

# Safe and Supportive Schools (S3)

## GRANT DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

### S3 Grantee Profile | West Virginia Department of Education

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments





## Highlights

The primary school climate improvement goal of West Virginia’s four-year Safe and Supportive Schools (WV S3) grant<sup>1</sup> was to reduce high rates of drug- and violence-related behavior in 22 high schools across 18 school districts. From baseline to final year, 82 percent of schools with fully implemented interventions and sufficient data reported a decrease in student alcohol use; 50 percent reported a decrease in harassment or bullying on school property; 73 percent reported improved school safety scores; and 68 percent reported a reduction in the number of suspensions due to violence without serious injury.

### *How Did They Do It?*

West Virginia S3 worked with participating schools and districts to use annual school climate survey data, as well as discipline, incident, and other administrative data, to choose and implement interventions tailored to those districts’ and schools’ specific populations and needs. West Virginia S3 used the WV Model for Positive School Climate (WVMPSC) as the framework for WV S3 grant activities. These activities made a positive impact on both school climate and academic outcomes. Notably, the WV S3 work triggered restructuring and revision of State policy regarding student behavioral expectations as well as the responsibilities of schools in creating safe and supportive learning environments. On July 1, 2012, [Policy 4373](#)—Expected Behavior in Safe and Supportive Schools was enacted as a direct result of the WV S3 initiative (see the Product Development and Dissemination section).

## School Participation

Participating schools were identified during the Federal grant application process. They consisted of the 23 lowest performing high schools cited by the West Virginia Office of Education Performance Audits (OEPA) for not meeting No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability standards.<sup>2</sup> Together these schools met Federal award requirements that the grant serve at least 20 percent of State enrollment.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.”

<sup>2</sup> West Virginia started with 23 schools, but one school (Mt. Hope) closed and merged with another S3 school (Oak Hill) during the grant period.



## WV S3 Grant Year 4 Demographics (School Year 2013–14)

This section provides descriptive information about participating LEAs<sup>3</sup> and schools and the demographics of the students they served. See also Appendix A for a list of WV S3 participating districts and schools.

**Number of districts served:** 18

**Number of schools served:** 22

- 2 PK–12 schools
- 3 middle/high schools (1 grades 5–12; 1 grades 6–12; 1 grades 7–12)
- 17 high schools

**School size:** Range: 189 to 1,243 students; average: 586 students

**Total number of students served by WV S3 schools:** 12,887

### Participating schools' student demographics

#### *Race and ethnicity:*<sup>4</sup>

- 95 percent White
- 4 percent Black
- 0 percent Hispanic<sup>5</sup>
- 0 percent Asian/Pacific Islander
- 0 percent American Indian/Alaskan
- 1 percent two or more races

#### *Other student demographics:*

- 29 percent free- and reduced-price-lunch eligible
- 15 percent with individualized education programs (IEPs)<sup>6</sup>

**Source:** NCES Common Core of Data (CCD)

(<http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/index.asp>)

## Key Partners

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

- **West Virginia Department of Education Office of School Improvement**, which collaborated with WV S3 to coordinate a strategic approach to improving the school climate and culture of schools.
- **Local law enforcement and courts**, which performed activities such as enforcement of school attendance.
- **Mental health agencies**, which assisted in efforts to expand school mental health services to students and families.
- **Regional school wellness specialists (RSWSs) in each of the eight regional education service agencies (RESAs)**, who focused on health and wellness issues, overlapping with school climate specialists' work. Additionally, RSWSs joined school team meetings to assist with coordinated school health and assisted in expanding the scope of surveys to other districts and schools in the State.

<sup>3</sup> 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*).

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> The percentages of Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan students are below 1 percent and are therefore rounded to 0 percent.

<sup>6</sup> The percentage of students with IEPs is based on S3 district-level statistics, as this detail was not available at the school level.



## 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, WV S3 enhanced its infrastructure by:

- Creating the Discipline Management System to track and analyze discipline and incident data in schools across the State.<sup>7</sup> This system moved WV reporting practices from student-based reporting to an incident-based reporting model.
- Developing a process to expand the school climate surveys to all schools for their participation on a voluntary basis. More than 60 percent of schools in West Virginia participated in the surveys.
- Developing dashboards for school climate survey results in [ZoomWV](#), West Virginia's single source for accurate, high-quality education information pertaining to students in prekindergarten through grade 12. This was part of a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) effort.

### School Climate Measurement

West Virginia S3 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 also were used to develop school safety scores (i.e., the WV School Climate Index [SCI]) to monitor change over time. The following describes WV S3's measurement tools.

#### Administrative Data

Administrative data on incidents and disciplinary actions was furnished through the West Virginia [Discipline Management System](#). This system was created during the 2012–13 school year, when all schools began using it. It allowed schools, counties, and the State to accurately track and examine discipline data. West Virginia S3 schools used this system to identify at-risk students, pinpoint when and where challenging behavior was likely to occur, measure responses to interventions, and improve communication with parents.

#### Surveys

West Virginia S3 administered the following surveys annually, each spring, from 2011 to 2014.

- [West Virginia School Climate Survey](#) (staff, students, and parents). This survey was designed as a no-cost option to help schools fulfill the requirement to obtain schoolwide input on needed climate/culture improvements.<sup>8</sup>
- [Health Education Assessment Project](#) (HEAP) (students). The HEAP measures students' knowledge in the areas of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs; injury prevention; nutrition; physical activity; and growth and development. Of note, WVDE mandates that all WV schools administer the HEAP annually. While HEAP data was not incorporated into the WV School Climate Index, results are available through the WV Education Information System for use by schools.

Surveys were available online for both student and staff respondents, and available in print and online for parents/guardians.

<sup>7</sup> More details on the WV Discipline Management System can be found in the "Administrative Data" section.

<sup>8</sup> Report about survey validation: Whisman, S. A. (2011). [The West Virginia School Climate Index: A Measure of School Engagement, Safety, and Environment](#). Charleston, WV: Author, Division of Curriculum and Instructional Services, Office of Research.



### 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 learning 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 WV S3’s school safety score.

- *Name of score:* West Virginia School Climate Index (SCI)
- *Formula:* Based on 20 indicators, drawing from the WV student and staff school climate survey data and selected incident and discipline data reported in the West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS). The index used a 9-point scale,<sup>9</sup> with 9 representing the most positive or desirable school climate conditions. Scores were interpreted as *above average* (scores from 7 to 9), *average* (scores from 4 to 6), or *below average* (scores from 1 to 3) relative to how each school compared to all schools combined.
- *Hyperlink:*
  - Each school was provided annually with a one-page general summary of its school climate indicator score, which was to be posted on its respective district or school Web site. A sample report is available in Whisman (2011).
  - State-level reports:
    - [The West Virginia School Climate Index: A Measure of School Engagement, Safety, and Environment](#) (Whisman, 2011); and
    - [The West Virginia School Climate Index: Validity and Associations With Academic Outcome Measures](#) (Whisman, 2012).
- *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 at the local level through a comprehensive planning process. West Virginia S3 used 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). The specific frameworks, programs, practices, and strategies were selected based on data and needs in all the districts.

**Table 1. Intervention frameworks, programs, and practices**

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|--|
| <b>Frameworks</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) (22)</li> <li>• <a href="#">WV Model for Positive School Climate</a> (WVMPSC) (22)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Programs</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavior Coach (1)</li> <li>• Capturing Kids’ Hearts* (1)</li> <li>• Character Education (3)</li> <li>• LINKS Program (2)</li> <li>• ILEAD (student leadership) (1)</li> <li>• Rachel’s Challenge/Friends of Rachel (7)</li> <li>• Random Acts of Kindness Project (4)</li> <li>• Respect and Protect (5)</li> <li>• Time to Teach (9)</li> </ul> |

<sup>9</sup> A stanine scale was used. Stanine is a method of scaling test scores on a 9-point standard scale with an average (“mean”) of 5 and a standard deviation of 2.



### Practices

- Afterschool detention/detention hall (5)
- Anti-bullying (5)
- Freshman orientation or transition supports (7)
- Graduation coach (4)
- Mentoring program (2)
- In-school suspension program (8)
- Services and supports by community providers (10)

Note: \* indicates a program that is classified as an evidence-based program (EBP), meaning that 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 specific frameworks and programs, WV S3 implemented a number of strategies to engage different groups affected by school climate.

- **State, district, and school leadership** was initially engaged through a WV Federal Program Directors' spring conference presentation: [Safe and Supportive Schools—Improving Conditions for Learning](#) on March 9, 2011. Ongoing engagement of leadership was supported through meetings between program staff, school climate specialists, and the WV [Office of Research](#).
- **Staff** were involved through regular trainings, webinars, and conferences. Also, **student assistance teams (SATs)** worked with students, teaching staff, leadership, and families to ensure that students' learning and behavioral needs were being met through any necessary interventions or accommodations. SATs also worked to ensure that newly hired staff were fully trained in the S3 model and implementation of the initiative.
- **Student voice** was empowered by holding student leadership development workshops, increasing the number and type of student clubs, and introducing peer mentoring programs. Additionally, students attended annual school climate conferences, where they received training on school climate and safety issues.

### Training, Coaching, and Technical Assistance

Professional development supports such as training, coaching, and technical assistance 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 interventions 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, and 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

West Virginia S3 held the following trainings for staff:

1. Annual school climate conferences for staff and students with training on school climate and safety issues. Conferences aimed to help WV S3 schools learn new strategies and share ideas with other schools. During the conferences, school leadership teams met to analyze school climate data and attend workshops on topics including community resources, expanded school mental health, judicial schools



attendance interventions, character education, effective team meetings, and bullying prevention.

2. [Fall 2013 School Leadership Team Conference](#), which focused on teams, structures, processes, and roles; instructional practices; school organizational culture; climate and discipline; early warning systems; data collection; and leadership.
3. Regular webinars to share school climate survey results among local education agency (district) personnel.

### Coaching and Technical Assistance Model

Six school climate specialists (SCSs) were trained to guide district teams and leaders through components of the WV Model for Positive School Climate. Each SCS served from one to eight schools, providing individualized technical assistance based on each school's needs. Technical assistance (TA) topics included: S3 model components; awareness; building buy-in; and using data to detect, identify, and document inappropriate behavior. Additionally, WV S3 held bimonthly S3 school team meetings coordinated by school climate specialists.

### Product Development and Dissemination

To support training, TA, 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 WV S3 grant include:

Presentations/webinars:

- [West Virginia School Climate Survey—A Critical Component of Implementing](#) (March 7, 2012)
- [Safe and Supportive Schools Teams Slideshow](#) (2012)

Policy guidance:

- [Policy 4373—Expected Behavior in Safe and Supportive Schools](#) is a WVDE policy that was enacted as a direct result of the WV S3 initiative. The new policy combined five policies that addressed different aspects of student behavior and/or consequences of student behavior. The five policies covered: harassment/bullying; alternative education for disruptive students; racial, sexual, religious/ethnic harassment and violence; substance abuse and tobacco control; and student rights and responsibilities. The initially separate policies left school employees, parents, and students with a fragmented understanding of what was expected regarding student behavior and the school system's role in creating safe and supportive learning environments. The new policy is completely comprehensive and also includes two additional requirements: schools must now (1) coordinate their efforts across all content areas; and (2) create more in-school options to address inappropriate behavior, limiting the use of out-of-school suspension. Policy 4373 went into effect beginning July 1, 2012. A brief summary of the policy can be found here: [http://wv.aft.org/files/policy\\_4373.pdf](http://wv.aft.org/files/policy_4373.pdf). For additional details and supplemental resources, see: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/healthyschools/ElectronicManual4373New.html>

WV S3 Web site:



- <https://wvde.state.wv.us/healthyschools/>

## Results

Monitoring and evaluation activities examined all the data that had been collected in order to determine how WV 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. West Virginia 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. Safe and Supportive Schools grantees reported annually on four GPRA measures. The 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:

- Alcohol use in the past 30 days (GPRA measures a and b); and
- 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).<sup>10</sup>

### GPRA Performance Summary

Participating schools that had fully implemented<sup>11</sup> their selected interventions and had sufficient data ( $n = 21$  of 22) reported the following successes (see also Figure 1):

- Eighty-two percent reported reductions in student-reported alcohol use;
- Fifty percent reported a reduction in harassment or bullying on school property;
- Seventy percent improved their West Virginia SCI school safety score; and
- Sixty-eight percent reported a reduction in student suspensions for violence without injury.

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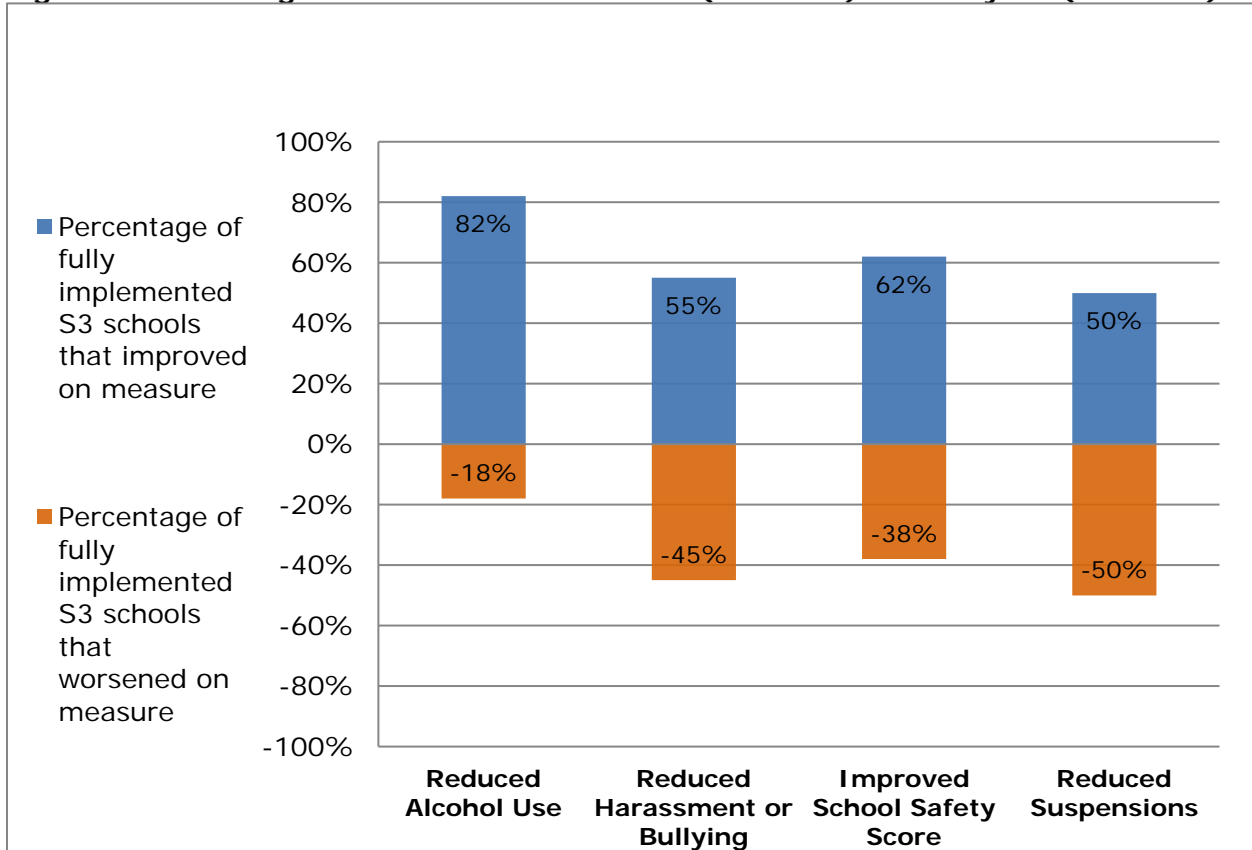
<sup>10</sup> Readers should note that suspension data, in particular, may be affected by changes in State policies during the course of the S3 grant period that may be unrelated to S3 programming.

<sup>11</sup> 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: West Virginia GPRA results baseline (2010–11) to final year (2013–14)<sup>12</sup>



Note: One school failed to have sufficient data in 2011 to calculate the safety score; when comparing later years to the 2011 baseline, the number of schools remained 21. Detail may not sum to 100 percent due to schools that experienced no statistically significant change or had missing data.

West Virginia S3 reported that decreases or worsening on GPRA indicators was likely attributable to a misalignment between specific requirements of the GPRA measures and the WV S3 needs assessment from the outset of the grant, which drove WV S3 leadership to focus on priorities other than GPRA improvements. Thus, WV experienced mixed results on the required GPRA measures. West Virginia S3 evaluators noted that the modest reduction in harassment or bullying on school property and the substantial reduction in suspensions due to violence without injury might be related to changes in the reporting requirements in the revised [Policy 4373](#).

<sup>12</sup> Calculation of SY 2013–14 safety scores was delayed due to extended interruptions in school schedules and attendance due to chemical spill contamination and extended weather interruptions. Reporting activities were shifted to the no-cost extension year.



## Additional Analyses

*Evaluators:* West Virginia Department of Education Office of Research (Andy Whisman)

In addition to GPRA analyses, WV S3 prepared an implementation evaluation report comparing participating schools for 2010–11 and 2011–12 on the following two questions: (1) *To what extent do participating schools implement their school climate improvement efforts with fidelity relative to the WV Model for Positive School Climate (WVMPSC)?* and (2) *Is there alignment between student and staff perceptions of changes in school climate?* This analysis continued in subsequent years of the grant.

*Reports:* [WV S3 Implementation Evaluation Report Executive Summary \(June 2013\)](#); see also [one-page report](#)

### Fidelity of Implementation

*Analysis approach:* West Virginia S3's evaluation of implementation fidelity explored the extent to which participating schools implemented the WV S3 program relative to a set of core activities for each of the five strategic steps in the WV Model for Positive School Climate: (a) organizing, (b) assessment, (c) building support, (d) planning and implementation, and (e) monitoring and evaluation. To assess implementation fidelity, 4-point rubrics were used for each core activity, with scales that ranged from *missing fidelity* to *strong fidelity*. These rubrics provided specific descriptors for each fidelity level associated with each core activity, and additional response options of *too early to tell* and *don't know* were also included. The fidelity assessments were completed for each school toward the end of each academic year. Both the school climate specialists (SCSs), who provided technical assistance and support to participating schools, and school-based leadership teams in each S3 intervention school (S3 teams) completed the assessment, and SCSs submitted a single consensus rubric for each school.

*Summary of findings:* West Virginia S3 school leadership teams rated themselves as implementing the strategic steps in the WVMPSC with fairly high levels of fidelity. Therefore, they were left with little room for improvement over the remainder of the project. The evaluation team reflected that it was beneficial for teams to review all core activities annually and to consider their progress relative to the full range of levels in the fidelity rubric. However, as progress was self-reported, leadership teams may have overestimated their progress in 2011, creating a ceiling effect that minimized the level of improvement that could be reported in the later years of the project.

Conversely, SCSs tended to be more conservative in their assessments of schools' implementation fidelity during the early years of the project, pointing to several areas in which there existed room for improvement. This difference in ratings was attributed to the fact that SCSs had a broader frame of reference across schools.

Specifically, the two groups differed—with S3 teams providing higher ratings—on the following core activities in both years:

- Informing parents and community partners about the S3 initiative and securing their commitment;
- Building understanding of S3 behavioral norms among school staff;
- Defining schoolwide procedural expectations for addressing student behavior; and
- Use of decision-support data systems (including assessment results to identify factors contributing to school climate problems, set priorities or plan activities, and select appropriate interventions).



Despite these differences, improvements were made across most core activities, moving from being altogether missing or implemented with weak fidelity in 2011 to being implemented with moderate fidelity in 2012.

### Student and Staff Perceptions of Changes in School Climate

*Analysis approach:* In spring 2012, WV S3 added a multipart question to the WV School Climate Surveys for students and staff, asking respondents to indicate whether the series of items corresponding to the 20 indicators from the school climate index had changed compared to the previous year.

*Findings:* Results indicated that there was a fairly wide gulf between students and staff in their perceptions of school climate improvements. Students were more likely to report that conditions had stayed about the same compared to the previous year, whereas staff were more likely to report that conditions had gotten better. The discrepancy between student and staff perceptions was persistent in later years. First detected in 2012, when these items were added to the school climate surveys, the findings remained essentially unchanged throughout the remainder of the project. Although evaluators did not explore what factors might have driven these differences, they highlighted the importance of doing so in future work in order to further enhance schools' efforts in school climate improvement.

Four recommendations were reported. West Virginia S3 schools were advised to:

1. Direct attention to establishing or refining behavioral expectations with the assistance of the SCSs;
2. Consider expanding their approaches for communicating and teaching behaviors that align with their expectations;
3. Select, implement, and adjust programmatic interventions based on a thorough assessment of factors contributing to school climate problems; and
4. Identify and leverage factors driving the gap between students' and staffs' perceptions of school climate improvement.

In addition, in a separate report (also for school years 2010 and 2011), WV S3 asked, *To what extent does school climate influence academic outcomes?*

*Report:* [The West Virginia School Climate Index: Validity and Associations with Academic Outcome Measures](#) (Whisman, 2012)

### School Climate Improvement and Academic Outcomes

*Analysis approach:* The WV research team compared overall school climate index scores for S3 schools for two school years (2010 and 2011) relative to academic outcomes at the school level. The index was tested based on the assumptions that a valid measure should (a) differentiate between favorable and unfavorable climate conditions and, based on other research, (b) be correlated with and predictive of academic outcomes. Complete data with which to address the three school climate evaluation areas that follow were available for 21 (out of 22) S3 intervention schools and 17 comparison schools (which had similar demographics but did not receive any interventions).



*Findings:*

- Statistically significant differences in index scores were found between intervention and nonintervention schools for 2010 and 2011. Safe and Supportive Schools intervention schools showed improvements on overall school climate index scores, whereas comparison schools showed no change between years.
- The index also showed a moderate to moderately strong relationship with school-level proficiency rates in four content areas (proficiency in math, reading and language arts [RLA], science, and social studies) and median growth percentiles for mathematics and RLA.
- School climate mitigated factors such as high poverty rates, a large proportion of students with disabilities, larger school size, and certain grade-span configurations typically associated with poorer academic outcomes.

**Special Feature**

**Demonstrated Impact of School Climate Efforts on Academic Achievement**

As part of its implementation evaluation, WV S3 worked diligently to develop a valid and reliable measure of school climate that would be meaningful at the school level and comparable across schools and would also tap into areas that schools could affect positively. Analyses of the index scores showed results that went beyond expectations.

As noted by Whisman (2012), "Intervention schools were identified a priori on the basis of being classified as low performing, and as such were expected to present with WVSCI scores reflecting more challenging school climate conditions." Despite these challenges, WV S3 intervention schools registered significant improvements in both school climate measures and academic outcomes, and also demonstrated a positive relationship between the two. "School climate was the most influential predictor in the social studies proficiency and mathematics growth percentile regression models, and was the second and third most influential predictor for reading/language arts (RLA) proficiency and growth percentile. Further, the study showed that positive school climate substantially moderated the effect of poverty as well as the other factors included in the model. For social studies proficiency and mathematics growth percentiles, the effects of poverty were entirely moderated by school climate. With all measures considered together, positive school climate lessened the cumulative negative impact of poverty, disability rate, school size, and grade-span configuration from 6 percent for science proficiency to 100 percent for math growth. This finding suggested that a positive school climate could provide substantial advantages, especially for schools serving high-poverty communities or schools that have high proportions of students with disabilities.

This study demonstrates that for low-performing schools, school climate enhancements have the potential to provide a substantial advantage in their broader school improvement efforts. Furthermore, the West Virginia School Climate Index (WV SCI) validity study suggests that "by addressing a factor that is within their sphere of influence—improving school climate—schools may substantially diminish the unfavorable effects of matters over which they have little control."



## Lessons Learned

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

- West Virginia S3 worked with school and community stakeholders who held longstanding attitudes toward school safety and climate. To engage them and get their support, WV S3 took frequent opportunities to share successes in school climate improvement, using sources such as school climate survey data, student behavior data, and information about the percentage of students earning rewards.
- There was substantial staff turnover in WV S3 schools, and new staff were not able to be trained as fully as previous staff on the S3 model, thus demonstrating less buy-in. West Virginia S3 found value in matching new staff with more experienced staff members as mentors and using the institutional knowledge and experience of administrators who were actively involved. West Virginia S3 also developed and delivered mini training sessions on the school's climate strategies to bring new staff members on board effectively and efficiently.
- West Virginia S3 schools initially had difficulty fostering effective communication from the leadership team to school staff. In response, WV S3 used a variety of communication methods to inform staff of events and issues, as well as faculty meetings and informal relationships to seek input from staff.
- Due to resistance from districts to release team members and administrators for meetings away from school, finding time for professional development was initially difficult. West Virginia S3 responded by offering flexibility when scheduling trainings, holding S3 grant school team trainings during the summer, and providing salary reimbursement for time away from school. Additionally, WV S3 provided funding to pay staff to work outside of regular school hours.
- School climate coaches had little effect on instructional practice improvement, as WV S3 had trouble getting buy-in from schools to work at the classroom level.
- Information on the effectiveness of coaches was anecdotal, because a formal plan to measure this had not been developed.
- Through this work, WV S3 gained an appreciation for the value of recognizing and rewarding the effort, improvement, and achievement of *all* students—not just in sports and not just for top students.

## Sustainability and Scaling Up

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

- Wellness specialists trained student assistance teams on the components of the S3 model and implementation of the initiative to enable the teams to transfer this information to new staff.
- Schoolwide trainings for new school staff were scheduled in order to increase awareness of behavioral norms and procedural expectations that address student behavior.
- West Virginia S3 schools prepared strategic plans to sustain school climate efforts; the plans included ways to integrate social and emotional learning with academics. Each school's strategic plan also included data from the S3 effort (e.g., the school safety score and incident data).
- During the course of the grant, 80 additional schools were participating in the WV S3 school climate survey for data-driven planning purposes. West Virginia plans to continue to offer the survey to schools each fall and spring, on a voluntary basis. Notably, in the fall of 2015 (following the close of the grant), over 150 schools had registered to use the survey (with about 80 percent expected to follow through). The



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survey report generation process is database driven and routinized so that schools can receive feedback shortly after the survey closes. This work was supported in part by a U.S. Department of Education statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) grant awarded to WV.

- [Policy 4373](#)—Expected Behavior in Safe and Supportive Schools was generated as a direct result of the WV S3 project. The enactment of this policy ensures the longevity of the WV S3 project in that it emphasizes and legally stipulates requirements for creating safe and supportive learning environments. Additional details can be found in the Product Development and Dissemination section.

## Contact Information

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

*Grant holder:* West Virginia Department of Education Office of Healthy Schools

*Web site:* <https://wvde.state.wv.us/healthyschools/>

*Project director:* fall 2010–spring 2014, Don Chapman (retired), assistant director, WVDE Office of Healthy Schools; fall 2014–close of grant, Josh Grant, coordinator, Office of Secondary Learning, [jgrant@k12.wv.us](mailto:jgrant@k12.wv.us)

*Project evaluator:* Andy Whisman, coordinator, WVDE Office of Research, [swhisman@k12.wv.us](mailto:swhisman@k12.wv.us)

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.



## Appendix A: List of West Virginia Participating Schools and Districts

| Participating Districts | Participating Schools  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Barbour County       | 1. Philip Barbour High School  |
| 2. Boone County         | 2. Sherman High School   |
| 3. Calhoun County       | 3. Calhoun Middle/High School  |
| 4. Fayette County       | 4. Midland Trail High School<br>5. Oak Hill High School                                  |
| 5. Grant County         | 6. Union Educational Complex   |
| 6. Harrison County      | 7. Lincoln High School   |
| 7. Kanawha County       | 8. Herbert Hoover High School<br>9. Riverside High School<br>10. Sissonville High School |
| 8. Lewis County         | 11. Lewis County High School   |
| 9. Lincoln County       | 12. Lincoln County High School   |
| 10. Logan County        | 13. Logan Senior High School   |
| 11. McDowell County     | 14. Mount View High School<br>15. River View High School                                 |
| 12. Mercer County       | 16. Montcalm High School   |
| 13. Roane County        | 17. Roane County High School   |
| 14. Summers County      | 18. Summers County High School   |
| 15. Tucker County       | 19. Tucker County High School  |
| 16. Wayne County        | 20. Tolsia High School   |
| 17. Webster County      | 21. Webster County High School   |
| 18. Wetzel County       | 22. Valley High School   |