIS team members. The team assisted school personnel with reviewing data ("data drill downs"), assessing community climate, identifying protective and risk factors that influence students, determining where to target resources and training, and developing individualized action plans for implementing appropriate interventions. PASSS team leaders provided on-site training and coaching on topics such as data-driven decision making, selection of effective intervention strategies, building schoolwide buy-in, and soliciting student input.

Each district was assigned a school climate coach (SCC). There was one coach per district no matter how many schools were in the district. The coach-to-school ratio ranged from 1:3 to 1:10. School climate coaches established and guided school climate leadership teams at each school. The role of a school climate coach was to:
* Provide staff development for districts and school staff regarding the implementation of the Louisiana School Safety Initiative;
* Provide technical assistance and support for data collection and intervention implementation;
* Regularly meet with the PASSS team members in order to increase program effectiveness and promote constant improvement;
* Assist with the identification, selection, and implementation of research-based programmatic interventions designed to make schools safer, more supportive, engaging, and challenging; and
* Assist school staff with continuous review to ensure that instructional strategies were implemented with fidelity.

More specific roles are outlined in the Role of a School Climate Coach handout created by LSSSI. Coaches' capacity to serve schools was enhanced through monthly calls to share information, celebrate victories, identify challenges, provide support, and hear suggestions from participating districts about what worked for them in addressing similar areas of concern.

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 LSSSI grant include:

- Louisiana Safe and Supportive Schools Initiative School Climate Survey Planning and Administration Guidebook, a step-by-step guidebook for LSSSI participating schools detailing the three LSSSI surveys, best practices for administration, and planning checklists. It was designed to ensure that the LSSSI survey administration process went as efficiently as possible with the goal of minimizing burden on district staff.
- Louisiana's Safe and Supportive Schools Initiative: Sample Student Survey Results Report, a sample report for the LSSSI student, staff, and parent surveys that contains sample charts and statistics.
- Instruments and strategies used to monitor and track program implementation for continuous improvement including:
  - Progress at a Glance (PAG) reports. This detailed template was designed for LSSSI schools to present their survey data, goals, and progress during the grant period. The template includes charts, graphs, and intervention highlights;
  - Implementation plans, which combine all information regarding Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound (SMART) goals,[10] school climate improvement focus areas, and intervention programs; plans were updated annually;
  - Fidelity checklists (to assess the quality of implementation of interventions);
  - Monthly data reports;
  - Lessons learned documents; and
  - Survey administration guidance documents.
- Site visit reports from 2013 and 2014 (to inform program improvements and monitor progress; for internal planning use only; produced by Barbara Dietsch, Meagan O'Malley, and Adam Voight).
- Three briefs highlighting best practices and districts doing exemplary work in promoting (1) student voice, (2) classroom management and restorative practices, and (3) mental health.
- Sustainability webinar: Sustaining Your Success—LSSSI School Climate Improvement, offered September 29, 2014, by WestEd.
- Videos:
  - Plaquemines High School; and

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[10] For more information, refer to the LSSSI final evaluation report section on implementation assessment results.

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     o [Carencro High School](#), which features staff and student interviews in conjunction with informational slides to highlight successful improvements to school climate achieved throughout the grant.
- [LSSSI Grant Accomplishment and Next Steps](#) (project summary).
- [LSSSI Web site](#), which details the work done throughout the grant and efforts to sustain the work beyond the grant period.

Results

Monitoring and evaluation activities examined all the data that had been collected in order to determine how LSSSI'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 schools that 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).

    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).[11]

GPRA Performance Summary

At the end of the grant period, the 42 intervention schools that had fully implemented[12] their selected interventions reported the following successes (see also Figure 1):
- Eighty-three percent reported reductions in student-reported alcohol use;
- Fifty-five percent reported a reduction in harassment or bullying on school property;
- Forty-five percent improved their school climate score; and
- Twenty-nine percent reported a reduction in student suspensions for violence without injury.

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[11] 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.
[12] Generally, for S3 grantees, 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.

Figure 1: Louisiana GPRA results baseline (2010–11) to final year (2013–14)
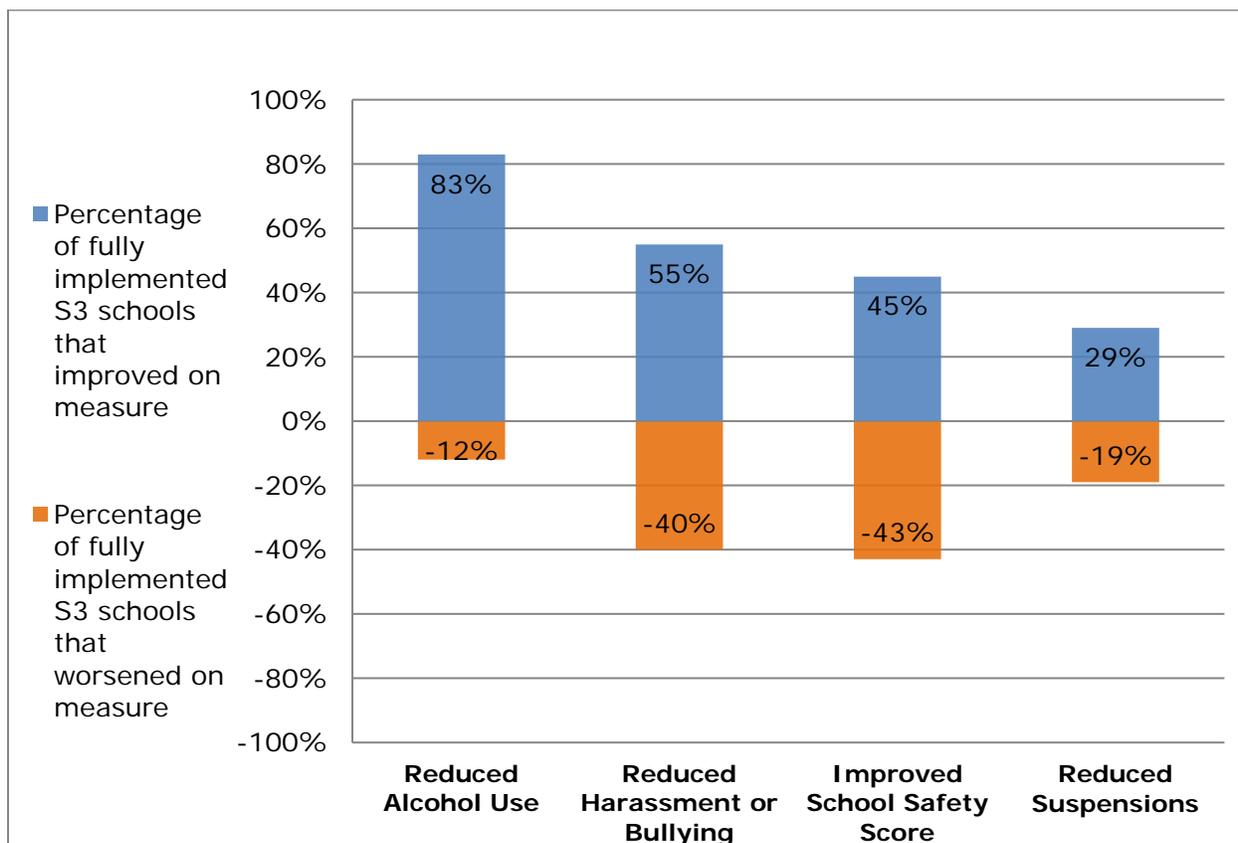
Note: Of the 42 S3 schools, two did not provide survey data in 2013–14, which is used to report alcohol use and harassment/bullying. Three schools did not have incident data because they were "alternative" schools for students having problems at their "home" school. The home school reported data for these students to the State, but the data were not available for this project. Therefore, a school climate score and suspensions for those schools could not be calculated. Detail may not sum to 100 percent due to schools that experienced no statistically significant change or that had missing data.

LSSSI reported that decreases or worsening on GPRA indicators were likely attributable to the fact that many interventions were not fully implemented until the second and third year of the LSSSI program. Although the LSSSI program occurred over four years, the district coaches were tasked with reviewing data, selecting targeted interventions based on the data, training staff to implement the interventions, and encouraging staff to implement with fidelity. Additionally, there were several areas within school climate reform that schools and districts focused on based on their individual school climate reports each year. With so many options for program implementation, it was challenging to focus on all of them with fidelity. Given that data do not look at individual students but rather focus on changes at the school level, which can be challenging, even small changes in a positive direction can be considered evidence of the effectiveness of school climate efforts.

Additional Analyses

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) contracted with WestEd to conduct both local and statewide evaluations. The WestEd evaluation report provided information on site visits, data on intervention implementation progress, and technical assistance needs.

Evaluators: WestEd (Barbara Dietsch)

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Analysis approach:

Across the 42 LSSSI intervention schools, there were 21,267 students surveyed in 2011 and 26,243 in 2014. In the 37 comparison (i.e., nonintervention) schools, 8,912 and 11,384 students took the survey in 2011 and 2014, respectively. In both 2011 and 2014, the majority of participants across intervention and comparison schools were female (52 percent) and Black/African American (40 percent) or White (36 to 40 percent).

Quantitative analyses included calculation of school climate scores based on annual results on the Safe and Supportive Schools Student Survey as well as data from the Louisiana Department of Education Student Incident Database and district referral data. Evaluators examined the school climate score domains, data related to GPRA measures, and project objective outcomes (including disapproval of peer drinking, disapproval or peer marijuana use, current alcohol or other drug use, physical fighting, and school connectedness) for the intervention schools. Each intervention school received an annual report with school-level findings from the student, staff, and parent surveys. The school climate score was calculated and included in each school report (see the School Safety Scores section for information on score calculation and subdomains). Findings for each item and category were provided for each year the school administered the survey, which allowed schools to monitor changes over time.

LSSSI also compared data from the 42 intervention schools and 37 nonintervention schools that had complete survey and student data to assess differences in school climate scores and the domains and subdomains that made up the school climate scores at baseline (2011) and the end of the grant period (2014).

Furthermore, qualitative information was collected from eight school climate coaches who participated in one-on-one interviews regarding their perceived role of a coach in school climate improvement, definition of school climate, and recommendations for successful school-based school climate improvement.

Summary of findings:

Overall, adjusted school climate scores improved at intervention schools (59 to 61) and worsened at comparison schools (64 to 58) between baseline and Year 4.[13] Given that the schools with the greatest need were receiving the interventions (see the School Participation section), as expected, the implementation schools had worse scores on many categories and subcategories, both at baseline and at the end of the grant period, compared with the comparison schools. However, comparison schools experienced worsening and/or smaller improvements over the course of the grant compared with the implementation schools. Overall, 80 percent of implementation schools saw improvement in at least one school climate indicator. In particular, LSSSI had the greatest positive effect on school climate scores, violence perpetration, and victimization and harassment.

Within subgroups of students, at the end of the intervention, no substantive differences in perceptions of school climate were detected between male and female students. However, based on race/ethnicity, African American students reported higher overall school climate perceptions and reduced experiences with violence perpetration and victimization and harassment compared with White or Hispanic students.

Qualitative data demonstrated that coaches relied on a number of essential elements to pursue school climate improvement, including an effective school climate team, support from the administration, staff buy-in and participation, engagement with student voice,

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[13] Detail was not provided regarding whether these changes were statistically significant.

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data-driven decision making, creative universal interventions, parent and community outreach, and alignment of student services with student need.

Report about analyses:

- Dietsch, B., O'Malley, M., Pate, C., Voight, A., & Zheng, H. (2016). Louisiana Safe and Supportive Schools Initiative (LSSSI) final evaluation report. WestEd: Author.

Special Feature
School Climate Coach Perspectives on Successful School Climate Work

In conjunction with analysis of quantitative data, LSSSI also collected qualitative data in the form of interviews with school climate coaches at the end of the grant period. The school climate coach interviews were organized around five questions, including:

- How do school climate coaches define school climate?
- What does the work of a school climate coach look like?
- What are the characteristics of an effective school climate coach?
- What are the characteristics of a successful school-based school climate improvement plan?
- How do districts support (and not support) school climate coaches?

Despite their role in LSSSI's work to achieve school climate improvement, the coaches did not have a clear consensus definition of school climate. Many coaches defined school climate as the "feel" of a school and focused on describing the attributes of school with a positive school climate. According to the coaches, schools with a positive climate feel safe and inviting to both students and staff, based on both the physical appearance of the school and the behaviors and attitudes of members of the school community.

Coaches' duties were split between program work and administrative duties associated with grant compliance. Some also took on extra responsibilities such as sitting on a wellness committee or serving as a hearing officer to assist with decisions regarding student suspension and expulsion. Coaches generally organized and disseminated survey and discipline data to school teams and convened retreats and regular meetings to review the data for continuous improvement.

Successful coaches were described as adept at developing positive relationships. Prior professional experience working in the school system or a background in education were seen as assets. Strong communication skills were also cited as essential.

Successful school-based school climate improvement plans were dependent upon school-level characteristics such as the effectiveness of the school climate team, support of leadership, staff buy-in and participation, authentic engagement of student voice, and a commitment to data-driven decision making. Coaches also mentioned successes for schools that were "creative" in implementing programs, such as the development of a ninth-grade academy transition program and a "tardy sweep" initiative. Intentional alignment of student services to complement universal approaches and novel approaches to engaging parents and community members were also noted as key to success.

Coaches also noted some factors out of their control that mattered greatly. Smaller schools were more successful, and for these schools staff and community at large had better cohesion. Coaches also perceived that schools with higher socioeconomic status (SES) were more successful; they mentioned that higher SES parents seemed to be more engaged and supportive. Staff turnover negatively affected school climate improvement efforts. Finally, coaches reported that school reputation affected progress: Schools with a negative reputation had difficulty generating school pride or enthusiasm.

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Finally, districts' support of school climate coaches varied. Some had a clear role in the district hierarchy and were intentionally assimilated; others were assigned to departments that were only tangentially related. Office space accommodations varied and were reflective of the level of support of the district. Coaches also struggled with pressures to focus on standardized test results; some were prohibited from scheduling anything to do with school climate if it would interfere with instructional time.

Based on their experiences, LSSSI coaches recommended the following:
- Assign coaches at the school (rather than district level);
- Other district staff need to have more ownership in school climate work;
- More emphasis was needed on parental involvement, uniform staff professional development over the summer to build shared understanding and set goals, and consistent discipline policies; and
- Expansion of the work to elementary and middle schools.

Lessons Learned

As with any pilot program, the LSSSI experienced its share of implementation challenges and learning opportunities. The following notable issues may be of interest to others:
- At the time of the LSSSI grant, implementing Common Core State Standards became the top priority for many schools in Louisiana. This posed an obstacle for the LSSSI goal of focusing on the importance of creating a positive school climate and placed the "burden of proof" on LSSSI to show that school climate mattered. To meet this challenge, LSSSI provided support to the school climate coaches, who were working to help school personnel understand the connections between teacher evaluations, Common Core, school climate, and improved academic outcomes.
- Initially, the LSSSI teams experienced substantial pushback from administrators who were convinced that existing discipline policies adequately and effectively addressed school safety. In order to dispel the notion that punitive discipline policies adequately provided safe school climates, the LSSSI initiated the following practices:
    - Ongoing review and discussion of office referral data with administrators;
    - Ongoing review and discussion of school climate survey and discipline data to identify changes needed in State- and district-level policies and procedures (e.g., bullying policy);
    - Data dives to identify needs, trends, and correlations;
    - Student Listening Circles, which engaged students in school improvement efforts by incorporating student voice into the data collection and review process at the school level;
    - Investing in safety equipment, including video cameras and door-locking systems that were often cited by students as important safety measures; and
    - Analyzing and presenting, in easy-to-understand formats, multiple data that showed that safety issues were not being adequately addressed.
- LSSSI found that teaching others—at all levels—how to understand the data reduced conflict and removed power issues. Extensive training was offered to staff and leadership, provided by the LSSSI data analysis team and the WestEd evaluation team.
- To facilitate buy-in, LSSSI involved districts in the coach hiring process from the beginning, ensuring alignment of the school climate improvement approach with the vision/mission of each school.
- LSSSI clearly communicated the purpose and goals of school climate efforts to build trust, strengthen relationships, and ensure that everyone was "on the same page."

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- Some districts were reluctant to provide discipline and referral data because of the sensitive nature of the data; LSSSI managed this issue by establishing written agreements with the districts and the schools specifying how the information would be managed in mutually agreeable ways.
- Survey administration challenges were overcome by:
  o Setting specific timelines for survey administration that gave schools ample opportunities to participate and that aligned with preexisting school calendars;
  o Allowing coaches to purchase a limited number of computers for survey administration. This decision was made because schools did not have enough computers available for student and staff surveys and the LSSSI found administering paper surveys to be cumbersome; and
  o Increasing parent participation by offering incentives, by engaging students as the survey "champions," and by providing access to the survey instrument on phones and electronic tablets.
- PBIS and LSSSI staff shared an office and were able to collaborate and coordinate to ensure the needs of students were being addressed through a multitiered approach. LSSSI succeeded in firmly saturating the State with the PBIS universal approach; however, there was a deficit in addressing Tiers 2 and 3. To ensure that schools were implementing PBIS in its intended form, it was essential to provide ongoing PBIS training to all PASSS team members to ensure that all members had similar expectations for standards of implementation fidelity. Working through Louisiana's regional PBIS technical assistance centers and the national PBIS technical assistance center ensured consistency in messaging, implementation, and monitoring.
- LSSSI reported that it would have been beneficial if the State Office of Mental Health and Office of Juvenile Justice had been involved in its efforts.
- LSSSI realized late in the grant how important it was to focus on student voice and providing opportunities for students to be actively engaged at school. It provided trainings to the coaches and conducted Student Listening Circles at schools that requested them, which was met with positive responses from teachers and administrators. Had LSSSI initiated these strategies earlier in the project (including the student/staff leadership workshop), it might have seen more positive changes in the social emotional domain scores in its School Climate Index.

Sustainability and Scaling Up

By the close of the grant, the LSSSI left the State in a strong position to continue school climate improvement efforts. Specifically:
- The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) planned to:
  o Host the Annual School Climate Institute; and
  o Continue to provide technical assistance on school climate to districts, schools, students, parents, teachers, counselors, and other staff as necessary. Four of the eight LSSSI districts continue to operate using funds provide either by the local school board or through other grant funds to continue the school climate efforts; these include Caddo, Jefferson, Lafourche, and Tangipahoa. They will continue to provide training and technical assistance. The Louisiana Department of Education is providing funding and training through grant funds to eight Regional PBIS Consortiums. The focus is on mental health, classroom management, trauma informed education, bullying, and youth suicide prevention.
- Districts where school climate work would continue were part of school improvement teams.

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- Comprehensive professional development was going to be offered for teachers, other school staff, and community service personnel working in schools on how to create and support positive school climates.
- Program briefs, lessons learned, and other information about the LSSSI were disseminated statewide.
- Training was provided for PBIS staff, child welfare and attendance, and other school discipline support staff on supportive discipline practices that address bullying, violence, alcohol and drug use, and the reduction of suspensions and expulsions.
- Collaboration was planned with the Office of Behavioral Health, the Office of Public Health, and Office of Mental Health to provide supports and services to local school districts.
- Staff planned to continue to support the previously funded projects in their efforts to institutionalize safe and supportive schools programs and practices.
- Louisiana's legislature established priorities for dealing with trauma and bullying, which tie closely to school climate.
- LSSSI staff met with various LDE departments to integrate school climate as a critical piece of LDE policies and statewide efforts. For example, LSSSI staff provided TA on how school climate related to Title I.

LSSSI worked with network teams and State infrastructure in the development of a sustainability plan that was designed to ensure that LSSSI school climate activities would continue after U.S. Department of Education funding ended.

Contact Information

For more information about the LSSSI, please refer to the information below.
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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 Louisiana Participating Districts and Schools

Participating Districts	Participating Schools
1. Caddo	1. C.E. Byrd High School 2. Fair Park College Prep High School 3. Huntington High School 4. North Caddo High School 5. Northwood High School 6. Southwood High School
2. East Baton Rouge	7. Belaire High School 8. Broadmoor Senior High School 9. Glen Oaks Senior High School 10. Northeast High School 11. Tara High School 12. Valley Park School* 13. Woodlawn High School
3. Jefferson	14. Bonnabel Connections – Martyn Academy for Career Preparation* 15. Douglass Academy for Career Preparation* 16. Bonnabel Magnet Academy High School 17. East Jefferson High School 18. Grace King High School 19. Helen Cox High School 20. John Ehret High School 21. L.W. Higgins High School 22. West Jefferson High School
4. Lafayette	23. Acadiana High School 24. Alternative Instructional Model Academy (AIM)* 25. Carencro High School 26. Martyn Alternative School 27. O. Cameaux High School
5. Lafourche	28. Central Lafourche High School 29. Thibodaux High School
6. Plaquemines	30. Belle Chasse High School 31. Phoenix High School 32. South Plaquemines High School
7. Tangipahoa	33. Hammond High Magnet School 34. Independence High School 35. Jewel M. Sumner High School 36. Loranger High School 37. Ponchatoula High School
8. Terrebonne	38. Ellender Memorial High School 39. Evergreen Junior High School 40. H.L. Bourgeois High School 41. Houma Junior High School 42. Terrebonne High School

This school has closed since the S3 grant concluded.

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