Safe and Supportive Schools (S3)

GRANT DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

S3 Grantee Profile | Michigan Department of Education

Highlights

The primary school climate improvement goal of Michigan's four-year[1] Safe and Supportive Schools (MI S3) grant was to improve staff and student wellness and reduce high rates of drug- and violence-related behavior in 22 schools across 21 school districts. From the baseline to final year, 55 percent of schools with fully implemented interventions and sufficient data reported a decrease in student alcohol use; 64 percent reported a decrease in harassment or bullying on school property; 73 percent reported improved school safety scores; and 55 percent reported a reduction in the number of suspensions due to violence without serious injury.

How Did They Do It?

MI S3 worked with participating districts and schools to help them collect and interpret annual survey, discipline, incident, and administrative data to choose and implement interventions for each school's specific population and need. The MI S3 grant placed a unique focus on staff and student wellness efforts to improve school climate and student outcomes. Grant activities also paid special attention to improving school safety in Michigan's high-need schools, particularly through empowering "meaningful student involvement" at youth engagement conferences and promoting restorative justice practices that yielded increased instructional contact time. MI S3 also successfully engaged other State education offices in efforts to make school climate and culture a priority for school improvement.

School Participation

As part of the grant, MI S3 worked with Michigan's lowest-achieving schools. Specifically, the project focused on schools that were ranked in the lowest 5 percent of the "Top to Bottom School List" as a result of not meeting the requirements of annual yearly progress (AYP).

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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."

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MI S3 Grant Year 4 Demographics (School Year 2013–14)[2]

This section provides descriptive information about participating districts[3] and schools and the demographics of the students they served. See also Appendix A for a list of MI S3's participating districts and schools.

Number of districts served: 17 districts

Number of schools served: 22 schools[4]

- Seventeen high schools
- Five middle/high schools combined

School size: Range: 254–1,562 students; average: 543 students

Total number of students served by MI S3 schools: 11,938

Participating schools' student demographics

Race and ethnicity:[5]

- 27 percent White
- 59 percent Black
- 11 percent Hispanic
- 2 percent Asian/Pacific Islander
- 0 percent American Indian/Alaskan[6]
- 3 percent two or more races

Other student demographics:

- 77 percent free- and reduced-price-lunch eligible
- 17 percent with individualized education programs (IEPs)[7]

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

Key Partners

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

- **Neutral Zone**, an Ann Arbor, Michigan-based community teen center, which partnered with MI S3 to facilitate youth engagement activities, including a two-day Student Engagement Institute each summer, a followup Youth Summit each winter, and on-site coaching visits throughout the school year (see the Training section).
- **Parent Action for Healthy Kids**, a Michigan-based Parent Engagement organization, which provided professional development on "Engaging Parents as Partners" at every MI S3 school. The effort included data collection, staff and parent focus groups, and ongoing professional development and technical assistance (TA) for all S3 schools.

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[2] Demographic information excludes data for one participating high school (Ypsilanti) because the school closed in 2012.

[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] There were 24 schools initially participating in the grant, but in Year 2 the number decreased to 22 schools due to one school closing and one consolidation.

[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 that are American Indian/Alaskan is <1 percent, and therefore reported as 0 percent.

[7] 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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- **Strategic Alternatives for Prevention Education (SAPE),** which provided Bully-Free Schools (BFS) surveys, trainings, and hands-on systems change coaching to prevent peer-to-peer aggression to numerous MI S3 schools.
- **Lambert Edwards & Associates (LE&A),** a media consulting firm, which provided TA, guidance, and branding (*think.respect*) to the 22 MI S3 schools and the MDE on media relations, writing press releases, and how to showcase positivity to the community regarding the grant.
- **O'Neill Consulting,** which provided intervention evaluation, resource guides, and conducted data analyses, as well as facilitated webinars and conference presentations to aid staff in evaluating S3 processes and outcomes.

Other key collaborators throughout the grant included:
- **Office of Education Improvement and Innovation (OEII)** at MDE, which promoted student learning and achievement by providing statewide leadership, guidance, and support over a wide range of programs that have a direct impact on teaching and learning, school leadership, and continuous school improvement.
- **Community Dispute Resolution Centers**, funded by the State Court Administrative Office, provided trained personnel to facilitate restorative practice trainings and support at MI S3 schools.
- **Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS),** which administers the School-Based Health Center Program, supported several of the MI S3 schools that had established Centers at their schools. Throughout the course of the S3 grant, a few others received MDHHS grant funds to open Centers in their buildings.

Project Components

Infrastructure Development

To the extent possible, the MI S3 grant built upon existing State student support efforts, while also funding significant operational and infrastructure development. Over the course of the grant period, MI S3 enhanced their infrastructure by creating a comprehensive survey and data system (www.michigan.gov/shs) that combines survey data on youth behavior and school climate with bullying incident data. These data help assess school safety, climate, youth risk behaviors, and engagement.

In addition, MI S3 augmented the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth (MiPHY) survey system through the development of a data toolkit, aimed at increasing the percentage of schools that take the survey. The toolkit also provides tools to assist in interpreting the data. MI S3 also worked with MDE staff in other offices to combine efforts of TA, guidance, and support to schools.

School Climate Measurement

MI 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 MI S3's measurement tools.

Administrative Data

Administrative data on incidents of violence or substance abuse from individual schools were collected in the School Infrastructure Database (SID) at MDE.

<u>Surveys</u>

As part of the Michigan School Health Survey System, which combines survey and incident data to assess school safety and engagement, MI S3 administered the following surveys annually each spring from 2011-2015.[8] All of the surveys were administered online.

- Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth for grades 7, 9 & 11, typically administered in "even" years but which, for this grant, was required annually.
- BFS survey (for students and staff), offered annually in any grades 5–12 (schools could choose specific grades).
- Michigan's School Climate Assessment Instrument (for students, staff, and parents), offered annually in any grades 7–12 (schools could choose specific grades).

<u>School Safety Scores</u>

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 MI S3's School Safety Score.

- *Name of score*: Michigan Profile of Safe and Supportive Schools (MIPS3).
- *Formula:* The score is based on both perception data (from the MiPHY survey) and school records (from the SID) collected from districts participating in the S3 program. No specific formula was provided, but the method for developing the formula can be found on the Michigan S3 Web site.
- *Hyperlink:* MiPHY main page: http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-74638_74639_29233_44681---,00.html. For administration details and baseline scores over time, see:
  - 2013-2014 Michigan Profile for Safe and Supportive Schools
  - 2012-2013 Michigan Profile for Safe and Supportive Schools
  - 2011-2012 Michigan Profile for Safe and Supportive Schools
- *Change over time:* Changes in school safety scores are reported in the Results section with other GPRA data.

Interventions: Frameworks, Programs, Practices, and Strategies

MI S3 grant staff helped their assigned schools use their survey data, collected each spring, and their most recent administrative data, to inform the selection and implementation of a variety of interventions and approaches (see Table 1). These particular interventions were officially approved for use under this grant.[9] However, the specific frameworks, programs, practices, and strategies were tailored to the needs for each school and district during implementation.

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[8] In Year 1 (2010–11), only student survey data were collected, using older versions of the MiPHY components. Some parent data were collected through parent focus groups and some parent surveys, but it was not comprehensive and did not cover all S3 schools. In Year 2, the Michigan School Health Survey System officially opened, and data were collected from all three respondent groups (students, parents, staff).

[9] For more information, see this MI S3 participating school sub-grant guidance document, Appendix E: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Yr_2_Application_Guidance_with_Appendices_387898_7.pdf

Table 1. Intervention frameworks, programs, and practices

Frameworks[10]
• Michigan Model for Health Coordinated School Health (Tier 1) (22) • Bully-Free Schools (Tiers 1 and 2) (4)
Programs
• Creating Safe Schools for Sexual Minority Youth (Tiers 1 and 2) (8) • Eliminating Barriers for Learning (Tiers 1 and 2) (22) • Michigan Model for Health® Curriculum[1] (Tier 1) (22)
Practices
• Restorative Justice practices (Tiers 1, 2, and 3) (11)

[1] This program 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, MI S3 implemented a number of strategies to engage different groups affected by school climate.

- *District and school leadership* was engaged through two administrative dinners that were offered during the biannual "Create the Change" conferences (*see* the Training section) in 2012. These were opportunities for the district/school administrators to network, hear from school climate experts, and share their experiences. Many of them then stayed to participate in the conference sessions the next day. Additionally, several of them continued to consistently attend the conferences in the following years.
- *Staff* wellness activities were provided as a component of the Coordinated School Health framework. These activities were provided during after school events. Additionally MI S3 held a staff self-care session at one of their biannual conferences. Special staff recognition events were also held.
- *Student voice* was empowered during various breakout sessions at the bi-annual "Create the Change" S3 conferences. Additionally, each year, schools volunteered to participate in a summer two-day Student Engagement Institute. At this event, schools were trained on how to establish youth advisory councils in their buildings. Three cohorts participated in these trainings over three summers, then received ongoing on-site coaching and TA. This intervention resulted in many schools having a dedicated core group of students who will sustain the MI S3 efforts past the life of the grant.
- *Family and community partnerships* were promoted through the distribution of school newsletters, public relations materials, and parent postcards. Also, as part of their work with a parent engagement consultant, nine of the MI S3 schools conducted parent focus groups and six conducted staff focus groups. Information gathered from those sessions was used to plan more responsive approaches to engaging families.

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[10] Some MIS3 schools had Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) already in place or launched PBIS during the course of the grant, but PBIS was not officially supported by the grant.

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Special Feature
Parent Postcards

MI S3 schools developed special "parent postcards" to build parent-school relationships, especially for parents of students struggling academically. Traditionally, contacts home are made to report poor performance and/or behavior. However, **these postcards were used to share positive news, invite parents to conferences, or share improvements**

Positive postcards sent home were often addressed and written by the student, and they served as a way to build authentic partnerships and re-frame negative attitudes about lack of parent involvement.

Schools were creative in their use of the postcards. Some sent them by mail, some had students hand-deliver them, and some offered an incentive to return it signed by a parent. Staff shared the success of the postcards with their peers, which motivated others to use them as well.

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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

MI S3 held the following trainings for a range of audiences including staff, teachers, administrators, students, and parents/caregivers:

1. Monthly Webinars for the 22 MI S3 funded building liaisons who were school representatives, on topics such as data analysis, survey implementation, goal setting, evaluation, and program guide toolkits.
2. Semiannual "Create the Change" S3 Conference
   - Grant Orientation Conference: June 2011. Topics included a grant overview, coaches and MDE State staff coordinator roles, data-driven decision making, coordinated school health, and school action planning.
   - Create the Change I: October 2011. Topics included linking coordinated school health and school improvement, team building (True Colors®), eliminating barriers to school climate, understanding parent perspectives, S3 evaluation, and youth engagement.
   - Create the Change II: May 2012. Topics included systems thinking and change, the Michigan Model for Health®, sexual minority youth, bullying, restorative justice, action planning and evaluation, parent engagement, and implementation practices.

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- Create the Change III: October 2012. Topics included health equity and social justice, staff self-care strategies, and teaming.
- Create the Change IV: May 2013. Topics included school-focused customer service, youth engagement, exclusionary discipline, parent engagement, student achievement, and the power of music.
- Create the Change V: October 2013. Topics included sustainability, the S3 legacy, mental health, family and community engagement, coordinating efforts to promote student success, and alternatives to exclusionary discipline.
- Going Pro: May 2014. Topics included sustainability, media relations, youth engagement incorporating a student panel, and highlights from Fitzgerald high school's S3 work.
- Crucial Conversations: October 2014. This two-day training provided attendees with the knowledge and skills around conducting crucial conversations in their buildings.
- Restorative Justice (RJ) Trainings: August 2014 (two days) and December 2014 (one-day booster). These trainings helped the 11 participating schools build capacity to sustain their RJ practices.

3. Student Engagement in School Reform, a two-day youth engagement institute that was co-hosted by MI S3 and the Neutral Zone, a community teen center in Ann Arbor, Michigan, during the summer of years 2012, 2013, 2014. Neutral Zone advisors and youth worked with 18 MI S3 high school teams of students and staff to conduct team-building exercises and small-group work. The goals were to (1) explore the role of students in school reform, (2) learn strategies that support student engagement, and (3) establish a youth advisory council at each school and a plan to initiate a participatory research project back at their home school districts.

4. Student Engagement Institute each summer, hosted by Neutral Zone (see the Key Partners section), a follow-up Youth Summit each winter, and on-site coaching visits throughout the school year(s).

5. Coaches' trainings: Six regional coaches participated in trainings on coordinated school health, eliminating barriers for learning (school mental health), Michigan Model for Health®, sexual minority youth, BFS, RJ, system change simulation, Coaching 101 from Michigan State University, parent and youth engagement, Crucial Conversations, and other professional development opportunities.

6. Building community and stakeholder buy-in: A media consulting firm, Lambert Edwards and Associates, provided two trainings per year (as well as consulting as needed) to individual MI S3 schools on how to build support for their efforts and also how to talk about their school safety score. The firm also helped create individualized school communications plans and launch "*think.respect*" campaigns.

7. Parent engagement trainings: Numerous events were offered on this topic.
- Initial mandatory staff training.
- A round-robin session titled, *The Hard Work and Heart Work of Family & Community Engagement.*
- Seven optional professional development opportunities (which 77 percent of the schools took advantage of).[11]
- Conferences and workshops offered for parents, including the **Talk Early & Talk Often Parent Connection Conference** (statewide) offered in March 2013 and April 2015, as well as individual workshops at the school sites. These offerings benefited parents and modeled for schools effective ways to

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[11] For more information, see the Training section: Create the Change V (October 21–22, 2013).

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engage these important stakeholders. There was 23 percent participation from S3 schools for these parent offerings.

8. Targeted efforts to promote team building among MI S3 Grant Leadership and school staff:
   - *The Change Game*, the foundation of the "Change Leadership Series," *Making Change Happen,* also known as the Change Game, is an engaging learning experience that concretely leads to understanding about the challenges and considerations for enacting change in schools and organizations.
   - *True Colors training*, a research-based approach to understanding human behavior and motivation. True Colors uses a metaphor of colors (green, gold, blue, and orange) to identify four distinct perspectives and personalities as an exercise in recognizing and appreciating diversity as well as acknowledging individual strengths. The training identified team members' "colors" and discussed how those perspectives influence team interactions and dynamics.
   - *Crucial Conversations training*, and coaches' on-site participation in team-building activities (see example October 2012 Create the Change III conference program journal and planning guide).

Coaching and Technical Assistance Model

Due to the vast geographic region served by the MI S3 grant, a regional network of service providers was created in order to support effective training and TA. The training structure consisted of six regional coaches, who each were responsible for three or four MI S3 buildings. MDE and other project staff provided training to those six coaches who, in turn, provided TA to building liaisons at participating schools within their geographic area. Regional coaches aided schools in interpreting school climate and incident data to select programs that best addressed their specific needs.

Additionally each school, with the guidance of their building liaison, built Coordinated School Health (CSH) teams. The CSH teams served as the grant leadership team, responsible for reviewing data and overseeing local intervention selection. The CSH teams included the building liaison, an administrator, teacher(s), student representative, parent(s), and community members. Each team was required to link with the building's school improvement team in an effort to streamline meetings and collaborate on efforts to improve school climate and academics. In many cases, those two teams became a single team. Additionally, schools were required to include a school climate goal on their school improvement plans.

Product Development and Dissemination

To support training, TA, and program implementation, S3 grantees developed many unique products. These include 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, grantee 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 MI S3 grant include:
   - The "*think.respect*" branding message, intended to serve as the outward face of the MI S3 grant. Focused on improving both school safety and student engagement, this messaging package included a social media plan focused on building a Twitter network, a number of marketing materials templates, as well as a full marketing toolkit.

- A [Meaningful Student Involvement](#) summary explaining MI S3's view of student engagement as an intervention approach. MI S3's efforts in this area were also captured in this [Community Spotlight](#), which describes the August 2012 two-day institute for students (see the Training section).
- [A Silent Crisis: Creating Safe Schools for Sexual Minority Youth](#), a resource guide about issues related to safe schools for sexual minority youth, aimed at teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, and other professionals.
- A suite of webinars about grant activities, ranging from yearly reporting requirements, to survey system training, to how to make sense of data, to an orientation to the *think.respect* branding effort.
- A large collection of fliers, frequently asked questions lists, and parent-night resources intended to boost family engagement. This collection includes both staff- and parent-centered resources.
- The [Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion Online Toolkit,](#) which includes modules and video vignettes delineating the RJ process and implementation tips.
- A [lessons learned report](#), which distilled four main themes from the MI S3 grant learning experience: (1) embracing change (even in the face of resistance); (2) be a bold leader (find your champions); (3) collect and use data (for systems change turnaround); and (4) professional development is worth the investment (including both teaching and nonteaching staff).
- The [MI S3 Final Report,](#) which provides the overview of the grant, grant staff, efforts overview and outcomes, grant funded schools and final data.
- A MI S3 [Web site](#) detailing the MI S3 grant activities.

Results

Monitoring and evaluation activities examined all the data that had been collected in order to determine how MI S3's efforts impacted 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 Accountability 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)
- 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)[12]

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[12] 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.

GPRA Performance Summary

At the end of the grant period, the 22 participating schools that had fully implemented[13] their selected interventions reported the following successes (see also Figure 1):

- Fifty-five percent reported reductions in student-reported alcohol use;
- Sixty-four percent reported a reduction in harassment or bullying on school property;
- Seventy-three percent improved their MIPS3 school safety score; and
- Fifty-five percent reported a reduction in student suspensions for violence without injury.

Figure 1. Michigan GPRA results baseline (2010–11) to final year (2014–15)
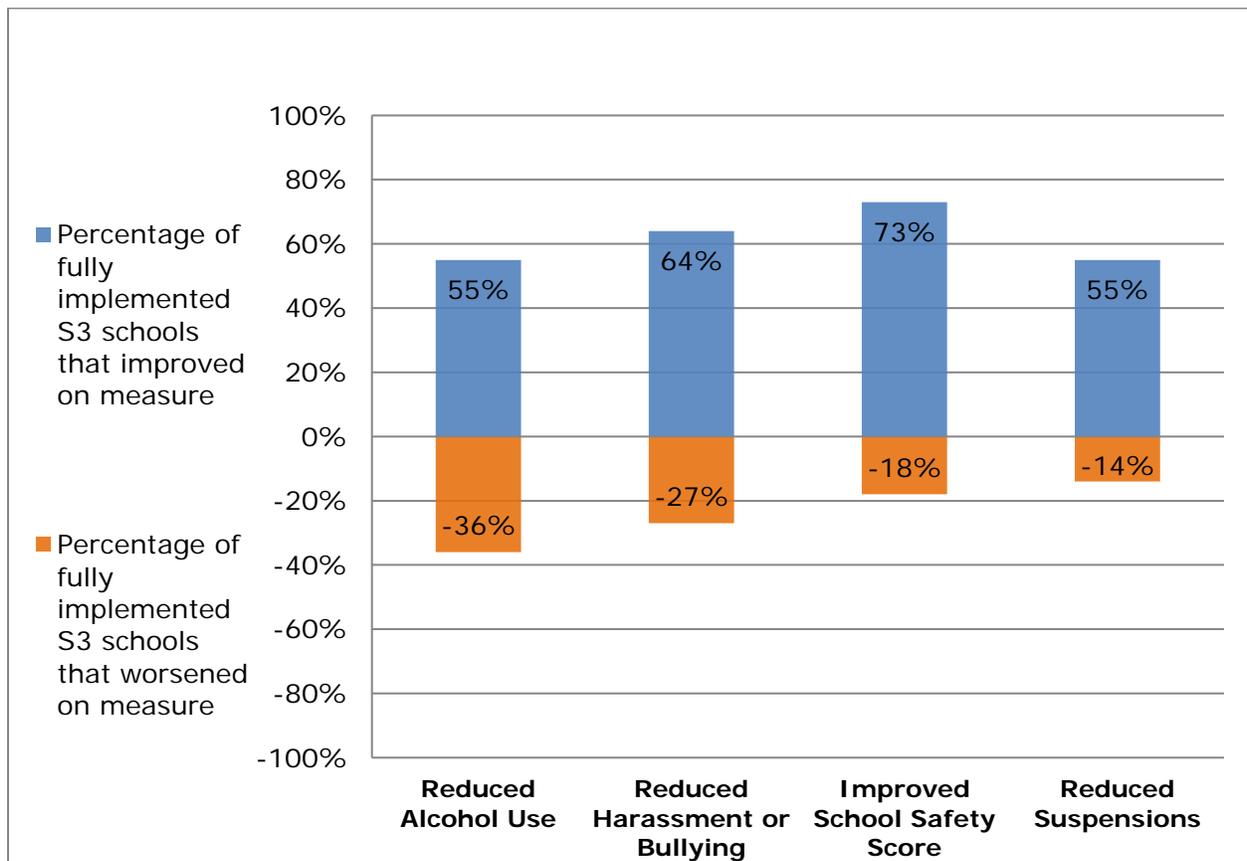
Note: Detail may not sum to 100 percent due to schools that experienced no statistically significant change or which had missing data.

MI S3 reported that decreases or worsening on GPRA indicators was likely attributable to (1) relatively high turnover among administrators, staff, and S3-funded personnel, and (2) relatively low buy-in from district and/or school leadership and staff, including those who were employed throughout the S3 grant period. No further detail was provided.

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[13] 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.

Additional Analyses

MI S3 also conducted a comprehensive evaluation of project-level objectives and milestones, including the link between school climate outcomes and four-year graduation rates.

Evaluators: Jim O'Neill, PhD

Analysis approach: Project analyses included both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative information on reactions to trainings and TA, fidelity of program implementation, and the State-regional-local collaboration process were coded for themes using content analysis. Quantitative data from surveys, incident data, and school safety scores were analyzed and intervention-level results were presented by and across programs as a yearly report. Annual reports also included GPRA measures and other long-term indicators (detail not provided). In addition, analysis was conducted to examine the connection between S3 outcomes (e.g., school safety scores) and academic outcomes (e.g., four-year graduation rates).

Summary of findings: An analysis of the connection between S3 outcomes and graduation rates revealed the following statistically significant findings:

- S3 schools with positive change in school safety scores or reductions in violent incidents (VI) had significantly higher graduation rates (18 percent and 15 percent, respectively) than S3 schools with negative or no change in school safety scores or VI (3 percent and 5 percent, respectively).
- S3 schools that utilized alternatives to suspension (e.g., restorative justice; $n = 11$) had significantly higher four-year graduation rates than non-S3 schools ($n = 14$). Additionally, through implementing alternatives to suspension, school staff and administrators were able to save over 23,340 hours—the equivalent of over 10 years—of instructional time.

Special Feature
Restorative Justice Saves Instructional Time

Eleven of the 22 MI S3 schools implemented Restorative Justice (RJ) practices in their buildings. RJ is a cooperative practice that brings the offender and the offended together after an incident to repair the harm. Focusing on mediation and agreement rather than punishment, RJ promotes respect, responsibility, and relationship building and repair. Most importantly, RJ serves as an alternative to zero-tolerance policies and aims to keep kids in school. In short, reduced suspensions leads to increased contact and instructional time.

According to MDE, across the 11 MI S3 schools practicing RJ, they found the schools **saved 23,340 instructional hours (or 3,591 days) in one school year (2013–14) due to RJ practices**. This figure was calculated by counting each successful RJ interaction as an avoided suspension of "X" days, depending on the seriousness of the infraction, and multiplying by 6.5 hours (the average hours in a typical school day).

Because of the positive impact this practice has had on schools and students, training modules were developed and will be available online for all schools.

Reports about analyses: See the Safe and Supportive Schools Grant Outcome Report for information about analyses.

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Lessons Learned

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

- MI S3 recognized the importance and benefit of including students in decision making. Therefore, **every school was required to incorporate student voice in their S3 efforts.** Of the 22 schools selected to work with Neutral Zone, 19 were able to receive hands-on training and TA in incorporating student voice. In some schools, student voice was integrated into school operations, for example student representation on the school board or student review of the Student Handbook.
- At the launch of the grant MI S3 realized that schools lacked the knowledge and skills to bring school and community people and resources together to work as a team. Through the bi-annual MI S3 conference and other trainings, **MI S3 was able to teach school staff how to productively work in teams.** See the Training, Coaching, and Technical Assistance section for more information about teambuilding training.
- To manage possible scrutiny as a result of releasing school safety score reports, MDE enlisted the support of a **media consulting** firm Lambert Edwards and Associates to **assist S3 schools in promoting their positive efforts**.
- In addition, school staff and building liaisons **improved communication with parents and community members** by generating press releases (e.g., see Example 1 with back to school tips for parents and Example 2 reporting grant outcomes), newsletters, and articles highlighting the progress being made at their schools.
- During the initial phases of the grant, many schools did not trust MDE. They viewed the coaches as "school improvement monitors" and didn't see any incentive for cooperation or collaboration. However, over the course of the grant, through on-site visits, meetings, trainings, and conferences, the coaches and MDE staff were able to **build trust and a positive rapport with the school administration and staff** and secure their active participation in grant activities.
- During the grant period, one S3 school closed due to budget deficits and low enrollment. MI S3 assigned that school's building liaison to be the **transition specialist** who helped students from the closing school transition into their new schools. This specialist helped address needs related to academic record keeping and transfers, special education services, cultural differences, and behavior problems. After one year of working with the transition specialist, all of the senior students from the closed school who transferred to new schools graduated.

These lessons, and more, were formally captured in the aforementioned MI S3 lessons learned report as well as in a brief summary of the grant proceedings.

Sustainability and Scaling Up

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

- In the summer of 2015, the new Michigan State superintendent invited anyone at MDE to meet with him for five minutes to share thoughts on what Michigan/MDE needed to do to become "a top 10 [school] nationally." S3DS leadership staff scheduled for back-to-back five-minute meetings so they could have 10 minutes total together and presented a two-page handout. The superintendent then invited them to present to the State Board of Education on the outcomes of the grant.
- The MDE will maintain the free, online comprehensive school climate measurement system beyond the life of the grant. This system includes the MiPHY survey, the BFS,

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and the Michigan School Climate Assessment Instrument surveys. The School Health Survey system is made available to all Michigan schools (public and private), allowing them to benefit from a sophisticated system that provides data on measures of school climate or youth risk behavior areas that impact a school's conditions for learning.

- Over the life of the grant, participating MI S3 schools received a great deal of consistent attention, training, and focus on evaluation. Many schools made great strides in their ability to correctly use, interpret, and communicate their school climate data. MI S3 schools are now using this new skill to write their own grants, and they were able to leverage outside grants and donations from local businesses and foundations. For example, schools secured free services and products such as eye glasses from Lens Crafters, donated prom dresses from local businesses, tablets for student learning, and food donations for students and their families. Notably, multiple schools received *Action for Healthy Kids* grants and were recognized with the Michigan School Wellness award (two S3 schools received the award two years in a row). One school received $10,000 from Yoplait (for two years in a row) that provided exercise and gym equipment along with yogurt and other healthy snacks.
- Every S3 school included a school climate goal on their school improvement plan.
- Schools established relationships with numerous community partners, who continue to participate in their Coordinated School Health team. Having these community agencies involved and included at the table will continue to bring resources to the buildings/districts.
- MDE received the Safe Schools Healthy Students, Project Aware, and School Climate Transformation grants awarded in fall 2014, and several of the S3 schools were included as recipients of these new grant funds.
- Six of the Building Liaisons that were hired with grant funds to support this work were offered extended positions in their buildings after the grant ends.
- New online toolkits (as previously mentioned) and Web site resources were made available for not only the S3 schools but also for all Michigan schools.
- According to MI S3 leadership, by far, the best "insurance" toward the continuation of this work was MI S3's collaboration with the Office of Education Improvement and Innovation (OEII). Due to the alignment of objectives focused on improving school safety and student achievement, these formerly separate MDE operational divisions forged a relationship to work together to make culture and climate a priority. This kind of work cannot be "undone"—the positive results spoke for themselves, and the relationships and priorities set around school climate are now part of the MDE organizational culture.

Contact Information

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

Grant holder: Michigan Department of Education (MDE)
Web site: http://www.michigan.gov/schoolclimate
Project director, Years 1–4 (retired): Bob Higgins
Project director, Year 5: Kim Kovalchick, kovalchickk@michigan.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 Michigan Participating Districts and Schools

Participating Districts	Participating Schools
1. Benton Harbor Area Schools	1. Benton Harbor High School
2. Bloomingdale Public School District	2. Bloomingdale High School
3. Cassopolis Public Schools	3. Ross Beatty High School
4. Clintondale Community Schools	4. Clintondale High School
5. Detroit Community Schools	5. Mumford High School 6. Pershing High School 7. Southeastern High School
6. Harper Woods School District	8. Harper Woods High School
7. Lansing Public School District	9. Eastern High School
8. Marion Public Schools	10. Marion High School
9. Mt. Morris Consolidated Schools	11. E.A. Johnson Memorial High School 12. Beecher Middle/High School[+]
10. New Haven Community Schools	13. New Haven High School
11. Pontiac Academy for Excellence	14. Pontiac Academy for Excellence - Middle/High School
12. River Rouge School District	15. River Rouge Middle College High School Academy
13. Saginaw City School District	16. Sagniaw High School 17. Robichaud Senior High School[+]
14. Taylor School District	18. Truman High School
15. Warren School District	19. Fitzgerald Senior High School[+]
16. Wyoming School District	20. Lee Middle/High School[+]
17. Ypsilanti School District	21. Ypsilanti High School[^] 22. Ypsilanti New Tech High School

[+]*These schools have likely been redistricted since the S3 grant concluded. Current districts do not match participating districts.*

[^]*This school has changed names or merged with another school since the S3 grant concluded.*

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