CALIFORNIA SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS

2013/14 Statewide Evaluation Results
Final Year Findings

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Executive Summary

Introduction - In October 2010, California became one of eleven states selected by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to receive a four-year Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) grant. This grant is intended to support statewide measurement of conditions for learning (known also as school climate), as well as targeted programmatic interventions to improve those conditions in comprehensive high schools (grades 9-12) with the greatest need. In particular, this initiative is designed to help address disruptive behaviors in school—such as bullying, harassment and violence, and substance use on campus—and promote safe, caring, engaging, and healthy school environments that foster learning and well being among both students and staff. California funded 59 high schools. The evaluation effort was led by Duerr Evaluation Resources in partnership with WestEd and the California Department of Education (CDE). An evaluation model was developed which draws from several sources but most heavily from the existing California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey (Cal-SCHLS) system, which includes school-level surveys of students, staff, and parents. The evaluation team developed a School Climate Index (SCI) to assess changes in climate among funded schools. The SCI is a state normed scale describing several factors that are known to influence learning success in schools. Additionally, several key individual questions from Cal-SCHLS addressed progress on program objectives and expected outcomes.

The evaluation team also developed a formative evaluation model designed to (1) determine what the school is doing and plans to do in relation to its specific program plan, (2) address research-based best practice management factors and Request For Application (RFA) requirements, and (3) identify technical assistance needs. The plan included evaluation site visits to every school in the spring of 2012, 2013, and 2014 that included interviews with key staff, focus group interviews, and a review of program activity progress. These visits were made by about one dozen Technical Assistance Specialists (TASs). Data from these visits was supplemented in 2012 and 2013 with a telephone interview with additional staff and parents. The survey was not repeated in 2014 but will be conducted again in 2015 to assess program sustainability.

The following summary findings have been drawn from the Key Topics identified in the full report, based on the data sources described above.

Leadership Support - Implementation science research describes "idea champions" as individuals who not only promote an idea, innovation, or program through encouragement and recognition, but also work in practical ways to nurture these strategies to fruition. In 96 percent of schools either the Administrator or S3 Coordinator was identified as an idea champion and in 60 percent of schools both individuals were described as champions.

Implementing New S3 Program Practices - Each school developed, and sometimes modified, a detailed work plan to guide implementation. During each site visit, the TAS scored implementation on a five-point scale of "consonance" designed to determine the extent to which each activity as implemented was consonant with the strategy found in the work plan. In the last two years and across all schools, about 60 percent of strategies were judged to be "fully" consonant.

Implementation Review of Program Fidelity - The fidelity assessment was conducted as an interview with the person most familiar with the implementation of one key program. In 75 percent of the schools, these were commercially or publically developed evidence-based programs. The bulk of the fidelity review was focused on an appraisal of the key program elements in six component areas identified primarily in the research by Fixen (2005). There was relative consistency among the different components, with "high" ratings earned for 71 to 84 percent of the schools. It is important to note that the program reviewed was in all cases only one of many S3 strategies being implemented at each site.

At-Risk Student Assistance - Each grantee was required to have one or more program components that focused specifically on identifying and serving students who are at higher risk for educational failure due to school climate related issues. The site visit interview instruments included student assistance assessments reported as "transformed ratings" on a 0-100 scale. The data showed consistent improvements in the student referral systems each year. In 2014, school use of clearly defined, standardized criteria in making referrals was scored at 81, compared to a rating of 42 in the first year.

Training for New S3 Program Practices - Training is defined by Fixen (2005) as a process through which school staff members or community members receive information and instruction in how to engage in new behaviors. Three of the most important components are demonstrations by trainers of key skills, trainee rehearsal, and observation with coaching. Transformed ratings for "demonstrations" improved over the three rating years from 20 to 71, "rehearsal" rose from 43 to 85, but "coaching" improved somewhat less moving from 20 to 71 in the final year. In a related finding, 28 of the 59 schools (47%) had the highest ratings on all three of these factors.

Staff Engagement in S3 Activities - Some schools hired consultants or specialists to conduct certain S3 activities, but most schools had program plans that placed expectations for behavior change related to S3 on a wide variety of existing staff. In 2014, 35 percent of schools rated staff involvement as "high: all or almost all staff participate in S3 as requested." High staff engagement was linked to changed school climate: 71 percent of schools with the highest staff engagement had above average SCI gains.

Monitoring School Climate Activities and Progress - Research shows that implementation effectiveness is positively related to having a system in place for monitoring implementation progress. This year, monitoring by administrators was rated slightly higher than last year (88 on the transformed scale) and indicated an overall high degree of concern for program quality. The more formal systems for record keeping and reporting was much improved, with nearly all schools conveying a clear description of systems that included observations, attendance systems, and service provision records. Overall, the evaluation indicated that most schools made serious efforts to monitor program implementation, and that these efforts had become highly systematized by 2014.

Communicating About School Climate - Both coordinator and administrator efforts to communicate about school climate were rated highly, with transformed scores of 81 and 84 respectively. The

evaluation concludes that in the large majority of schools, administrators did an admirable job of communicating support for school climate improvement.

The School Climate Team - Each funded school was required to have a site-based School Climate Team (SCT). The RFA envisioned the SCT as being centrally and formally involved in monitoring program progress, addressing implementation challenges, and if necessary modifying the Work Plan. However, the SCTs in most schools did not play as active a role in project management as envisioned. Only 54 percent of SCT's fulfilled their grant-required role of monitoring program progress, and TAS comments indicated that in perhaps as many as one-half the schools the SCT did not meet regularly as required.

Policies and Rules – Ninety percent of schools reported rules or policy changes related to S3. Common changes included policies of progressive discipline replacing out-of-school suspension with other alternatives (70 percent of schools) and at about 30 percent included rule or policy changes such as, "rewards for positive behavior," "student recognition," "positive youth reinforcement" and other similar changes.

Reporting School Climate Data and Progress - The CDE had emphasized the importance of data sharing to the grantee schools. The topic was addressed during a TAS site visit each year with a Data Use Workshop, and the subject was also discussed at grantee Regional Meetings and at the annual S3 Symposium. Despite these extensive efforts, only 54 percent of schools reported sharing the SCRC with all parents and the community, and somewhat fewer (47 percent) had shared Cal-SCHLS data.

S3 Integration with Other School Improvement Programs - Coordinators and administrators were asked to describe the ways the school climate program has been integrated with other school programs. All but four of the 59 schools received one of the top two "high" ratings, clearly demonstrating that integration was locally important and that there was high evidence of integration. Several interviewees specifically mentioned how the S3 program was integrated with the local student assistance efforts.

Community Partnerships - Language in the federal S3 "Notice Inviting Applications" identified school-community partnerships as being a critical and required component of S3 programs. In addition, the CDE S3 RFA to schools required a plan to reach out to the community and to have community agencies provide "opportunities for students to contribute back…to the community as a whole". In the current year, however, 13 of 59 funded schools did not have collaborations with a community agency. Administrators had a transformed rating of 79 regarding the quality of their involvement in maintaining partnerships with community agencies.

Parent Engagement - Parent engagement is described in the CDE S3 Request for Applications (RFA) as consisting of two primary components: (a) development of opportunities for meaningful parent involvement in the program and recruitment into it, and (b) development of strategies to make parents feel welcomed and supported at school. Ratings based on interviews with the S3 coordinators indicated very modest levels of parent engagement efforts, achieving a transformed rating of only 50 in 2014. Eight schools (14%) related that they did not make any special effort to enhance parent treatment by staff. Another five schools commented about the lack of cooperation in general from many of their staff related to this goal. Many schools discussed the great difficulty in engaging parents in any way, not just for S3. On balance, the evidence does not suggest strong improvements in parent engagement during the project.

Student Voices - The following findings were drawn from the Student Voices focus groups conducted on each site. The large majority (over 80%) of student focus groups said that the changes made at their schools to help reduce bullying have had a positive impact. Several groups reported that cyber bullying is now more of an issue than traditional bullying. The large majority (almost 70%) of student focus groups said that the changes made at their schools to reduce substance use have had a positive effect. About 90% of the groups reported that violence overall has decreased in recent years, usually attributed to (a) better monitoring of the campus (more teachers/staff/ campus monitors, cameras, and/or campus police) and (b) various S3 programs that had been implemented on their campus. The findings from the Student Voices component of the evaluation clearly demonstrate that many of these students who were most involved in the program expressed changes not just in themselves but in the school environment as well.

Sustaining the S3 Program - About 40 percent of the schools reported that they feel they can sustain their full S3 program next year while most of the rest expect to run an abbreviated program, with most of these schools expecting to sustain about one-half of the S3 activities. The S3 program arrived at a fortuitous time in California because a new strategy for funding schools is taking place starting with the 2014-15 school year. This new strategy (Local Control Funding Formula, or LCFF) specifically mentions school climate as one of eight core strategies that must be addressed in school expenditure plans. The S3 schools have been working to show how their programs can help the district meet its LCFF school climate responsibilities, with 85 percent of the S3 administrators reporting that they were aware of district efforts to address school climate with LCFF.

Quantitative Findings - S3 schools recorded a statistically significant 29-point gain on the SCI with a strong effect size of .71. Stating the SCI scores as California state percentiles, they grew from the 21st percentile at baseline to the 42nd percentile in the last funding year. When contrasted with the small SCI gain realized by the non-grantee comparison group, the S3 schools still had a level of improvement with a moderate .49 effect size. Nearly all of this improvement was found in the Violence, Victimization, and Substance Use subscale, where the S3 grantees made a significant 58-point improvement with a very large effect size of 1.34. The other major subscale, Supports and Engagement, remained statistically unchanged during the grant period.

There were five Implementation Objectives for the project with the goal of having 90 percent of grantees meet each objective. Four of these five objectives were met. The evaluation also included several specific Outcome Measures selected by CDE to provide data for the federal Department of Education's Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA's) measures. Only one of these six outcomes (90 percent of schools experiencing a decrease in student alcohol use) was met.

Summary Discussion - S3 schools as a group generally received moderately high ratings on the rubric-anchored site visit assessments. About 80 percent of Work Plan activities had been implemented in consonance with their plan, student referral systems received strong ratings (after a very slow start in the first grant year), staff training was strong in most elements except coaching, and efforts to communicate to the staff and students about school climate were robust. Most schools also did an excellent job of integrating the S3 program with other school programs and efforts. SCI findings demonstrated a strong, positive change for S3 schools during the program. These results remained moderate to strong when contrasted with the non-grantee comparison group.

Nearly all of the gains made on the SCI were on the reduced Violence, Victimization and Substance Use subscale. These findings were broadly confirmed by the results of the site visits, where many schools demonstrated significant school-wide changes to school discipline policies and systems, where anti-bulling programs were in wide adoption, and where restorative justice was a strong focus. These programs often had strong fidelity of implementation and seemed to impact the whole school.

At the same time, improvements were not recorded for the other major SCI subscale, Supports and Engagement. The qualitative findings provide some explanation for this conclusion. School climate research suggests that increasing high expectations, building caring relationships, enhancing meaningful participation for students, and generally building school connectedness requires changed behaviors on the part of the large majority of adults on a campus. This is especially true on a high school campus where students generally have direct contact with at least six and often more adults each day. This evaluation demonstrated that very few funded schools adopted approaches that reached or intensively involved the broader school staff or large numbers of parents.

It was also true that the schools varied widely in their level of success and that this success was linked to the quality of program implementation. In the examination between the measured work plan implementation and SCI gains over time it was found that 80 percent of schools that were in the top quartile of work plan implementation had a better than average SCI gain, while only seven percent of schools in the lowest quartile of work plan ratings had an above average SCI gain. These findings strongly demonstrate that the schools which more fully implemented their work plan were much more likely to have improved school climate. This also adds evidence that SCI gains were the direct result of quality program implementation and not random chance.

The evaluation provided rich information about the challenges and obstacles that either impeded implementation, or were overcome, and clearly show the formidable difficulties that schools face in attempting to make fundamental changes such as are required to improve school climate. The most typical challenges were:

- Lack of staff buy-in and participation
- Staff and administrator turnover and reductions
- Difficulty engaging parents in school life
- Barriers faced with district administration
- Competing priorities such as Common Core, WASC accreditation, LCAP and School Improvement.

These many and varied challenges make very clear the difficulty of creating and institutionalizing new programs, behaviors and expectations in California schools, especially in efforts to involve all members of a school staff and large numbers of parents.

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INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) requires a comprehensive evaluation of the Safe and Supportive Schools grant (S3), one that includes both objective outcome measures and qualitative evaluation data. Following are the California Department of Education's (CDE's) Objectives and Outcome expectations for the California S3 grant. All of the Objectives and Outcomes reference the end of program year four, September 30, 2014.

Objectives

1. Ninety-five percent of the programmatic intervention schools funded in this program will demonstrate a school wide commitment to create a safe and supportive learning environment.
2. Ninety-five percent of funded schools will engage in systematic data-driven decision making for school improvements.
3. Ninety percent of funded schools will systematically involve students, staff members, and parents in Program design and implementation.
4. Ninety-five percent of funded schools will develop a comprehensive program that addresses both the needs of the general student population and a referral-intervention system for at-risk students.
5. Ninety percent of funded schools will implement evidence-based programs or research-based strategies with full fidelity.

Outcomes

1. Ninety percent of funded schools will experience an improvement in their School Climate Index.
2. Ninety percent of funded schools will experience a decrease in the percentage of students who report personal harassment or bullying on school property during the current school year.
3. Ninety percent of funded schools will experience a decrease in the percentage of students who report (30-day) alcohol use.
4. Ninety-five percent of funded schools will experience a decrease in the number of suspensions for violent incidents without physical injury.
5. There will be a ten percentage point increase among all funded schools in the number of students who report feeling connected to school.
6. There will be a ten percentage point increase among all funded schools in the number of teachers who agree or strongly agree that their school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn.
7. There will be a ten percentage point increase among all funded schools in the number of parents who agree or strongly agree that the school allows input and welcomes parents' contributions.

The evaluation team, led by Duerr Evaluation Resources (DER) and comprised of individuals from both DER and WestEd, started the evaluation work by developing the systems and approaches necessary to assess the pre-to-post project Outcomes in funded schools. An evaluation model was developed which draws from several

sources but most heavily from the existing California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey (Cal-SCHLS) system, which includes school-level surveys of students, staff, and parents. The team developed a School Climate Index (SCI) that was incorporated into individual School Climate Report Cards (SCRCs), which are used as annual progress reports covering all project Outcomes.

While the S3 grant Outcomes focus largely on fundamental criteria regarding school climate behaviors, the S3 grant Objectives are more general statements about implementation requirements. The evaluation team set out to assess progress on these Objectives using a formative evaluation model that would allow the collection and analysis of information that could be used by both the CDE and each funded grant to assess current progress, and more importantly to identify areas where additional technical assistance could lead to stronger programs and outcomes. Development of these evaluation strategies were guided by (a) the requirements of the grant application and (b) best practices identified from implementation science. Best practice statements were drawn largely from the recent work "Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature" by Fixen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman & Wallace (2005).[1] The Methodology section that follows provides the details of the full evaluation plan. Additional information on the California S3 program can be found on the S3 website: http://californias3.wested.org.

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[1] Fixen, D., Naoom, S., Blase, K., Friedman, R., & Wallace, F. (2005). Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, The National Implementation Research Network (FMHI Publication #231).

METHODOLOGY

The School Climate Index and the School Climate Report Card

The SCRC summarizes findings from several data sources utilized by all S3 schools to address the Objectives and Outcomes described above. Data for the SCRC are drawn from the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey System (Cal-SCHLS)[2]. These are comprised of the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) of students, the California School Climate Survey of staff (CSCS), and the California School Parent Survey (CSPS). School suspension incident data reported to the CDE is also utilized in the SCRC. A key measure constructed from these data is the School Climate Index (SCI). It is an individual school-level measure that assesses school climate, which refers to the conditions or quality of the learning environment that affects the school experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and performance of both students and staff members. The SCI was indexed at baseline so that a score of 300 represents the mean score for California schools. The final Statewide SCRC is included in the Appendix and includes a more detailed explanation of the overall SCI score and its various subscales.

Data from the baseline, pre-funding year (2010) SCI and last (2014) SCI were used to make summative judgments about program success among the funded schools. In addition, the funded schools will also be compared to two other groups: (1) all other schools in the funded districts, and (2) all schools in districts that applied but did not receive funding[3]. Regression models were estimated (per Tom) to compare changes in outcomes across the intervention and non-intervention schools. This design presents issues for interpretation, however, because the non-intervention schools had higher baseline SCI scores. Because the two groups were known to be non-equivalent at baseline, the resulting analysis will be descriptive only and cannot be used to establish a rigid attribution to the S3 program if the funded sites show more improvement. Individual school-level SCRCs for each of the funded S3 schools can be accessed through the California Department of Education's DataQuest system at:

http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/CSRC/searchname.aspx

The 2014 Spring Evaluation Site Visit

Twelve regional Technical Assistance Specialists (TASs) conducted site visits in April, May and June of 2012, 2013, and 2014 using evaluation tools developed by the evaluation team. The site visits had three definitive purposes:

- as a monitoring evaluation to determine what the school is doing and plans to do in relation to their specific program plan;
- as a formative evaluation that addresses research-based best-practice Factors and Request For

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[2] Additional information about the survey system can be found at cal-schls.wested.org

[3] These districts were required to collect data leading to the SCI as part of their agreement in applying for funds.

Application (RFA) requirements, and

- as an opportunity for technical assistance provision designed to provide guidance for ongoing improvements to S3 programs.

Each site visit consisted of five primary activities:

1. An interview with the S3 coordinator to examine Work Plan Matrix progress and to review implementation best practices
2. An interview with an administrator (usually the principal, but in some cases the vice principal)
3. An interview with the representative with best knowledge of one selected program for implementation fidelity assessment
4. A focus group with students
5. A Parent Email Survey

Each of these site visit strategies is described in more detail below:

The <u>Coordinator Quality Factor Interview</u> provided an assessment of the Coordinator's grant responsibilities, followed by questions related to best practices implementation for the primary program components. The TAS read each question, but also had notes to use as probes or for follow-up to the question. After hearing the coordinator's descriptive response, the TAS assigned a rating on a five-point "Low to High" scale[4]. The ratings were anchored to written rubric descriptions that were unique to each question. If a rating was "moderate" (the middle rating) or lower, the TAS was asked to provide a written explanation. The interview then moved on to a list of possible Challenges and Obstacles with a three point rating scale, again with a written explanation of a low rating was given. The interview ended with a rating of CDE Webinars and technical assistance. The TAS then answered several questions based on the interview experience, all anchored to rubrics.

The <u>Coordinator Activity Matrix Interview</u> was a tool that the evaluator customized for each school with a summary of each strategy the school identified in their proposal. The TAS reviewed specific activities for each grant strategy with probing questions about meeting milestones, if frequency and intensity goals were met, and if key date goals were met. The TAS then rated each strategy on a five point Scale of Consonance, a measure of the degree to which the school's strategies as described in their proposal plan matched their actual implementation. The Consonance ratings also had anchored rubrics.

The <u>School Administrator Interview</u> was usually conducted with the Principal, although there were exceptions based on local factors. The questions were largely focused on administrator actions and activities that the Request for Application identified as important. Some other questions focused on best practice factors identified in the research. The questions, ratings, and written comments followed the format described in the Factor Interview section above. The instrument then moved to the topic of program sustainability. These

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[4] This rating scale differed from the one used in the previous two years, where a three-point scale anchored to Beginning, Developing, and Advanced were used. The change was made to allow for a more subtle range of ratings; very few schools would still be "Beginning" in 2014. For the purpose of comparison of the old and new survey data, most rating scores have been converted to a 0-100 scale. This scale was adopted because it is easily understood and interpreted. A zero represents all Low ratings and 100 represent all High ratings. Data from 59 schools were averaged for these ratings.

questions utilized a variety of fixed-response options, and in some cases required explanations. After the interview ended, the TAS then made several overall ratings.

The S3 Uniform Fidelity Assessment was conducted on a major program at each school. The assessment was conducted specifically to address S3 Objective 5: Ninety percent of funded schools will implement evidence-based programs or research-based strategies with full fidelity. The interview tool was developed based on the literature review and analysis by Fixen (2005). In about 75 percent of the cases, the program selected was an evidence-based program with enough available information to create a custom Fidelity Review tool (This compares to 60 percent evidence-based programs last year).   The remaining schools selected a locally developed program--although usually based on evidence-based approaches—also with a custom Fidelity Assessment tool developed based on program goals and content. In all cases, the intention was to ascertain the extent to which the program was implemented as designed. Various fidelity elements were assessed then rated on a rubric-anchored rating scale. The interview was conducted with the individual who had the greatest knowledge of the program.

The S3 Student Voices Focus Group was conducted primarily with juniors and seniors who had experienced the program for two or three years. Each group was designed for 7-9 student participants and the actual size of most groups fit this range. The focus group discussion was moderated by the TAS without school staff present (with two exceptions). The TAS utilized a Guide with seven questions related to the program and the desired Outcomes. The TAS wrote a one to two page summary of the answers provided.

The Parent Email Survey was designed as a low-cost replacement for the parent telephone survey conducted last year (the re-administration of which has been postponed until spring 2015). Each school was to provide ten parent email addresses and let them know that the evaluator would be contacting them via email. The instructions asked schools to select parents with one or more of the following characteristics:

- Parents with an internet address
- Parents on the School Climate Team
- Parents known to be active in any S3 activity
- Parents aware of S3 services delivered to their child

The evaluator email directed the parent to an online survey site with a 23-item survey with all fixed-responses. The content of the survey reflected primarily the RFA requirements regarding parent engagement, and parent perceptions of the S3 program. Parents received three reminders asking them to complete the survey. Email addresses were made available for 306 parents from 33 schools. Surveys were completed by 120 parents from 30 schools, for a response rate of only 39 percent. This small response rate from a limited number of schools means that the results cannot be considered representative of the 59 schools as a whole. At the same time, the response sample should represent a "best case" sample of parents who might know about S3, compared to other parents who did not share the characteristics shown on the list above.

FINDINGS

The report sections below are organized around key themes that were explored during the site visit interviews. The majority of these questions were rubric-defined, closed-end questions, with data contrasted between the current year and previous years where feasible; not all questions were asked every year. Site interviewers were asked for explanations for lower ratings, and general themes drawn from these are described.

Assessment of the S3 Coordinators' Grant Role

Funded projects had S3 coordinators engaging in a variety of roles in the S3 program. These were assessed as part of the coordinator Quality Factor Interview with a listing of possible grant responsibilities, shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Coordinator Grant Roles and Responsibilities in 2014

Coordinators Roles	None	Some	Yes
Coordinating the requests of the CDE evaluator and TAS	2%	0%	98%
Coordinating the administration of Cal-SCHLS surveys	0%	8%	92%
Monitoring project progress to ensure that programmatic interventions are implemented as described in the Work Plan	4%	8%	88%
Helping write S3 progress reports for CDE	4%	11%	85%
Maintaining required documentation of project services, activities, and counts of individuals served	2%	13%	85%
Facilitating meetings of the SC Team	6%	12%	82%
Providing S3 direct services to students and/or parents	18%	N/A	82%
Coordinating S3 work conducted by various school-level staff (not district/agency staff)	5%	16%	79%
Working with staff to ensure that all project funds expended were for allowable costs; comply with budget	4%	20%	76%
Coordinating S3 efforts to better engage parents to enhance school climate	9%	38%	53%
Coordinating S3 work conducted by community agency staff	27%	22%	51%
Supervising operations of the S3 At-Risk Student Identification and Referral System	18%	40%	42%
Coordinating S3 work conducted by districts staff	47%	16%	37%

The roles in italics were those required of the S3 coordinator in the funding RFA.

The rubrics for the three fixed-response options were:

None: Coordinator generally does not have primary responsibility for this task

Some: Sometimes or for some components, responsibility may be shared with others such as the Principal, etc.

Yes: Coordinator generally has primary responsibility for this task

The six items in italics were specifically mentioned in the funding RFA as assigned coordinator roles. Only one or two coordinators did not have some role in these six activities, so nearly all schools followed these RFA directives. It was interesting to note that over 80 percent of coordinators also provided direct project services to students and/or parents. Although only 42 percent of coordinators had primary responsibility for managing the risk-referral system, this is principally because so many schools integrated their S3 risk referral component into existing school referral systems. In three schools the coordinator job was split between two individuals.

Leadership Support

Research by Rogers (1983)[5] on implementation science describes "Idea Champions" as individuals who not only promote an idea, innovation, or program through encouragement and recognition, but also work in practical ways to nurture these strategies to fruition. After completing their interviews, TASs making site visits were asked to rate both the interviewed administrator and the S3 coordinator on an Idea Champion Scale. The TAS was to consider whether the individual:

- Was a primary advocate for the importance of the project
- Works with individuals to overcome resistance
- Works to solve problems with the program
- Strives to "infect" others with enthusiasm for the program

The ratings spanned five options on a scale from "Not an Idea Champion" to "Strong Idea Champion." Table 2 provides the 2013-14 results.

Table 2

2014 Idea Champion Ratings for Administrators and S3 Coordinators: Percent of schools

	RATINGS: Percent of Schools				
Role	Not an Idea Champion (1)	(2)	Moderate Idea Champion (3)	(4)	Strong Idea Champion (5)
Administrator	2%	11%	16%	27%	44%
Coordinator	0	5%	15%	32%	48%

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[5] Rogers, E. M. (1983). *Diffusion of Innovations* (4 ed.). New York: The Free Press.

Combining the two highest ratings, 71 percent of administrators and 80 percent of coordinators were considered strong Idea Champions. In another question, coordinators were asked whether lack of administrator support had been a challenge or obstacle to the S3 program and seven (12%) said it was a "moderate" problem and four (7%) said it was a "great" problem. These figures track fairly closely with the TAS ratings of the administrators as Idea Champions, where 13 percent received the lowest two ratings. However, in 96 percent of schools at least one of these individuals was identified as an Idea Champion. In about 60 percent of schools, both individuals were described as "Champions."

Another question asked the administrator to identify the ways in which they exhibit leadership by helping solve problems related to S3 Implementation (a role identified in the program RFA as important for administrators). Ratings given by the TAS based on the rubrics revealed that 74 percent of administrators received the highest two of five ratings. For nearly all of the other ratings, the review notes indicated that the administrator did not feel it was their role to provide solutions to these issues, but had in most cases relegated this role to the coordinator.

In a final question about leadership the TAS was asked to provide a rating of the administrators' overall "project engagement," defined by their knowledge of project details and exercise of project leadership. Although a modest 65 percent of administrators received the top two of five ratings, none received the lowest rating.

A comparison of the leadership factors described above with other qualitative findings regarding the quality of program implementation demonstrated a noticeable correlation. That is, schools with higher leadership ratings were more likely to have programs with research-related quality features. However, leadership support was not found to be associated with SCI gain. Schools with the highest administrator project engagement were no more likely to have above average SCI gains.

Implementing New S3 Program Practices

The evaluator and TAS worked to produce a custom Work Plan Strategy Matrix Interview form for each school. Each custom form listed all the Work Plan Strategies. The TAS reviewed each strategy and the related activities with the coordinator in each of the past two years, and then made rubric-anchored ratings. The interview tool used a five-point scale of "consonance" designed to determine the extent to which each activity as implemented was consonant (in agreement with) the strategy as described in the Work Plan. These ratings for the current and previous year are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Percent of Work Plan Strategies in Each Rating Category

Work Plan Strategy Ratings and Abbreviated Rubrics	2012-13 %	2013-14 %
Not Consonant: The strategy as implemented is not in accord and consistent with the activity descriptions. (0 – 10% complete).	2%	5%
Marginally Consonant: The strategy is between Partially and Not Consonant (10 – 30% complete).	6%	4%
Moderately Consonant: The strategy as implemented is partially in accord and consistent with the Matrix description. One or more fundamental elements of the activity (milestones, frequency, intensity, etc.) varied from the activity description in important ways that could negatively impact the project (30 – 60% complete).	8%	10%
Mostly Consonant: The strategy is between Partially and Fully Consonant (60 – 90% complete).	24%	22%
Fully Consonant: The strategy as implemented is fully in accord and consistent with the Matrix description. The fundamental elements of the strategy were implemented very nearly or completely as described (90 – 100% complete).	60%	59%

In the last two years, about 8-9 percent of strategies were marginally or not consonant with the program plan, while about 60 percent were fully consonant. Comments were available from the TASs regarding reasons for the lowest ratings being given. These comments reflected a very wide range of reasons for low performance. A few of the more common, but very general reasons given for low implementation were:

- Administrator and S3 coordinator turnover
- Lack of interest by the target audience
- Staff resistance to implementation
- Overt decisions by the administrator not to implement a strategy (not approved by CDE).
- Specially trained personnel left the school, or the training was not embraced by staff.

An analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the level of measured work plan implementation and SCI gains over time. It was found that 71 percent of schools that were in the top quartile of work plan ratings had a better than average SCI gain, which is 21% more than random chance (if there were no relationship between work plan implementation and SCI gains). Thirty-one percent of schools in the lowest quartile of work plan ratings had an above average SCI gain, which is 19 percent lower than random chance. These findings strongly suggest that the schools which more fully implemented their work plan were more likely to have improved school climate.

Implementation Review of Program Fidelity

The Fidelity Assessment was conducted as an interview with the person most familiar with the implementation of one key program. In 75 percent of the schools, these were commercially or publically developed evidence-based programs ("named programs"). In about 40 percent of schools the interviewee was the S3 coordinator. Others interviewed most commonly included counselors, teachers, administrators and program coordinators of evidence-based programs. The most common programs selected for review were Link Crew (13 schools), PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports) (6), PLUS (Peer Leaders) (5) and Challenge Day (3). In about two-thirds of schools, the person interviewed was the only one responsible for monitoring the program, while at other schools this role was shared with one or more other individuals. In addition to their role as a program monitor, 75 percent of interviewees were also active in program delivery.

A key component for ensuring program quality relates to monitoring program progress. Interviewees were asked if they used group meetings, individual meetings, and/or direct observations as part of their monitoring and quality control duties. About 20 percent did all three, 40 percent did two of them, and the remainder did only one[6]. Additional information about these three methods includes:

- Conducting group meetings with providers was the most common monitoring strategy, employed by about 60 percent of the schools. Meetings averaged 60 minutes in length and were typically held weekly. Keep in mind, however, that in about 20 percent of schools the interviewee was the sole program provider, so group meetings could not take place.
- Individual meetings with providers occurred in 64 percent of the schools. These meetings averaged 30 minutes, with from 4-20 meetings per person per year being typical.
- Direct observation of program delivery was conducted in about 40 percent of schools. They conducted on average 8-12 observations per provider per year, typically lasting about 15-30 minutes.

The remainder of the Fidelity Review was focused on an appraisal of the key program elements in six component areas identified primarily in the research by Fixen (2005). These six components are shown in Table 4 below[7]. Most components were evaluated by exploring two or more program elements related to the components. Each element received separate ratings. Programs averaged 14 elements for review among the six components. The rating rubrics used are shown abbreviated below:

High: *The element as implemented was a precise match to the program element described, or varied in a small way that could be reasonably interpreted to match the general intent of the program designers. For numerical elements (number of lessons, sessions, time on task, etc.) the program was within 10% of the recommendation.*

Moderate: *The element as implemented was somewhat different from the program element described; the program was between 50% and 90% of numerical recommendations.*

Low: *The element as implemented was very different from the program element described; the program was below 50% of numerical recommendations.*

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[6] Although some of the interviewees did not specifically name one of the three monitoring methods above, written comments from the Fidelity forms made clear that they had in fact used one or more of these methods for monitoring.
[7] A more thorough explanation of each Fidelity Element is in the Appendix

Table 4

2014 Fidelity Review Results
Percentage of Fidelity Element Ratings for Six Fidelity Components

	RATINGS		
Fidelity Components	**High**	**Moderate**	**Low**
Audience Category and Characteristics	74%	16%	10%
Setting Size	71%	18%	9%
Provider Characteristics	78%	14%	8%
Provider Training	86%	13%	1%
Topic Content	75%	18%	7%
Dosage	71%	20%	9%
AVERAGE	**76%**	**12%**	**7%**

There was relative consistency among the different components, with "high" ratings earned for 71 to 86 percent of the schools. The average component score was 76 percent, demonstrating that most sites were reasonably faithful to the original program design. It is important to note that the program reviewed was in all cases only one of many S3 strategies being implemented.

At-Risk Student Assistance

Each grantee was required to have one or more program components that focused specifically on identifying and serving students ("referral systems") who are at higher risk for educational failure due to school climate related issues. Research shows that there are several common components of effective referral systems. Interviews and surveys showed that prior to S3 funding, nearly one-half of the funded schools had some sort of existing system for identifying and referring behaviorally at-risk students for specialized services. These systems relied on student identification by staff members—not always using standardized criteria—although nearly all systems also encouraged students to self-refer. The S3 funding required schools to design systems capable of identifying at-risk students specifically for S3-funded services. A few schools used a stand-alone system, but more commonly schools sought to integrate the new referrals into their existing referral systems.

One of the problems described by some schools in the first two years was a lack of clarity among staff about who should be making referrals. Related to this, some of the staff asked to make referrals had not received adequate (in their view) training to make referrals. A new question was added to the evaluation this year based on this concern. It asked the coordinators to describe the extent to which the school's S3 referral-intervention service systematically assigned staff to identify and refer students for services and whether the

referring staff had received any formal training in making referrals. Three-fourths of the schools received the highest two of five ratings, while 25 percent had ratings of "moderate" or lower (the lower three of the five ratings).

Table 5 below (and several others in this report) provides comparisons of TAS ratings on two more referral questions over the three evaluation years. To facilitate easy comparison of the relative strength of these ratings across questions and years, all ratings scales were converted to a 0-100 scale. A program which received the highest possible rating on a question received a 100%, while one that received the mid point rating ("moderate" on a low-moderate-high scale, for example) received a 50%, and so forth. These will be henceforth referred to as "Transformed Ratings."

The ratings in Table 5 show consistent improvements in the student referral systems each year, with 2014 ratings being the highest. In the current year, school use of clearly defined, standardized criteria in making ratings was scored at 81, while ratings of the systems developed to record and periodically report referral data was scored even higher at 87.

Table 5

At-Risk Student Referral and Tracking:
Transformed Ratings

At-Risk Student Referral and Tracking	0-100 Scale		
	2012	2013	2014
The Program's referral system to identify at-risk students is based on standardized and clearly defined criteria.	42	69	81
The at-risk referral system records the number of students referred, what they were referred to, and whether they participated. It is integrated well with the referral forms, and/or is easy to get periodic summary statistics.	41	72	87

The 2014 coordinator interview also addressed how at-risk students were assigned to services. Probing questions included: "Was there a strong connection between the student's presenting issue and the service they received?" and "Is data other than the referral form considered in deciding what service would be best for the student?" On the transformed 100-point rating scale, schools received an extremely high score of 91. This finding, along with some written comments by TASs, makes clear that schools generally had excellent systems to assign students to the appropriate service(s). Many schools utilized a team approach to assess student needs and refer them to appropriate services.

One of the qualitative findings from 2013 noted that some schools failed to assure that someone was assigned responsibility for facilitating each referral and assuring that the student successfully gained access to the desired service. A question addressing this issue was added to the Coordinator Survey. It asked, "How is progress monitored for a student who receives S3 intervention? Are goals developed and assessed, or is

progress otherwise monitored?" The rating for this question was 80 percent. Only two of 59 schools reported that they did not do this type of monitoring at all, exhibiting an improvement over the prior year.

In summary, schools consistently showed further progress in developing and running their referral systems in 2014.

Training for New S3 Program Practices

Training is defined by Fixen (2005) as: a process through which school staff members or community members receive information and instruction in how to engage in new behaviors. This year, the coordinator (or in about ten cases, another individual) was interviewed and asked to describe the training for one key program during the year. In nearly every case, the person being interviewed was also trained in the program. The number of individuals trained varied widely (and appropriately, given that some programs were aimed specifically at only a few staff implementers while others may have addressed large numbers of the staff). About one-half the schools trained between 10-50 individuals, and one-quarter trained more than 50.

The training elements described in Table 6 are drawn from the research conducted by Fixen (2005). This research shows that several key components must be present for training to be most successful. Three of the most important components are demonstrations by trainers of key skills, trainee rehearsal, and observation with coaching. It is important to note that these quality indicators were not required elements of the S3 funding. These criteria were used to develop questions used during the site visit and shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Implementation Factors of Staff Member Training:
Transformed Ratings

	0-100 Scale		
Implementation Factors — Community Partnerships	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**
Training as planned or conducted includes demonstrations by the trainers of the new behaviors.	20	80	92
Training as planned or conducted incorporates rehearsal by all participants in the training setting.	43	76	85
Training as planned or conducted includes someone (the 'coach') observing staff members engaging in new program activities, and offering feedback and advice for performance improvement.	20	49	71

In the first evaluation year, only a handful of schools had implemented a training/coaching strategy that utilized the majority of these quality factors. Implementation of these elements was enhanced strongly over time. Coaching remained the lowest rated element each year. In a related finding, 28 of the 59 schools had the highest possible ratings on all three of these factors. The most common programs evaluated for training in 2013-14 were Link Crew (10), PBIS (5), Restorative Justice (5), and PLUS (Peer Leaders) (4).

Staff Engagement in S3 Activities

Some schools hired consultants or specialists to conduct certain S3 activities, but most schools had program plans that placed expectations for behavior change related to S3 on a wide variety of existing staff. These staff may have been challenged to find time to engage in their new S3 behaviors. The TAS asked questions of the administrators and S3 coordinators related to their efforts to help staff address this challenge. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Ratings of S3 Coordinator and Administrator Direction to Staff about S3 Implementation:
Transformed Ratings

	0-100 Scale		
Assistance to Staff	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**
Coordinators help staff understand how to make time for grant practices within their already busy days.	27	75	87
Administrators help staff understand how to make time for the new grant practices within their already busy days.	18	83	86

The Table shows that strong improvements were made in the second year, with further modest increases in 2014. Some quotes from the last two years illustrate how some coordinators and administrators helped staff understand how to make time for S3 practices:

- "I provide the release time when necessary, answer questions, and am as transparent as possible."
- "Some new grant practices take place in the classroom during instructional time, so I impress upon the teachers how these things impact student achievement in a positive way. I try to make those links apparent to motivate my teachers' behavior and success in the classroom."
- "Every day, everything is related to it…Single School Culture, Link Crew. I give staff and students more input. I also meet with student leadership classes every two weeks."
- "All staff are expected to support S3 in some way. I explain the importance of various activities at staff meetings, which also helps build commitment to giving time. Key implementers were selected because they would make time and follow through."
- "Having the [SCRC] data has really helped to give context and credibility for the new S3 strategies. To motivate staff to get involved, I emphasize that what they do makes a difference and it's not just a grant requirement. I also make time to appreciate them with food, praise, and certificates of appreciation

In contrast to the efforts put into helping staff make time for S3 activities, actual staff performance was not as positive. Coordinators in only 35 percent of schools rated staff involvement as "high: all or almost all staff participate in S3 as requested." Another 34 percent said staff efforts were between moderate and high. For the remaining one-third of schools with lower scores, typical comments included:

- "Staff members continue to be incredibly resistant to the grant feelings as if it has been a top down requirement."
- "Less than half of our staff members are engaged. Those that do participate do not do so in as complete a way as I would like."

- "Having difficulty getting general education teachers to buy in to PBIS."
- "A wide swath of staff "fizzled;" but those involved do it fully."
- "About 40% of the staff members are still reluctant to participate in events and with programs."

Monitoring School Climate Activities and Progress

Another critical factor to success identified by Fixen (2005) was quality program monitoring: "Overall implementation effectiveness was positively related to having a system in place for monitoring implementation progress." Monitoring takes on a special importance when examining a program such as S3, which requires many individuals to add responsibilities to their core educational mission. Several questions from the site visits addressed this function, with results noted below.

Table 8

Monitoring School Climate Activities and Progress:
Transformed Ratings

| | Beginning | | |
School Climate Monitoring	2012	2013	2014
Administrator monitors S3 implementation using multiple strategies.	25	86	88
The school has adopted strategies to systematically collect and keep records evidencing the number of students, parents and staff being served by the program (*coordinator*).	42	79	95

Monitoring by administrators was rated slightly higher than last year and indicated an overall high degree of concern for program quality. The more formal systems for record keeping and reporting was much improved, with nearly all schools conveying a clear description of systems that included observations, attendance systems, and service provision records. These systems were generally well structured and sites reported that the majority of staff utilized them. A new question added this year further explored the degree to which the administrator was personally engaged in monitoring by periodically reviewing the S3 Work Plan, and with what level of scrutiny. Only five administrators received the lowest two ratings for this, in each case indicating that that responsibility had been given to the S3 coordinator. Overall, the data above indicate that most schools made serious efforts to monitor program implementation, and that these efforts had become highly systematized by 2014.

Communicating about School Climate

Both coordinator and administrator interviews included questions focused on communication issues. The coordinator was asked a new, detailed question in 2014 about the frequency and type of methods used by the school overall to communicate to students and staff the importance of improved school climate. The transformed rating score for this item was 81 percent, a high average score across the 59 schools. The

remaining questions focus on actions of the school administrator(s) in communicating support for school climate enhancement, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Administrator Communication Promoting School Climate
Transformed Ratings

	0-100 Scale		
Administrator Communication	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**
Communicates to parents and the community a strong commitment to improving school climate.	14	82	81
Uses of a variety of strategies to communicate personal support for the S3 program to school staff.	~	84	86
Encourages and motivates school staff to be fully engaged in the S3 program.	~	80	86

~ Question not asked this year

The ratings show small changes from 2013 to 2014 and are consistently positive across questions. In another new question this year, an assessment was also made of administrator frequency and consistency of school climate messaging. The transformed score for this was similar to the other ratings at a score of 83. In summary, in the large majority of schools, administrators did an admirable job of communicating support for school climate improvement.

The School Climate Team

Each funded school must have a site-based SCT. Members were to include at minimum the Principal, two teachers, two student support (or "learning support") services staff members, two parents, and two students. Community partner membership was encouraged but not required. The S3 SCT could be an existing school site team with similar representation, such as the school improvement team, school climate team, or the school site council. Duties of the SCT as defined in the funding RFA were:

- Hold monthly meeting for one hour.
- Review annual Cal-SCHLS survey results and revision of the Work Plan as needed.
- Monitor program progress.
- Address implementation challenges.
- Maintain involvement and participation as described in the Work Plan.
- Participate in the many technical assistance opportunities offered through the California S3 TA Center.

The TASs were asked to review the administrators' interactions with the SCT. They reviewed meeting attendance frequency, the extent to which the SCT made regular reports (written or oral) to the administrator, how the SCT influenced project improvement, and the ways SCT recommendations were considered. Based on this review, the TAS assigned a rubric-anchored rating. Seventy-four percent of administrators were rated as Moderately High or High in interactions with and use of the SCT. Still, 13% of the ratings were in the lower two

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categories demonstrating that in a few schools the administrator did not use the SCT in the manner encouraged by the funding language.

As noted above, one of the SCT duties was to monitor program progress. The TASs explored this with the coordinator, asking what methods the team used to monitor, what data sources were considered, and whether they included presentations and reviews from S3 project staff. Only 54 percent of the SCT's received ratings in the two highest of five categories. Generally, the reason given for lower ratings for SCT monitoring was simply that the SCT did not undertake monitoring as their role. In four schools it was reported that the SCT did not meet at all, and TAS comments indicated that in perhaps as many as one-half the schools the SCT did not meet as often as originally scheduled.

Another question for the coordinator addressed whether and how the SC Team explored and helped solve project implementation challenges. About 70 percent of SCTs received ratings demonstrating high or moderately high success. In the other schools, the ratings were lower because the team did not meet or because they simply did not recognize solving implementation problems as a role for the SCT.

The RFA envisioned the SCT as being centrally and formally involved in monitoring program progress, addressing implementation challenges, and if necessary modifying the Work Plan. However, the SCTs in most schools did not play as active a role in project management as envisioned.

Policies and Rules

Findings from the 2013 site visits related to changes made to policies and rules demonstrated that 95 percent of schools reported rules or policy changes related to S3. The evaluation team determined to drop questions about policies and rules in 2014 in favor of addressing other issues that arose from the 2013 evaluation. However, a summary of the 2013 findings has been provided here for reference.

Most common among the changes made, in about 70 percent of schools, were policies of progressive discipline, which generally consisted of replacing out-of-school suspension with other alternatives, which included:

- Alcohol or other drug counseling (30 percent of schools)
- Restorative Justice (25 percent)
- Anger management or related counseling services (18 percent)
- In-house suspension (10 percent)
- Unspecified alternatives to suspension (42 percent)

Related to these changes in discipline policies were efforts that offered clarity about behavioral expectations, which often took the form of new school rules. About 15 percent of schools reported these changes. Some rules or policies addressed the prevention of behaviors requiring discipline. Common approaches (about 30 percent of schools) were described variously as "rewards for positive behavior," "student recognition," "positive youth reinforcement" and other similar descriptions.

Reporting School Climate Data and Progress

The CDE had emphasized the importance of data sharing to the grantee schools. The topic was addressed during a TAS site visit each year with a Data Use Workshop, and the subject was also discussed at grantee Regional Meetings and at the annual S3 Symposium. Despite these extensive efforts, only 54 percent of schools reported sharing the SCRC with all parents and the community, and somewhat fewer (47 percent) had shared Cal-SCHLS data. Schools that had shared these data were asked to describe their efforts, which were contrasted with the primary recommendations from the training described above. Only eight schools received the top two ratings indicating a strong adherence to the guidance provided. Overall, the results made clear that the large majority of schools did not follow recommendations for quality data sharing with parents and the community.

S3 Integration with Other School Improvement Programs

Coordinators and administrators were asked to describe the ways the school climate program has been integrated with other school programs. All but four of the 59 schools received one of the top two "high" ratings, clearly demonstrating that integration was locally important and that there was high evidence of integration. Several interviewees specifically mentioned how the S3 program was integrated with the local student assistance efforts. Some of the quotes from staff provide other examples:

- "S3 has permeated the entire fabric of the school and has really been integrated into all programs at school."
- "S3 Plan was developed with integration involved. How do we best support our kids – and that's what S3 is about."
- "S3 was a huge part of our school plan, school goals, and the LCAP funding plan for the district."
- "Student life and teacher care components are pretty well integrated into school...…the way we talk to parents will be sustained regardless of funding."

Community Partnerships

Language in the federal S3 "Notice Inviting Applications" identified school-community partnerships as being a critical and required component of S3 programs. In addition, the CDE S3 RFA to schools required a plan to reach out to the community and to have community agencies provide "opportunities for students to contribute back…to the community as a whole". In the current year, however, 13 of 59 funded schools did not have collaborations with a community agency. For those schools with collaborative relationships, site visit questions addressed several aspects of this work. These are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Implementation Factors for Community Partnerships:
Transformed Ratings

Community Partnerships	0-100 Rating		
	2012	2013	2014
Administrators' level of involvement in developing partnerships with outside agencies.	15	77	79
The school works with community partners offering S3 grant services as described in the proposal.	20	87	78
Partner agencies offer students opportunities for student contribution as described in the proposal (*coordinator*).	42	67	51

Significant progress was made on all three dimensions from 2012 to 2013, but fell back somewhat on two of the three dimensions in 2014. Student opportunities for contribution in community agencies dropped to a score of 51 this year. In explaining this data, many TASs noted that while there were one or more community agencies engaged with the project, opportunities for student engagement and contribution were not part of the partnership in 2014.

Schools partnered with a variety of agencies for various services. Some of the most common services were for:

- Substance abuse counseling
- Mental health counseling
- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Wellness
- Afterschool activities
- Speakers
- Coaching/staff training
- Youth development activities
- Community Youth Forum participation
- Volunteering at charitable organizations

Parent Engagement

Parent support is described in the CDE S3 RFA as consisting of two primary components: (a) development of opportunities for meaningful parent involvement in the program and recruitment into it, and (b) development of strategies to make parents feel welcomed and supported at school. S3 coordinators and staff members were to reach out to parents to increase their involvement in improving the school climate and safety as well as informing, recruiting, training, and building trust among parents in this program. Parent involvement in the S3 program was to be meaningful, allowing parents to develop ownership of the program. All S3 Work Plans included strategies and activities aimed at improving parent inclusion including but not limited to:

- Developing strategies to have more frequent and effective communication with all homes
- Completing the California School Parent Survey
- Helping parents understand school sanctions on their children and how parents can be proactively involved in helping their child develop positive school behaviors
- Trying new strategies to increase attendance at campus activities and events—even basic gatherings such as "Back to School" night

Data about parent engagement was available from both the administrator and coordinator interviews, and from the on-line parent survey (2014) contrasted with the same questions from the 2013 parent telephone interviews.

Table 11 below relates to parent engagement efforts from the coordinators' perspective. The results of all three years were very modest and showed little change over time. For the second question, eight schools related that they do not make any special effort to enhance parent treatment by staff. Another five schools commented about the lack of cooperation in general from many of their staff related to this goal. Many of the comments accompanying these questions related to the great difficulty in engaging parents in any way, not just for S3.

Table 11

Coordinators' Assessment of Parent Engagement

Parent Support	0-100 Rating		
	2012	2013	2014
Parents have been contacted and encouraged to participate in the program.	42%	68%	51%
Staff are encouraged to ensure parents feel welcome and supported at school.	44%	55%	49%

Coordinators were also asked, "In what ways have parents been made active participants in the S3 program?" The rubric for the highest rating was "There is considerable parent involvement in S3-related activities," and only four schools received this rating. Another 11 schools (20%) were rated "Moderately-high" with the largest proportion of schools (50%) rated "Moderate: There is some parent involvement in S3 activities." The related

comments generally fell into two equally sized categories: schools that tried but had limited success in engaging parents, and schools that did not put much effort into parent engagement.

One of two new questions this year asked the administrators, "In what ways have you promoted parent involvement in S3?" The transformed rating for this question was a modest 65 percent. Less than one-half of the administrators received one of the highest two of five ratings. A second administrator question asked, "In what ways have parents actually been involved in improving school climate this year?" The follow-up probes asked about better attendance at school functions, having a role in S3 activities, and improved connection to the school. This question demonstrated an even lower rating of 51 percent. Many of the interviewee comments noted that although their current success was modest, they felt it represented an improvement over prior years.

Administrators were asked how extensively they promoted parent involvement in the S3 program, using personal contacts, calls, emails, meetings, and newsletters. Two-thirds of the administrators received "High" or "Moderately High" ratings on the five-point scale. Unfortunately, nine schools (15%) had "Moderately Low" or "Low" ratings. Some of the TAS written comments based on administrator statements were:

- "The Principal does not perceive promotion of S3 generally, and parent involvement in S3 specifically, as part of his role. "
- "School has no ongoing sustained support for parents."
- "Parental involvement is a huge struggle for this site as most parents are simply in "survival mode" and aren't able to become engaged at school."

The parents' perspective on their on-campus treatment was derived from the question asked of them on the 2012 and 2013 telephone survey: "How do school staff members treat you when you go on campus?" These data are shown for the past two years in Table 12 below. The responses were fairly similar both years, with an uncomfortable proportion of parents saying that "only some" or "few" staff members treated them well in 2013.

Table 12

Staff Treatment of Parents on Campus

	% Response	
Responses	**2012**	**2013**
Everyone treats me very well	65%	55%
Nearly everyone treats me very well	20%	24%
Many treat me very well	9%	8%
Some treat me very well	2%	8%
A few treat me very well	4%	5%

The Parents' perspective on efforts to involve them at school is shown in Table 13 below. These results show improvement but still indicate great room for improvement.

Table 13

Changes in School Efforts to Involve Parents in School Activities

	% Response	
Responses	**2012**	**2013**
Dramatic increase in efforts to involve parents	32%	48%
Some increase in efforts to involve parents	53%	35%
Little increase in efforts to involve parents	15%	17%

Not all parent respondents had children in the school at least two years.

When parents were asked about the school's effectiveness in building trust, 66 percent said it was extremely or very effective in 2013 compared to 56 percent in 2012. Overall however, these data suggest that parent engagement and involvement was a lower priority for many schools than some of the other components of S3. On balance, the evidence does not suggest strong improvements in parent engagement during the project.

Student Voices

The following findings were drawn from the Student Voices focus groups conducted on each site. Findings are organized by each of the question topic areas.

(1) What changes have been made at this school to help reduce bullying?

The large majority (over 80%) of student focus groups said that the changes made at their schools to help reduce bullying have had a positive impact. A few (2 or 3) each reported a minimal impact, moderate impact or no impact. The most common changes reported by the groups were:

- Report bullying when it's witnessed (over 80%)
- Staff/Administration take swift action (about 60%)
- Peer Mediation (about 30%)
- Assemblies (about 25%)
- Increased awareness (about 20%)
- More security guards/cameras (about 25%)

About 20-25% of the groups had very positive comments about the following programs and attributed the resulting "good will" on campus to alleviating bullying:

- Link Crew
- Safe School Ambassadors
- Challenge Days

Several groups reported that cyber bullying is more of an issue than traditional bullying.

The following are some representative comments from students:

"The campus is calmer now than before because they, as a whole, won't tolerate bullying."

"We stop bullying at the root."

"When I was a freshman, I didn't have an upperclassman to be a friend. Most freshmen were trashed (thrown in the trash can). We used to have Freshman Friday where upperclassmen could pick on freshmen, but now we have Link Crew to create friendships and connections."

"So many staff are at our games and involved with us outside of school. There is always someone right there to help and stop the bullying right then and there. Teachers will get involved and won't just leave the kids to handle it on their own."

"We look out for underclassmen and help all the kids."

"When the administration finds out about bullying they deal with it."

(2) How does this school encourage students not to use alcohol or drugs?

The large majority (almost 70%) of student focus groups said that the changes made at their schools to reduce substance use have had a positive effect. About 15% thought the changes had helped moderately, and a few (5 or less) each reported a minimal impact or no impact. The most common methods were:

- Every 15 Minutes and Red Ribbon Week.
- Speakers/assemblies/classroom presentations
- Freshmen receive a semester-long health class about alcohol and drugs
- Substance abuse counselor/Health Center/Wellness Center/classes or support groups for substance users
- Posters/flyers around campus
- Increased security

The following are some comments from students:

"Every time I used to walk by the restrooms I could smell drug use. Now it's way better."

"Students rely on substances less because they can rely on the adults."

"Upperclassmen set the tone overall for the campus, and drug and alcohol use won't be tolerated."

"PBIS presentation boards and videos made by students that talk about good choices have more impact than if they were done by teachers or other adults, because students can relate better to their peers."

"Drug use and involvement is prevalent in the community."

(3) What changes have been made at this school to help reduce violence (fighting and assaults)?

About 90% of the groups reported that violence overall has decreased in recent years, usually attributed to (a) better monitoring of the campus (more teachers/staff/campus monitors, cameras, and/or campus police) and (b) various S3 programs that had been implemented on their campus. The following comments were made by some of the students:

"I was walking to class one day and there were two guys about to fight. They were really close to each other and it was clear that a fight was about to break out and then another student stepped between them and said, 'Hey guys, you really don't want to do this right now.' He literally stopped the fight from happening and I couldn't believe it.'"

"Security guards find out what's going on and address it."

"There were many more fights when we were freshmen and sophomores."

"Our school is a lot closer and everyone is just more friendly in general."

"In my freshman year there used to be some fights, but after we got Link Crew and Camp LEAD, the fights just seemed to go away. It isn't even an issue anymore."

"Staff members treat threats of violence very, very seriously."

"It's much calmer here now than it used to be."

(4) Does it seem that adults at this school have higher expectations for students than in the past?

Over 80% of the groups reported that overall the adults at their schools have higher expectations than they have in the past. About 10% reported that some teachers do. One or two each reported that there is preferential treatment primarily by AP/Honors teachers or that teachers do not have higher expectations. The following is a sampling of representative comments:

"Any academic help we need we get even after class."

"We know what is expected of us."

"I've gotten so much help from teachers. They are awesome. I know if I were in a bad situation they would help me out with lunch or a ride home."

"The bar is set high and we have to go past the bar. Teachers that don't set high standards are disrespected by students."

"I didn't do well my freshman year, but teachers encouraged more opportunities and encouraged me to do better."

(5) What changes have you seen that show your school has been working to support caring relationships among students and staff?

About 75% of the groups agreed that there are more caring relationships between students and staff in recent years. Less than 10% felt there were not caring relationships overall, and the remainder said there were some. About three-fourths of the groups with more caring relationships cited most if not all of the following characteristics of caring adults at their schools:

- Connect to students
- Reach out to students
- Rooms are open/Greet students at the door
- More visible

- Approachable/Available
- Friendlier
- Understanding
- Helpful both academically and personally
- Supportive

Several groups reported that staff members are more relatable now by expressing their personalities more and sharing personal stories, especially when both students and staff are included in activities or events. Students felt these connections help to form caring relationships. A few groups reported that staff now ask students for their opinions and feedback, which makes them feel more connected:

"They would do anything for us."

"Administrators are usually out and about on campus mingling with students and know many by their first names."

"I have been able to talk to teachers during prep periods when there are things bothering me, if I need help with school or a personal issue."

"The Principal is always walking around campus and talking with students. He is very professional but finds ways to connect."

"At first I thought my teacher only cared about how I did academically, but the more I talked with her and got to know her, I realized she truly cares about me as a person. We talk about my life and I can tell she really believes in me."

(6) What was your experience with some of the S3 programs?

"If I wasn't involved in one of these programs, I probably wouldn't be as involved in school."

"I have now been able to use the skills in my own life and really think twice about what I am doing and set an example for others."

"I have connected with different people on campus and am more open to other people's challenges and not as judgmental about people."

"Things on campus have really calmed down a lot since our freshman year. The tension has gone and the overall mood seems calmer. Students are interacting with each other more."

"My freshmen year there were so many gang fights and the Restorative Justice program has really changed our environment."

The findings from the Student Voices component of the evaluation clearly demonstrate that many of these students who were most involved in the program expressed changes not just in themselves but in the school environment as well.

Challenges and Obstacles

Still, every S3 school cited at least one challenge or obstacle to grant implementation. Taken together, they clearly show the formidable challenges that face a school attempting to make fundamental changes such as are required to improve school climate. The following challenges were identified most commonly:

Lack of staff buy-in: Last year, over 60 percent of site leaders reported that "some or many" staff members were reluctant to participate in the S3 program. This year this concern had been reduced to 45 percent of schools, which although improved was still uncomfortably high. Some of the explanations for low staff buy in were:

"Staff has been opposed to this grant because they have viewed it has been a top down decision and not something they have had a voice in."

"Although many CHS staff have been supportive of S3 strategies, there remain a group of tenured teachers that do not wish to participate in any S3 activities. This year has seen a further decline in staff participation due to other obligations such as Common Core implementation."

"Hard to get anyone to go beyond the academic. The School Improvement Grant took a lot of people's time, leaving less for S3."

"[This] is a very contentious place where teachers are currently under "work to rule". They will not work after school, which is a barrier for most S3 activities. The coordinator can still host them, but shifting the climate of the school is impossible if no school adults are participating."

"Change comes slowly to teachers and lots of pieces have to be in place."

"Staff resistance actually grew over the last three years rather than declined. There was a lot of tension between the previous administration team and the staff and as a result, the staff have not been supportive of S3."

"By far the greatest challenge was working with staff in a way to where they would be supportive and on board with the grant and not feel like it was being shoved down their throats. Now, the entire culture of the school has changes for not only students but staff too."

<u>Staff/Administrator turnover or reductions:</u> Almost one-half of all coordinators listed staff/administrator turnover as a significant problem to S3 implementation; one-quarter said it was a "great problem or obstacle." The concern was evenly split between administrators versus staff changes. Some key comments were:

"There have been five principals since the beginning of the grant (two were temporary), two different S3 coordinators and many other staff/administrator changes."

"The entire administrative team is new this year."

"The coordinator was switched out at the beginning of this school year and it caused a great disruption in services, not because she was not wonderful, but because there is a lot to learn and track."

"The drastic turnover in Principals (3) has been the biggest obstacle. [The current Principal] said she has had to try to carry on the original vision but was not part of the initial grant writing team."

<u>Lack of parental involvement:</u> Last year, about 65% of the sites experienced difficulties with getting parents involved and this year that number moved up to 75%. Comments regarding the issue at some of the schools with the lowest parent involvement:

"Improving, but a long way to go still. Mainly economic reasons. There is little to no parent involvement at [this school]."

"This continues to be an issue for this high poverty school."

"Several parents on the team had to drop out because of illness, jobs, pregnancy, etc."

"Parental involvement at the school continues to be a great challenge despite the consistent and proactive communication by administration."

"Got really frustrated because reaching out … parents don't call back on follow-up with their child.

"Parents have shared with the Principal that they feel very informed these days about school events due to the increase in parent communication. However, parental involvement is still an issue. This topic is talked about at every leadership group on campus and they are committed to continuing their outreach efforts in order to recruit parents."

"There is a lot of transition among families at this site and many families who have single working parents who aren't able to commit to being involved in school activities."

<u>Difficulty in getting district approval for and access to grant funds:</u> One-third of the sites experienced issues with getting funds from the district office(s) for grant expenditures, reduced from one-half last year. Some of the relevant comments included:

"District always wanted to use the funds for district level things, not school specific."

"The new coordinator had to learn the systems, by trial and error."

"Seems like we have to fight district for approval for our money. Example, couldn't get [blank] through despite CDE approval."

"The new S3 coordinator has had much trouble with getting timely responses to his questions about expenditures and filling our expenditure reports at the school and district level."

"The district has a cumbersome fiscal approval process."

Competing Priorities: Many coordinators and administrators commented on the difficulty of implementing S3 while at the same time dealing with competing challenges such as Common Core, WASC accreditation, LCAP, and School Improvement grants:

"We are piloting Common Core and PBIS this year, which has stretched the leadership team pretty thin."

"Time and competing demands are the biggest challenges. This year with the implementation of Common Core it was difficult to give full-attention to S3 all of the time."

"Too many competing agenda items such as transition to Common Core, academic discourse."

"The major challenges have been cleaning up the grant effort after the last principal left and also the simultaneous roll-out of Common Core."

"Time, competing factors and attitudes have been the biggest challenges. The SIG (and WASC) in year one led to a late start… I had to cut red-tape of SIG, was difficult to have staff available for S3."

These many and varied challenges make very clear the difficulty of creating and institutionalizing new programs, behaviors and expectations in California schools. Given these difficult impediments, the qualitative review suggests a reasonably high level of implementation quality for the majority of funded schools.

Sustaining the S3 Program

Providing a measure of the extent to which the S3 programs may be sustained in 2014-15 and beyond has been made more complex by the fact that about 85-90 percent of the schools will have some carryover S3 funding into that year. The amount of carryover by site could not be determined by the time of this report, but it is expected to range widely from school to school. About 40-50 percent of the schools reported that they feel they can sustain their full S3 program next year while most of the rest expect to run an abbreviated program, with many schools expecting to sustain about one-half of the S3 activities.

The schools realize that they need additional sources of funding for their S3 program next year; 60 percent of the schools had already identified program strategies that could not be covered by carryover S3 funds. They have worked in spring 2014 to identify additional funding sources. The S3 program arrived at a fortuitous time in California because a new strategy for funding schools is taking place starting with the 2014-15 school year. This new strategy (Local Control Funding Formula, or LCFF) specifically mentions school climate as one of eight core strategies that must be addressed in school expenditure plans. The S3 schools have been working to show how their programs can help the district meet its LCFF school climate responsibilities, with 85 percent of the S3 administrators reporting that they were aware of district efforts to address school climate with LCFF. Other possible sources of funding to continue the S3 program were Title I (20% of schools) and grants (22%).

The work to plan an extended S3 program in 2014-15 had been primarily led by school groups that most often consist of the Principal, S3 Coordinator (80% of schools), Vice Principal (70%), district-level staff (60-70%), and

others such as school site councils (20%). About 75 percent of the S3 schools said they think there has been an "extensive" or "considerable" increase in awareness and supports from central district staff in promoting and supporting school climate. In a final question to administrators about sustainability, 65 percent said they were "almost certain" their S3 program would continue on two years from now when all carry-over funding is gone.

Analysis of School Climate Index Data

As described in the Methodology section, a primary Outcome Measure is the School Climate Index (SCI), a school-level school climate measure. Data from the baseline, pre-funding year (2010) SCI and last (2014) SCI were used to make summative judgments about the likely impact of program efforts among the funded schools. In addition, the funded schools were also contrasted to a comparison group comprised of all other schools in the funded districts, as well as all schools in districts that applied for, but did not receive, funding. Regression models were estimated (per Tom) to compare changes in outcomes among and across the intervention and non-intervention schools. For the SCI and its subscales, higher scores are more desirable.

Table 14 provides a breakdown of the statewide mean scores for the 58 S3 schools and the 94 non-grantee school comparison group. In addition, the table shows the changes (differences) from baseline to program end, the effect size[8], and whether a statistically significant difference at the .05 confidence level was found. The S3 grantees scored 40 points lower at baseline than the non-grantee group, which was a natural outcome of inviting only low-scoring schools for S3 funding. In contrast, the non-grantee schools' baseline score of 295 was near the state average of 300. While non-grantees had a small, nine-point improvement over the four years, the S3 grantees improved a statistically significant 28 points with an effect size of 0.71. Effect sizes in this range are generally considered between moderate and large, suggesting a strong impact of the variable being tested, which is of course the S3 program.

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[8] An Effect Size is calculated from the pooled standard deviation of means at baseline and is a measure of the substantive significance of differences between groups. While statistical significance reports the likelihood that a difference is real, the effect size provides a measurement of the strength of that difference. Social scientists generally consider an ES of <0.3 "small", 0.3-0.6 "moderate", 0.7-1.0 "large" and >1.0 "very and unusually large."
Rosenthal, J.A. (1996), "Qualitative descriptors of strength of association and effect size," Journal of Social Service Research, 21(4): 37-59.

Table 14

Overall SCI Scores for S3 Grantees and Non-Grantees

School Climate Index Scores for Grantee versus Non-Grantee Schools					
Schools	Baseline 2010-11	Post 2013-14	Change	Effect Size	Significant Difference?
Non-Grantees	295	304	9	0.21	Yes
S3 Grantees	255	284	28	0.71	Yes
Difference	-40	-20	20	0.49	Yes

The SCI has two major sub-scales, the first of which is Supports and Engagement (S&E). The scores for these are shown in Table 15 below. The S&E subscale measures high expectations, caring relationships, perceived school safety, school connectedness, and opportunities for meaningful participation. Non-grantees saw a small but significant lowering of their S&E scores. S3 grantees had a smaller change (-6) that was not statistically significant. These scores suggest that the S3 programs were not successful in improving the S&E components of the SCI.

Table 15

Changes in Grantee and Non-Grantee SCI Supports and Engagement Subscale Scores

SCI Scores for Grantee versus Non-Grantee Schools: Supports and Engagement Subscale					
Schools	Baseline 2010-11	Post 2013-14	Change	Effect Size	Significant Difference?
Non-Grantees	288	276	-12	0.31	Yes
S3 Grantees	256	250	-6	0.16	No
Difference	-32	-26	6	0.15	No

Table 16 contains data for the other major SCI subscale, Low Violence, Victimization, and Substance Use (VVS). The VVS scale is made up of items measuring school violence perpetration, violence and emotional victimization, harassment/bulling and substance use.

Table 16

Changes in Grantee and Non-Grantee SCI
Violence, Victimization & Substance Use Subscale Scores

SCI Scores for Grantee versus Non-Grantee Schools: Violence, Victimization & Substance Use Subscale					
Schools	Baseline 2010-11	Post 2013-14	Change	Effect Size	Significant Difference?
Non-Grantees	303	331	28	0.64	Yes
S3 Grantees	264	323	58	1.34	Yes
Difference	-39	-8	31	0.70	Yes

Non-grantees saw a modest (ES: 0.68), statistically significant improvement of their VVS score. S3 grantees improvement was 58 points and was both statistically significant and "very large" in Effect Size, at 1.34. The measured effect between the two groups' change scores was "large" at .70. These data strongly demonstrate a high probability that these positive climate changes are attributable to the S3 program. Further analysis of the VVS subscale component elements revealed that the strongest effects were for reduced self-reported violence perpetration (ES: 1.58) and lower reported violence victimization (1.40). Detailed results of the S3 grantees' statewide SCI component elements can be found in the State School Climate Report Card in the Appendix.

S3 Implementation Objectives Findings

The Implementation Objectives are statements of intended impacts created by the CDE in developing its S3 proposal. Each objective is shown in Table 17. The first three objectives each utilized a single question from the California School Climate Survey of staff (CSCS). A school was defined as meeting the objective if 60% or more responding staff selected the top two most desirable items on the five item scale. The fourth objective utilizes a 0-100 score representing the approximate success achieved by S3 schools in implementing their proposed work plan activities while the fifth objective was measured based on a program fidelity assessment conducted on-site by the evaluation team. In both cases, schools that achieved a 60% or higher score met the objective. Baseline data was not available for most items because the questions used to assess the objectives were added to the surveys after the baseline year.

Table 17

S3 Implementation Objectives Findings

Implementation Objectives	Percent of schools Meeting the Objective		
	2012	2013	2014
School-wide commitment to create a safe & supportive learning environment	96%	91%	95%
Engage in systematic data-driven decision-making for school improvement	93%	97%	96%
Involve students, staff, and parents in program design/implementation	63%	66%	81%
Address program needs of the general student population and high-risk students	29%	72%	91%
Implement evidence-based/research-based programs with full fidelity	N/A*	94%	92%

Fidelity data not collected in 2012

By 2014, over 90% of funded schools were meeting all the objectives except for the one involving students, staff and parents in program design and implementation. The school staff in 19 percent of S3 schools reported in the CSCS that their school did not promote their participation in decision making. This was confirmed in the qualitative findings, where some schools had low levels of parent and student participation. Overall, however, the large majority of S3 schools met the standards of the Implementation Objectives.

S3 Outcome Measures Findings

The evaluation also included several specific Outcome Measures selected by CDE to provide data for the federal Department of Education's Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA's) measures. The Outcome Measure is comprised of individual questions drawn from the CHKS, CSCS, or CSPS. The goals for each objective are integrated into the objective text. These results are shown in Table 18.

Table 18

S3 Outcome Measures Findings

Project Outcome Measures	Percent of schools Showing Decline since 2011		
	2012	2013	2014
Ninety percent of funded schools will experience a decrease in the percentage of students who report personal harassment or bullying on school property.	60%	72%	55%
Ninety percent of funded schools will experience a decrease in the percentage of students who report (30-day) alcohol use.	71%	90%	90%
Ninety-five percent of funded schools will experience a decrease in the number of suspensions for violent incidents without physical injury.	43%	48%	47%
	Percentage Point Change Since 2011		
There will be a ten percentage point increase among all funded schools in the number of students who report feeling connected to school.	0%	+1	-1
There will be a ten percentage point increase among all funded schools in the number of teachers who agree or strongly agree that their school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn.	-5	-4	-2
There will be a ten percentage point increase among all funded schools in the number of parents who agree or strongly agree that the school allows input and welcomes parents' contributions.	-1	-1	-1

Fidelity data not collected in 2012

One of the first three objectives was met; for 30-day alcohol use. Only about half of the funded schools met the other two. In the case of harassment or bullying, it can be argued that the goal was set too high since the SCI harassment/bullying subscale improved with a very large effect size of 1.01. So while not all schools improved, those that did made great strides.

The second three objectives were not met. The objectives required ten percentage point changes and the results were far from these goals. In fact, the results were slightly worse than at baseline. These findings generally match the findings for the SCI Supports and Engagement scale, where the S3 schools made no significant improvement.

Summary Discussion

S3 schools as a group generally received moderately high ratings on the rubric-anchored site visit assessments. About 80 percent of Work Plan activities had been implemented in consonance with their plan, student referral systems received strong ratings (after a very slow start in the first grant year), staff training was strong in most elements except coaching, and efforts to communicate to the staff and students about school climate were robust. Most schools also did an excellent job of integrating the S3 program with other school programs and

efforts. SCI findings demonstrated a strong, positive change for S3 schools during the program. These results remained moderate to strong when contrasted with the non-grantee comparison group.

However, nearly all of the gains made on the SCI were on the reduced Violence, Victimization and Substance Use subscale. These findings were broadly confirmed by the results of the site visits, where many schools demonstrated significant school-wide changes to school discipline policies and systems, where anti-bulling programs were in wide adoption, and where restorative justice was a strong focus. These programs often had strong fidelity of implementation and seemed to impact the whole school.

At the same time, improvements were not recorded for the other major SCI subscale, Supports and Engagement. The qualitative findings provide some explanation for this conclusion. School climate research suggests that increasing high expectations, building caring relationships, enhancing meaningful participation for students, and generally building school connectedness requires changed behaviors on the part of the large majority of adults on a campus. This is especially true on a high school campus where students generally have direct contact with at least six and often more adults each day. This evaluation demonstrated that very few funded schools adopted approaches that reached or intensively involved the broader school staff or large numbers of parents.

It was also true that the schools varied very widely in their level of success and that this success was linked to the quality of program implementation. In the examination between the measured work plan implementation and SCI gains over time it was found that 80 percent of schools that were in the top quartile of work plan implementation had a better than average SCI gain, while only seven percent of schools in the lowest quartile of work plan ratings had an above average SCI gain. These findings strongly demonstrate that the schools which more fully implemented their work plan were much more likely to have improved school climate. This also adds evidence that SCI gains were the direct result of quality program implementation and not random chance.

The evaluation provided rich information about the challenges and obstacles that either impeded implementation, or were overcome, and clearly show the formidable difficulties that schools face in attempting to make fundamental changes such as are required to improve school climate. The most typical challenges were:

- Lack of staff buy-in and participation
- Staff and administrator turnover and reductions
- Difficulty engaging parents in school life
- Barriers faced with district administration
- Competing priorities such as Common Core, WASC accreditation, LCAP and School Improvement.

These many and varied challenges make very clear the difficulty of creating and institutionalizing new programs, behaviors and expectations in California schools, especially in efforts to involve all members of a school staff and large numbers of parents.

APPENDIX

Fidelity Elements to be rated in the SUFA

A. Audience Category and Characteristics: a Category is a general population identifier such as parents, students, teachers, adult volunteers, bus drivers, or others. Specific characteristics of each Category might include:

B. Students: "at-risk"; suspended; general population; abused substances; student leader; etc.

C. Parents: parents of students who have been suspended, parent volunteers, etc.

D. As a rating example, if the evidence-based program proved its success with at-risk students selected through a well-identified screening procedure, it should not be used with general population students, or with students screened by some other approach.

E. Setting Size: Individual service or certain group sizes. If the program is designed for groups of 5-7 students, it would have "Low" adherence if delivered in a classroom setting with 30 students. If a program is specifically designed for an afterschool program, it would be a departure from the model to use it during the regular school day.

F. Provider Characteristics: This refers to the pre-existing characteristics of the individuals who will deliver the program prior to receiving any program training. Examples include: certificated teacher, certificated counselor, "12th grade student mentor", "community adult", Registered Nurse, etc. An example showing a mismatch would be a program model tested with "community volunteers", but implemented by the school's classroom teachers.

G. Provider Training: This refers to the specific training the provider was to receive; content, hours, provider, etc.

H. Topic Content: Content refers to the recommended curriculum, guides, or other written material provided by the program. This component includes lesson or session topic content (stories, vignettes, readings, assessments, etc.). Topic Content can generally be assumed to have been covered if a Provider uses the full number of lesson plans or guides as designed, taking care to cover all topics.

I. Dosage: Dosage refers to time on task for the Topic Content pieces described above. If a curriculum has 20 sessions designed to last one class period each (about 45 minutes), but a Provider presented only 10 sessions at 45 minutes, or tried to cover the 20 session content in five hours, this would be "Low" fidelity to the intended design.

SUFA Rating Rubrics

High: The element as implemented was a precise match to the program element described, or varied in a small way that could be reasonably interpreted to match the general intent of the program designers. An example is a program designed for drug user intervention directed to drug users; or, for numerical elements (number of lessons, sessions, time on task, etc.) the program was within 10% of the recommendation.

Moderate: The element as implemented was somewhat different from the program element described. An example is a program designed for drug user intervention directed to groups with both drug users and nonusers; or, for numerical elements (number of lessons, sessions, time on task, etc.) the program was between 50% and 90% of the recommendation.

Low: The element as implemented was very different from the program element described. An example would be a program designed for drug user intervention directed instead to general population students; or, for numerical elements (number of lessons, sessions, time on task, etc.) the program was below 50% of the recommendation.
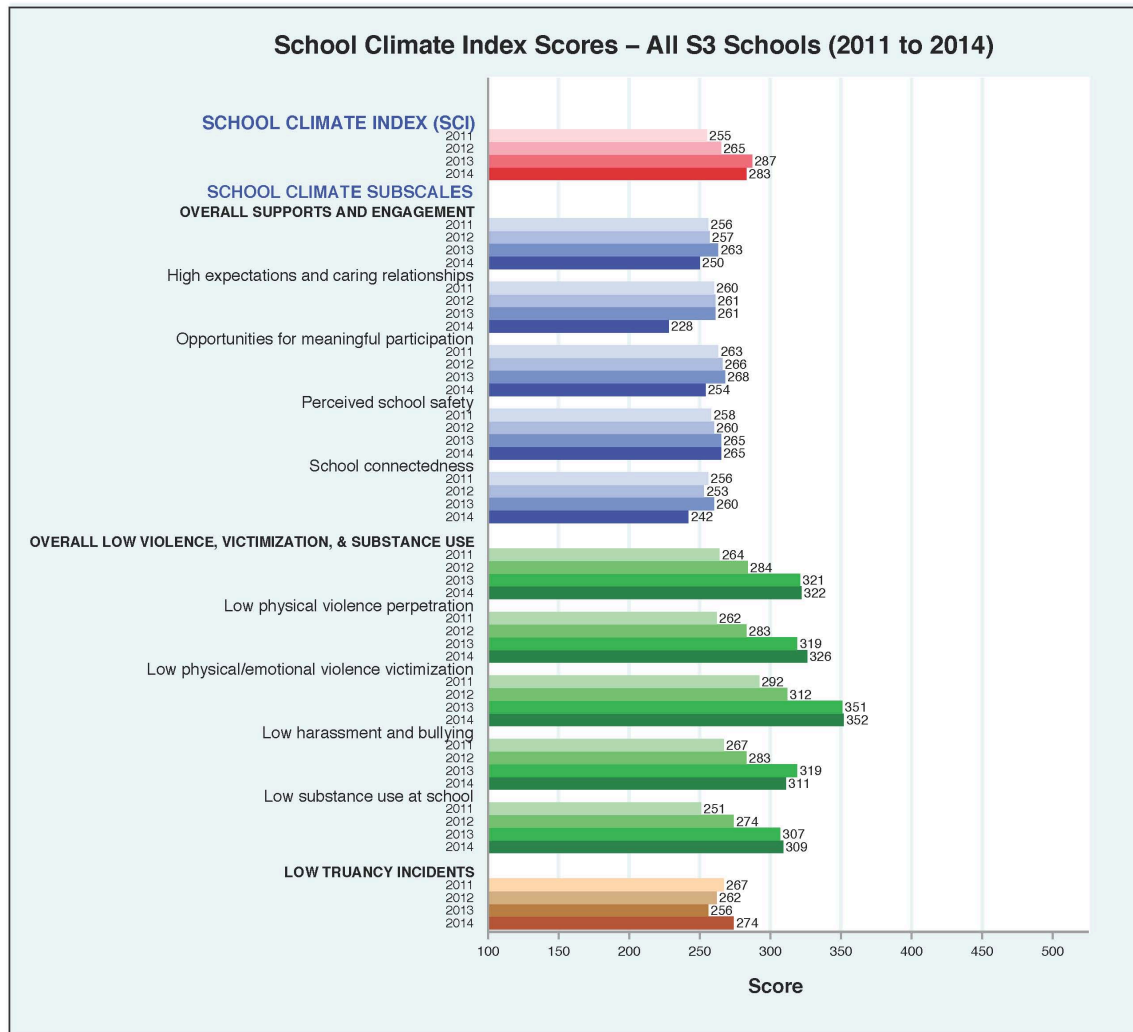
State School Climate Report Card—Spring 2014

California Safe and Supportive (S3) High Schools   Date Prepared: 25 Nov 2014

School Climate Index (SCI)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	Change
SCI Score	255	265	287	283	+28
SCI State Percentile	21	31	45	42	+21

School Climate Index Scores – All S3 Schools (2011 to 2014)

SCHOOL CLIMATE INDEX (SCI)
- 2011: 255
- 2012: 265
- 2013: 287
- 2014: 283

SCHOOL CLIMATE SUBSCALES

OVERALL SUPPORTS AND ENGAGEMENT
- 2011: 256
- 2012: 257
- 2013: 263
- 2014: 250

High expectations and caring relationships
- 2011: 260
- 2012: 261
- 2013: 261
- 2014: 228

Opportunities for meaningful participation
- 2011: 263
- 2012: 266
- 2013: 268
- 2014: 254

Perceived school safety
- 2011: 258
- 2012: 260
- 2013: 265
- 2014: 265

School connectedness
- 2011: 256
- 2012: 253
- 2013: 260
- 2014: 242

OVERALL LOW VIOLENCE, VICTIMIZATION, & SUBSTANCE USE
- 2011: 264
- 2012: 284
- 2013: 321
- 2014: 322

Low physical violence perpetration
- 2011: 262
- 2012: 283
- 2013: 319
- 2014: 326

Low physical/emotional violence victimization
- 2011: 292
- 2012: 312
- 2013: 351
- 2014: 352

Low harassment and bullying
- 2011: 267
- 2012: 283
- 2013: 319
- 2014: 311

Low substance use at school
- 2011: 251
- 2012: 274
- 2013: 307
- 2014: 309

LOW TRUANCY INCIDENTS
- 2011: 267
- 2012: 262
- 2013: 256
- 2014: 274

Score

Note: High values correspond to more positive school climates.

School Climate Subscale Results

	SCI Scores				
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**Change**
Overall Supports and Engagement	**256**	**257**	**263**	**250**	**-6**
High expectations and caring relationships	260	261	261	228	-32
Opportunities for meaningful participation	263	266	268	254	-9
Perceived school safety	258	260	265	265	+7
School connectedness	256	253	260	242	-14
Overall Low Violence, Victimization, and Substance Use	**264**	**284**	**321**	**322**	**+58**
Low physical violence perpetration	262	283	319	326	+64
Low physical/emotional violence victimization	292	312	351	352	+60
Low harassment and bullying	267	283	319	311	+44
Low substance use at school	251	274	307	309	+58
Low Truancy Incidents	**267**	**262**	**256**	**274**	**+7**

Results for Other Indicators

S3 Implementation Objectives and Measures

	Percent of Schools That Met Objective[A]			
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**
Objective 1. School-wide commitment to create safe/supportive learning environment				
Staff: Work hard to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment	N/A	96%	91%	95%
Objective 2. Engage in systematic data-driven decision-making for school improvements				
Staff: Objective data are integral in making school improvement decisions	N/A	93%	97%	96%
Objective 3. Involve students, staff, and parents in program design/implementation				
Staff: School promotes personnel participation in decision-making	67%	63%	66%	81%
Objective 4. Address program needs of student population and high-risk students				
Work Plan Activity score	N/A	29%	72%	91%
Objective 5. Implement evidence-based/research-based program with full fidelity				
Implementation Fidelity score	N/A	N/A	94%	92%

S3 Outcome Measures

	Percent of Schools Exhibiting Decline Since 2011		
	2012	**2013**	**2014**
Students: Harassed or bullied at school	60%	72%	55%
Students: 30-day alcohol use	71%	90%	90%
Incident data: Suspension rate (w/o physical injury)	43%	48%	47%
	Percentage Point Change Since 2011		
Students: Feeling of connectedness to school	0	+1	-1
Staff: School is a supportive and inviting place to learn	-5	-4	-2
Parents: School welcomes parents' input/contributions	-1	-1	-1

Note: N/A—Data were not collected.

What is the School Climate Index?

The School Climate Index (SCI) provides a state normed, school-level description of several factors that are known to influence learning success in schools. The SCI is used to measure one of the seven state Safe and Supportive Schools outcome measures. Scores on the SCI are based on **student CHKS data** and **school-level truancy incident data**. SCI scores can range from 100 to 500, with higher scores representing more positive school climates. During the 2008-10 period, the average SCI score for all high schools in California was 300.

The SCI is calculated by computing the weighted average of three domains: (1) *Supports and Engagement* (45%); (2) *Violence, Victimization, and Substance Use at School* (45%); and (3) *Truancy Incidents* (10%). The first two domains are measured based on a statistical model applied to CHKS items. These two domains are themselves each measured by four subdomains, as listed below.

      (1) Overall Supports and Engagement (45%)
- o   High expectations and caring relationships (6 items)
- o   Opportunities for meaningful participation (3 items)
- o   Perceived school safety (2 items)
- o   School connectedness (4 items)

      (2) Overall Low Violence, Victimization, and Substance Use at School (45%)
- o   Low physical violence perpetration on school property (7 items)
- o   Low physical and emotional violence victimization at school (6 items)
- o   Low harassment and bullying at school (5 items)
- o   Low substance use at school (4 items)

      (3) Low Truancy (10%)
- o   Low Truancy Incidents (1 indicator)

The *State Percentile* (page 1) shows how the average SCI in S3 high schools compares to the state average. Percentiles can range from 1 to 99. For example, a *State Percentile* of 21 means that only 21 percent of all California high schools had scores that were lower than or equal to the S3 schools. Percentiles are based on the distribution of SCI scores across all comprehensive high schools that administered the CHKS in the 2008-09 or 2009-10 school years.

What are the S3 Implementation Objectives?

The Implementation objectives are statements of intended impacts created by the California Department of Education (CDE) in developing its S3 proposal. Each Objective was assessed using one or more measures. The first 3 Objectives each utilize a question from the California School Climate Survey for staff. A school was defined as meeting the state objective if 60% or more responding staff selected the top two most desirable items on the five item scale. The fourth Objective utilizes a 0-100 score representing the approximate success achieved by S3 schools in implementing their proposed work plan activities. The fifth Objective was measured based on a program fidelity assessment conducted on-site by the evaluation team. In both cases, schools that achieved a 60% or higher score met the Objective.

What are the S3 Outcomes?

The S3 Outcomes were selected by CDE to provide data for the federal Department of Education's Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA's) measures. They comprise individual questions from the CHKS, CSCS, or California School Parent Survey (as indicated on page 2). The S3 Outcome Objectives refer to anticipated **changes** in the outcomes after the implementation of S3 activities in grantee schools (e.g., percent of schools that experience a decline or percent-point decline).

Further information about the methodology used to construct the SCI can be obtained in *Construction of California's School Climate Index* (http://californias3.wested.org/about) or by contacting Tom Hanson at 562-799-5170 or thanson@WestEd.org.