CALIFORNIA SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS

2011/12 Statewide Evaluation Results

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Executive Summary

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—and promote safe, caring, engaging, and healthy school environments that foster learning and well-being among both students and staff. Each funded state is conducting an independent evaluation of their program. In California, this effort was led by Duerr Evaluation Resources and involves a partnership effort with key staff members from CDE and WestEd. Additional information on the California S3 program can be found at: http://californias3.wested.org. The evaluation team began by developing the systems, measurement tools, and approaches necessary to assess the pre-to-post project Outcomes and Objectives in funded schools. The evaluation was comprised of the following elements:

Spring 2012 Evaluation Site Visit: The site visits had three definitive purposes: (1) as a monitoring evaluation to determine what the school is doing and plans to do in relation to their specific program plan, (2) as a formative evaluation that addresses research-based best-practice Factors and Request For Application (RFA) requirements, and (3) an opportunity for technical assistance provision—based on the evaluation criteria--designed to provide guidance for ongoing improvements to school programs. Each site visit consisted of interviews with key staff, focus group interviews, and a review of progress in program activities.

Spring 2012 Evaluation Telephone Survey: The S3 Evaluation Team completed telephone interviews with representatives from each S3 school. The phone survey addressed the same implementation quality issues identified in the site visit evaluation tools, but with more individuals than could be interviewed during the site visit. With extensive re-calling, 326 surveys were completed with a representative response rate of 74 percent.

The School Climate Report Card (SCRC) and the School Climate Index (SCI): The primary measure on the SCRC is the School Climate Index (SCI)—including several subscales--drawn from the California Healthy Kids Survey and archival truancy data. The SCI is a state normed scale describing several factors that are known to influence learning success in schools. The SCRC also includes other S3 Objectives and Outcomes utilizing staff and parent survey results.

The findings below are based on the combined outcomes of the site visits and telephone surveys.

Past School Climate Focus: Overall, the vast majority of S3 grant sites had a narrow and extremely limited focus on school climate prior to program funding. They struggled to involve the community, parents, staff, and students in a cohesive and effective manner. Staff members were frequently quoted as describing the efforts as "disjointed", "fragmented", "decentralized" and with "no shared goal" for school climate improvement. In contrast, four school sites were identified as having a fairly strongly established focus on school climate prior to S3 grant funding. According to staff members, concerted efforts were being made to enrich campus life at these sites. Overall, however, the School Climate Index scores for all 58 S3 sites were among the lowest in the state, demonstrating that these reported efforts had not led to the desired outcomes. Considering the reports across all S3 schools, the preponderance of evidence shows that these sites were all in desperate need of School Climate improvement.

Leadership and Idea Champions: Research 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. TA Specialists making site visits described almost all sites as having at least one such individual, in spite of the fact that about one-fifth of sites did not yet have a S3 grant Coordinator. Idea Champions were about equally likely to be Principals or S3 Coordinators, and occasionally other individuals such as a vice principal or other staff. Idea Champions were described by TA Specialists as enthusiastic, committed, excited, optimistic, and supportive.

At-Risk Student Referral: Each grantee was required to have program components that focused specifically on identifying and serving at-risk students. Nearly one-half of the funded schools had some sort of existing system for identifying and referring behaviorally at-risk students for specialized services. The remaining one-half of schools reported that prior to S3 funding they had either no referral system or an informal system without clear criteria for identifying appropriate students. By the end of the 2012 school year, TA Specialists reported that 72 percent of schools had referral systems that were still in a "developing" state that required further work.

The School Climate Team: Each school had a site-based School Climate Team (SCT). Members must include at minimum the principal, two teachers, two student support (or "learning support") services staff members, two parents, two students, and (voluntarily) community partners. Requirements of the SCT include: monthly meetings, review of annual Cal-SCHLS survey results, monitoring program progress, and other tasks. One-half of the program sites reported having no meetings during the course of the year outside of those required for the TA Specialist site visits, although a vast majority of these schools reported that regular meetings were being scheduled for the 2012/13 school year to be in grant compliance. Although the grant enjoins the S3 Coordinator to facilitate the meetings, in many schools the Principal or a different individual takes this role. A majority of the sites reported that having regular meetings and ensuring consistent attendance was hampered by two primary factors. The first was that some members were simply not committed and therefore quit or stopped attending. Even more problematic was finding meeting times that assured every member's attendance.

School Climate Promotion: S3 grant sites are responsible for communicating the school climate message to all stakeholders on campus and in the community. In general, the 58 sites fell fairly evenly into three categories of message dissemination in the first few months of funding: (1) Messages were not yet developed, (2) a modest number of climate messages had been disseminated, and (3) new climate messages were plentiful and delivered to a variety of stakeholders. Among the third group, more than half included newly developed slogans—such as "Be The Change," "Silence is not Golden" (anti-bullying)," and "Kindness Revolution." Messages were delivered in many ways, including staff meetings, parent phone calls, media materials, assemblies, and many others.

S3 Integration with Other School Improvement Programs: According to staff members and S3 Coordinators at the vast majority of funded schools, the S3 grant was being integrated into existing school improvement programs to leverage resources and collaborative relationships among staff and community members. The most common programs and services for integration included School Improvement Grants, student assistance programs, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Program, and after school programs. Several individuals described the S3 grant as an "umbrella" or "tent" under which the smaller, individual school climate efforts they had been making could be coordinated with other, new approaches.

Staff Training: The evaluation examined several key training factors shown by research to be critical to program success, including rehearsal, trainer observation of trainees, and ongoing coaching. About one-half or more schools were still at the 'beginning' stage with these training elements. Other practices, such as trainer demonstrations and instruction regarding the degree of allowable variation (for fidelity) were rarely beyond the 'beginning' stage. According to staff members at about two-thirds of the sites, at least one training session pertaining to a key S3 grant component occurred prior to the end of the 2011/12 school year. The remaining one-third of sites reported that there had been no training thus far, with many individuals citing constraints related to the late release of grant funds as a challenge to providing training to staff prior to the end of the first funded school year. In nearly all of the schools, plans were also firmly in place for additional trainings during the summer and/or beginning in the fall of the 2012/13 school year.

Parent Involvement: The requirements for parent involvement were twofold: (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. The large majority of S3 school Principals and Coordinators interviewed reported that they had started their parent involvement work by the end of the first year. This was confirmed by a resounding majority of parents interviewed, who described many and varied ways in which their school was clearly working harder to involve parents in school life. No interviewed parents indicated that they felt unwelcomed or unwanted on campus. Nearly all the parents who were interviewed felt that their opinions were not only sought, but respected and appreciated as well.

Policies and Rules: Approximately one-third of the program schools reported changes in policies or rules since the S3 grant was awarded. These changes often involved campus safety, discipline rules, alternatives to suspension, and harassment and bullying strategies. Another one-third of the schools reported that the S3 grant was motivating them to reexamine current policies and rules and consider possible revisions. The remaining schools did not report changes, or immediate plans to change, school policies.

Challenges and Obstacles: Over ninety percent of the S3 schools cited at least one challenge or obstacle to grant implementation. The following challenges were identified most commonly:

- *Delay in receipt of S3 funding*: most schools received funding about two-thirds of the way through the school year.
- *Lack of staff buy-in*: respondents in about thirty percent of sites reported that some or many staff members are reluctant to participate in the S3 program.
- *Delay in hiring the S3 Coordinator:* about one-third of sites still had not hired an S3 Coordinator due to administrative challenges and long time frames in the district hiring process.
- *Staff/Administrator turnover or reductions*: one-quarter of sites experienced the loss of key S3 team members and/or administrators due to layoffs or re-assignments to other schools.
- *Lack of available time to meet/implement the grant*: staff members often reported being already committed to the existing school year programs and services.

California S3 Website: Just short of one-half of the staff and parents reported having used the California Department of Education's S3 website at the time of the interview. The majority of those who used the website found it "helpful," "useful for gathering information about S3," and "informative." A few interviewees that reported the site, for them, was "difficult to navigate."

S3 Schools Technical Assistance Needs: Principals and S3 Coordinators reported to the TAS's the following examples of topics on which the local programs would like to receive technical assistance and training. Among these were the following:

- *Project Record Keeping* (over one-third of sites): requests were for detail about what records must be kept and good systems/practices for doing so.
- *CDE Reporting* (over one-third of sites): sites wanted additional information on fiscal reporting, examples of program reporting narratives, and a definition of clients "served."
- *Interpreting and further analysis of Cal-SCHLS data* (about one-third of sites)
- *Developing at-risk student referral systems*: a few asked for help; one-third of sites had no system in place.
- *Conducting staff training*

Listening Circle Action Item Review Findings: Student Listening Circles were one of the primary components of the fall site visits. The Circle Activity is a data–driven, research–based process for increasing the youth voice, promoting resilience, strengthening adult–youth connections, and ultimately, for improving schools. A student listening circle is a special type of focus group involving

eight to ten student participants who respond to five or six questions gleaned from the school's California Healthy Kids Survey data. The spring evaluation site visit included a review of Action Items from the Student Listening Circle Activity. The review was designed to determine the extent to which the Action Items from the Listening Circle had been addressed. It was determined that about a quarter of items were unrealistic and therefore dropped; another quarter were in-progress at year end; a further quarter had been completed; and the final quarter were still under review. Perhaps the most important finding, however, is that the vast majority of sites were taking the action items seriously and following-through with the promises made during the activity to take the recommendations seriously.

SCRC Findings: School-level SCRC's were developed in both 2010-11 and 2011-12 for the 58 S3 schools, both to provide ongoing feedback and to serve the schools for needs assessment. The data from these 58 schools were also aggregated each year for a State Level SCRC that displays changes over the two years. The primary measure on the SCRC is the overall School Climate Index (SCI), with scores that range from 100 to 500 with an average of 300 – with higher scores representing more positive school climates. The SCRC also translates this score to a percentile normed for the State of California.

In raw score, the SCI increased in 2011-12 from 253 to 261, and in state percentile improved from the 15th to the 21st Percentile. Examination of the subscale scores suggest that most of this improvement came from the Overall Low Violence, Victimization, and Substance Use components of the SCI, rather than the Supports and Engagement subscales. The evaluation model did not predict changes in the SCI as a result of one-half year's funding in 2011-12, when most schools' programs were just getting underway.

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INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) requires a comprehensive evaluation of the Safe & 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 (SCI), which is based on their survey and incident data (see II–C).
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 and comprised of individuals from both the CDE and WestEd, started the evaluation work by developing the systems and approaches necessary to assess the pre-to-post project Outcomes in funded schools. A 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 allow annual progress reports on all project Outcomes (the SCI and SCRC are described in more detail in the following Methodology section). Although both funded school and statewide results from 2011-12 for these Outcomes are presented in this report, they are only intended as progress indicators since the full findings cannot be determined until the end of year four.

While the S3 grant Outcomes focus largely on fundamental criteria regarding school climate behaviors, the S3 grant Objectives are more general statements regarding 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 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. However, as with the Outcomes, the findings from 2011-12 related to the Objectives are intended to assess interim progress only. Development of additional 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, et. al.[1] The Methodology section that follows provides the details of the full evaluation plan.

Additional information on the California S3 program can be found at 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 2012 Spring Evaluation Site Visit

Twelve Regional Technical Assistance Specialists (TAS) conducted site visits in April or May of 2012 using evaluation tools developed by the evaluation team. The site visits had three definitive purposes: (1) as a monitoring evaluation to determine what the school is doing and plans to do in relation to their specific program plan, (2) as a formative evaluation that addresses research-based best-practice Factors and Request For Application (RFA) requirements, and (3) an opportunity for technical assistance provision—based on the evaluation criteria—designed to provide guidance for ongoing improvements to school programs.

Each site visit consisted of four primary activities:

1. An interview with the S3 Coordinator (or other primary program contact if the S3 Coordinator hadn't been hired at the time of the visit)
2. An interview with the Principal (and in some cases the Vice Principal)
3. A focus group with the S3 School Climate Team (SCT)
4. A review of the mid-year "Student Listening Circle" activity Action Items

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

The interviews with the S3 Coordinator and Principal had two primary components. The first was the use of open-ended questions for which the TAS recorded a verbatim or abbreviated response. The second was a list of activities that the TAS discussed with the interviewee. The TAS then made a rating based on a provided rubric. The three possible ratings for all statements were "Beginning," "Developing," or "Advanced," each of which had a written rubric for use in making the appropriate rating. Although the rubrics for the S3 Coordinator interview varied specifically by question, those for the Principal interview were standardized and are shown below to provide a general understanding of the three ratings:

BEGINNING: The plan for this activity is not yet formed or systematic; there have been no meetings for planning or implementation yet; no written documents related to this activity developed; the activity is not yet underway.

DEVELOPING: There has been some planning; there may have been a meeting for planning or implementation; there may be draft written documents related to this activity; the activity may be in initial stages of implementation.

ADVANCED: A clear, systematic plan is in place; there have been two or more meetings for planning or implementation; there may be written documents related to this activity; the activity may be well underway.

The S3 School Climate Team Focus Group activity used a list of seven questions to guide the discussion. The group received an introduction to the activity and a set of rules to guide the process. TASs were trained to encourage discussion around each question and they recorded a summary narrative with the session results.

The final site visit component was the Student Listening Circle Action Item Review. Before the spring site visits, each funded school conducted a Listen to Students activity. Selected students gathered in a small circle, with school staff and other concerned adults sitting outside the circle, listening but not speaking. The students reflect on questions as in a focus group. In this program, the student conversations were guided to arrive at "action items" that might be included in the schools S3 program or in other ways. The purpose of the Action Item Review was to document the schools' progress in considering the action items, and also as a TA reminder of their importance.

The 2012 Spring Evaluation Telephone Survey

The S3 Evaluation Team conducted telephone interviews in May and June of 2012 with an average of six representatives of each schools S3 program. The phone survey addressed the same implementation quality issues identified in the site visit evaluation tools, but with more individuals than could be interviewed during the site visit. Separate questions in new areas of inquiry were prepared for the parents surveyed—focused largely on parent involvement —issues—since parents were not individually interviewed during the site visits.

Each school was asked to prepare a phone survey list to include individuals with the following roles. A single individual could not be selected to fill more than one of these roles:

- The S3 Coordinator
- Three or more parents with program involvement
- Two school or district employees with a role in delivering program services
- Up to two non-district individuals with a role in delivering program services (if applicable)
- One person with a role in modifying or managing the school's high risk youth identification and referral system
- One or more members of the School Climate Team not selected for one of the roles above

The final call list was comprised of 441 individuals in 58 schools. With extensive re-calling, 326 surveys were completed for a response rate of 74 percent. The highest survey completion rate was for S3 Coordinators (83%) and the lowest was for parents, at about 50 percent. Calls were completed with the following number of individuals in each subgroup:

- 48 S3 Coordinators (or primary program contact at that time)

- 82 parents

- 93 school or district staff

- 48 School Climate Team members

- 36 non-district individuals with a program role

- 19 individuals who worked on the at-risk student identification system (in many cases, the S3 Coordinator also filled this role and was not included in this count)

The School Climate Report Card (SCRC)

The SCRC summarizes several key evaluation information sources (see below). A key measure on the SCRC—and one that addresses S3 Outcome 1—is an overall score (with several subscales) called the School Climate Index (SCI). This 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. Progress on each of the other S3 Objectives and Outcomes is also displayed on the Report Card.

Several sources of data are used to populate the SCRC. The SCI total and subscale scores are based on student California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) data and school-level truancy incident data. Data for California S3 Outcome Measures are drawn from the California School Climate (staff) Survey, the California School Parent Survey (CSPS), and from school suspension incident data reported to the California Department of Education. The five S3 Objectives are measured using data from the CSPS and CSCS surveys, and from the findings of the Implementation Evaluation being conducted by the Independent Evaluator. Additional information about all three of the school surveys can be found at cal-schls.wested.org, while the methodology of the Implementation Evaluation is described above.

Data from the first (pre-funding) and last SCRC will be used to make summative judgments about program success. Although the statewide findings from —this—the second —SCRC—are included in this report, the evaluation model does not postulate an expectation for positive changes this year given the recent start of program implementation. Collection of the data is instead provided primarily for each of

the local schools as a way to track ongoing progress. 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

FINDINGS

Factor Rating, Interview, and Telephone Survey Findings

Introduction

This section is organized around topics linked to effective program implementation. It blends the results from both site visits and telephone surveys, and includes information from the site visit factor ratings, open-end questions and School Climate Team focus groups, along with the telephone survey responses. Data tables describe the factor ratings and identify the source of these ratings as from either the S3 Coordinator or Principal, while all of the personally recounted content is blended for a narrative analysis on each topic. The section begins with a description of the work and focus of these schools on school climate prior to S3 grant funding.

Past School Climate Focus

Overall, the vast majority of S3 grant sites had a narrow and extremely limited focus on school climate prior to program funding. They struggled to involve the community, parents, staff, and students in a cohesive and effective manner. Staff members were frequently quoted as describing the efforts as "disjointed," "fragmented," "decentralized," and with "no shared goal" for school climate improvement. Other typical comments were that "many good things [were] going on in different aspects, but everyone was not on the same page" and "everyone wanted to do something, but didn't know how." The challenges of past efforts to improve school climate reportedly included:

- Poor and disorganized surrounding neighborhoods
- Limited financial resources available to build school climate
- Inadequate communication and organization among stakeholders
- Significant and persistent administrative and staff turnover
- Severely limited parental and community involvement on campus

- School climate improvement efforts too often localized within one group of stakeholders

In contrast, four school sites were identified as having a fairly strongly established focus on school climate prior to S3 grant funding. According to staff members, concerted efforts were being made to enrich campus life at these sites, as evidenced by a mix of the following activities:

- Many multi-cultural events for both parents and students
- Workshops for parents on climate-related topics
- Increased parent participation on campus
- Strong partnerships with local community agencies
- Increased awareness of campus security
- Proactive approach by site administration and staff to parent and community involvement

Still, the School Climate Index scores at these sites were among the lowest in the state, demonstrating that these reported efforts had not led to the desired outcomes. Considering the reports across all S3 schools, the preponderance of evidence shows that these sites were all in desperate need of School Climate improvement.

Leadership and idea Champions

Research on implementation science[2] 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. TA Specialists making site visits described almost all sites as having at least one person who could be described as an "Idea Champion" for school climate. This was in spite of the fact that about one-fifth of sites did not yet have a S3 grant Coordinator. Individuals described as "Idea Champions" were about equally likely to be Principals or S3 Coordinators (and in a few cases both were described as such), and occasionally other individuals such as a vice principal or other staff member were identified. These "Idea Champions" were described by TA Specialists as "enthusiastic," "committed," "excited," "optimistic," and "supportive." Examples of how they demonstrated their leadership were described as follows:

- Promoting effective collaboration/positive working relationships
- Encouraging ongoing and open communication with team members and staff members
- Identifying and leveraging other resources for the S3 grant

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

- Addressing problems and barriers in a timely manner
- Publicly stating clear articulation of the importance of the S3 grant
- Demonstrating by example effective school climate behaviors
- Providing direct engagement in S3 activities
- Listening to student/staff/parent feedback
- Developing community support for the grant

Several factor ratings addressed leadership behaviors, as shown in Table 1 below. These ratings, about two-thirds of which were rated "beginning" suggest that—notwithstanding the narrative evidence provided above—there was still much room for expanded efforts in specific leadership areas on the part of S3 Coordinators and Principals.

Table 1
Leadership Behaviors

Implementation Factors — Leadership	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
The S3 Coordinator communicates regularly with staff members assigned to program activities	66%	33%	1%
Frequency of the Principal's messages to staff members about expectations	72%	22%	6%
Principal's personal role in helping solve problems in getting the new program operational	65%	30%	5%

Moving back to the narrative results, the following quotes illustrate typical leadership characteristics observed by the TA Specialists:

- "The Principal listens to feedback from staff regarding program implementation and acts decisively. The Principal has dedicated his time to promote the S3 program and he and the S3 Coordinator meet regularly to provide support to the program and identify challenges."
- "The Principal is an 'idea champion' to a considerable extent as evidenced by his vision, advocacy and enthusiasm for the project."
- "Both the Principal and S3 Coordinator are 'Idea Champions.' The principal is highly supportive of the program and well versed in the work plan. He has placed a high priority on ensuring that staff has adequate time for the new program practices. He is an active participant in all program activities and noted that he takes it very seriously…He views this program as a great opportunity for long-term change at this site."

- "The Assistant Principal is a clear idea champion of the program, and his enthusiasm has moved the program forward while awaiting the hiring of a permanent S3 Coordinator."
- "The S3 Coordinator meets and even exceeds all of the criteria for an 'idea champion.' She has built a strong rapport with all students, staff and administrators and has garnered the support of the school community."
- "Both the school's administrators and the S3 Coordinator are seen as leaders in the S3 program. All appear passionate about the grant and look to motivate those around them to ensure the success of the program."

At-Risk Student Referral

Each grantee was required to have one or more program components that focused specifically on identifying and serving at-risk students. 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 large majority of these systems had record keeping procedures that documented the referrals provided and in some cases monitored student outcomes. Of schools that had these systems, nearly all said they were modifying and expanding them to include identification of students meeting S3 criteria, and in all cases were identifying new resources for these referred students.

The remaining one-half of schools reported that prior to S3 funding they had either no referral system (except those focused strictly on academic concerns) or an informal system without clear criteria for identifying appropriate students. Nearly all of these sites were in the process of planning or building new systems for the S3 program, but only a handful of these were operational by the end of the 2011-12 school year. Most of these schools were building their referral systems as part of a larger Student Assistance Program (SAP), which generally included plans for training staff regarding referral processes, procedures, and criteria. Many of the schools in this group were interested in receiving assistance in developing these systems.

Research shows that there are several common components of effective referral systems. The factor ratings in Table 2, examined with the S3 Coordinators, addressed some of these components. The factor ratings confirm the narrative results and show that about one-half of the schools were well on the way to developing clear criteria and a solid plan for at-risk students, although this also means one-half of schools were still in the beginning stages. Looking at the third factor in Table 2, only about one-third of schools had the two higher ratings for assuring the new system would be consistently and systematically

used by staff. The final factor in Table 2 represents a judgment by TA Specialists in 72 percent of schools that the systems planned or operating at the time of the site visit were not at a 'developing' or 'advanced' state in terms of assuring the identification of the expected number of students.

Table 2
Implementation Factors of the At-Risk Student Referral Process

Implementation Factors — At-Risk Student Referral Process	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
The program's at-risk referral system is based on standardized and clearly defined criteria.	48%	20%	32%
The at-risk referral system will track the number of students referred, what they were referred to, and whether they participated.	48%	20%	32%
The at-risk referral system has features ensuring it will be used consistently and systematically by all individuals making referrals.	67%	13%	20%
The at-risk referral system will successfully identify the number of students described in the proposal.	72%	22%	6%

The School Climate Team (SCT)

Each funded school must have a site-based SCT. Members must include at minimum the principal, two teachers, two student support (or "learning support") services staff members, two parents, and two students. Community partners are encouraged but not required. The S3 SCT may 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 include:

- Facilitate 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.

One-half of the program sites reported having no meetings during the course of the year outside of those required for the TA Specialist site visits, although a vast majority of these schools reported that regular meetings were being scheduled for the 2012/13 school year to be in grant compliance. Although the grant enjoins the S3 Coordinator to facilitate the meetings, in many schools the Principal or a different individual takes this role. The ratings in Table 3 confirm the descriptions above from the SCT focus groups.

Table 3
Implementation Factors of the School Climate Team

Implementation Factors — School Climate Team	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
The School Climate Team has met the requirements for meeting frequency and member composition.	70%	20%	10%
The S3 Coordinator facilitates the School Climate Team meetings.	48%	20%	32%

 A majority of the sites reported that having regular meetings and ensuring consistent attendance was hampered by two primary factors. The first was that some members were simply not committed and therefore quit or stopped attending. Even more problematic was finding meetings times that assured every member's attendance. Principals were extremely busy and hard to schedule, and the nature of the highly diverse roles of the members (parents, teachers, community members, etc.) made scheduling for high attendance levels very difficult. A few sites reported working to overcome these challenges by requesting common preparation periods for SCT members and by providing substitutes for the teacher members.

Several sites reported convening subcommittees to overcome scheduling problems and to ensure progress toward program implementation. Sites indicated that these groups often met more frequently and reported back to the larger SCT regarding specific tasks related to program implementation. When asked about the management strategy used to make decisions, the large majority of sites reported that they operated by achieving consensus regarding their work.

School Climate Promotion

S3 grant sites are responsible for communicating the school climate message to all stakeholders on campus and in the community. In general, the 58 sites fell fairly evenly into three categories of message dissemination in the first few months of funding:

- No messages were delivered or the site was in the very beginning stages of developing and disseminating school climate messages.
- A modest number of messages regarding school climate were developed and delivered to some, but not all stakeholders.
- Numerous messages, many of which included new program slogans, were delivered to most or all stakeholders.

Principals and S3 Coordinators who stated that no messages were delivered generally felt they had not had enough time after funding to prepare and disseminate messages. Among the sites who had delivered some messages to specific stakeholder groups, examples included promoting "Quick Win" activities to teachers or messages related to specific programs, such as anti-bullying campaigns or the Safe School Ambassadors Program. Other schools had started their messaging campaigns by reaching some groups with limited messaging. These sites also universally noted the short development time available to them in the few months since S3 funding as the reason for not having fully developed communication strategies in place.

Among the nineteen sites in the third group, more than half included newly developed slogans as part of the school's campaign to promote S3 programs and activities. These slogans were developed as part of promoting specific program activities; for example, as part of the Challenge Days campaign, a site used "Be The Change" as the event motto. Another site developed the slogan "Silence is not Golden" as part of its promotion for an anti-bullying campaign. For some sites this was an opportunity to develop an overarching school motto to help promote the commitment to school climate improvement, for example, the "Excellence Campaign," "Kindness Revolution," "Viking Pride," "Stallions Helping Stallions Succeed," and "The Madera Way."

Staff members stated that messages were delivered to stakeholders from the Principal, S3 Coordinator, School Climate Team members, and students via:

- Posters, flyers, school newspapers, bulletins
- Staff meetings
- School website
- Assemblies

- Meetings (Staff, PTA, Club)
- School announcements (PA system)
- Parent phone call networks (ConnectEd, Parent Phone Tree, etc.)
- Community and/or Parent Liaison
- Word of mouth
- Specific program campaign materials
- Open house/Parent night

The Principal's role in school climate promotion is explored in Table 4.

Table 4
School Climate Promotion

School Climate Promotion	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
Principal's efforts to initiate and maintain a school-wide commitment to improving school climate in general	84%	12%	4%
Principal's communication to parents and the community regarding the school's commitment to the grant	76%	20%	4%

The table content confirms that in over three-fourths of schools, the Principals were in the "beginning" stages of promoting the grant to parents and the community. In even more schools—over four-fifths— the Principals were just beginning to initiate the communication of a school-wide commitment to school climate. These data suggest that the Principal's role in promoting school climate was somewhat behind the efforts of other staff members who had developed the messages described earlier in this section.

As a result of these communication efforts at two-thirds of the sites, evaluation respondents reported understanding the elements necessary for a safe and secure learning environment. Survey respondents specifically mentioned these elements most frequently:

- School connectedness
- Students have a trusting/caring adult on campus
- Students feel safe from emotional and physical threats on campus
- Clear expectations
- Fair and consistent discipline
- Respectful relationships between students and staff

S3 Integration with Other School Improvement Programs

According to staff members and S3 Coordinators at the vast majority of funded schools, the S3 grant was being integrated into existing school improvement programs to leverage resources and collaborative relationships among staff and community members. Programs and services for integration included:

- School Improvement Grants (SIG)
- Western Association of School and Colleges (WASC) review data
- Student Assistant Programs (SAP)
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) programs
- Health and Wellness Centers
- After School Programs
- Safe School Plan

One staff member was cited as saying, "the S3 program integrates well by creating stronger community feelings when families and business partners are involved and get a sense of connectedness." Another respondent said the S3 grant, "adds the socialization process/emotional aspects to complement our school's academic focus." Several individuals described the S3 grant as an "umbrella" or "tent" under which the smaller, individual school climate efforts they had been making could be coordinated with other, new approaches. One staff member saw the S3 grant as "our way of universal buy-in" for improving school climate.

The effectiveness of both the S3 Coordinator and Principal in resolving conflicts that result from integration is explored in Table 5. The ratings show that in about one-half the sites, these individuals were at a developing or advanced stage in dealing with these kinds of conflicts.

Table 5
S3 Integration with Other Programs

School Climate Promotion	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
Principal works to minimize any disconnects between this program and others at the school.	45%	45%	10%
The S3 Coordinator works with the Principal (or school leader) to resolve conflicts between existing programs and the new grant practices.	48%	20%	32%

Staff members at many program sites described the challenges ahead in bringing these integration efforts to fruition. These included:

- High rates of staff turnover
- Teacher, student, and community buy-in
- Effective communication
- Hiring/acquiring permanent S3 Coordinator and/or S3 staff member(s)
- Time constraints
- Unmet training needs for S3 programs

About one-third of the schools explicitly noted the important role of the SCT in making a success of the integration process. For example, a few individuals reported that team members are tasked with delivering follow-up messages and reports to groups on campus and the community. Others described the SCT as having a key role in monitoring and improving efforts to integrate S3 with other programs at the site expressly because the members were also involved with the other initiatives and could help navigate the complementary and/or conflicting elements of the various efforts.

Community Partnerships

Language in the federal S3 Notice Inviting Applications identified school-community partnerships as two-way relationships. While community agencies may provide resources and support for the students and parents, they should also provide an opportunity for students to contribute back and be involved in the improvement of the community as a whole.

Table 6
Implementation Factors for Community Partnerships

Implementation Factors — Community Partnerships	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
The school works with partner agencies offering S3 grant services as described in the proposal.	70%	20%	10%
Partner agencies offer students opportunities for student contribution as described in the proposal.	48%	20%	32%
The Principal is involved in developing partnerships with other district personnel or outside agency representatives related to developing the grant.	**80%**	**10%**	**10%**

The funded schools' work in community partnerships was addressed in three factor ratings, shown in Table 6. The greatest progress had been made with partner agencies offering students opportunities for contribution, with about one-half of schools receiving the two higher ratings. Principals' work in this area was rated lowest, with 80 percent of Principals receiving a rating of "Beginning."

Staff Training

Training is defined in the federal S3 Notice Inviting Applications as a process through which school staff members or community members receive information and instruction in how to engage in new behaviors. The following rated factors address these components. These ratings show that about one-half or more schools were still in the 'beginning' stages of the first three training factors below. Some of the more specific recommendations for training excellence—inclusion of demonstrations, degree of allowable variation, and observation—were even less likely to have progressed beyond "beginning."

Table 7
Implementation Factors of Staff Member Training

Implementation Factors — Staff Member Training	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
Training as planned or conducted incorporates rehearsal by all participants in the training setting.	48%	20%	32%
Training as planned or conducted includes trainer observation of trainees practicing new behaviors in real-world settings (in classrooms, during counseling sessions, small group situations, etc.).	46%	22%	32%
The coach has or will participate in a specific coach training program.	48%	20%	32%
Training as planned or conducted includes demonstrations by the trainers of the new behaviors.	70%	20%	10%
Training as planned or conducted provides guidance to trainees on the degree to which variation in trained behaviors is acceptable.	70%	20%	10%
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.	70%	20%	10%

According to staff members at about two-thirds of the sites, at least one training session pertaining to a key S3 grant component occurred prior to the end of the 2011/12 school year. In nearly all of these schools, plans were also firmly in place for additional trainings during the summer and/or beginning in the fall of the 2012/13 school year. The number of training sessions and number of staff members, parents, or others involved varied greatly among these schools. Some examples of training sessions that took place prior to the end of the school year included these programs and approaches:

- Breaking Down the Walls
- Capturing Kids' Hearts
- Link Crew
- Olweus Bullying Prevention
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Safe School Ambassadors (SSA)
- Student Assistance Program (SAP)

The remaining one-third of sites reported that there had been no training thus far, with many individuals citing constraints related to the late release of grant funds as a challenge to providing training to staff prior to the end of the first funded school year. Of those who did not provide training, only six reported having scheduled trainings set to begin during the 2012/13 school year.

About a quarter of the TA Specialists noted during their year-end site visit that their schools would benefit from assistance with developing a comprehensive training plan that included those factors identified by research as elements related to effective coaching, observation of student behaviors, acceptable variations in trained behaviors, and other elements. Only a few sites described a training plan that incorporated all of the elements noted above, which have been identified as important components for effective behavioral change.

School staff also listed both specific programs and generic topics on which they felt they needed more information before completing their training plans:

- Restorative Justice
- Breaking Down the Walls
- Student Assistance Program (SAP)
- Link Crew
- Safe School Ambassadors (SSA)
- Peer mediation

- Challenge Days
- Too Good for Drugs
- Project Toward No Drug Abuse

Parent Involvement

Parent support is described in the federal S3 Notice Inviting Applications 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. 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

The following factor ratings address these components:

Table 8
Implementation Factors of Parent Involvement

Implementation Factors — Parent Involvement and Support/Welcoming	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
Parents have been contacted and encouraged to participate in the program.	48%	20%	32%
Parents are being recruited for participation as described in the grant proposal.	70%	20%	10%
Efforts are being made to ensure parents feel welcome and supported at school	48%	20%	32%
Parent members of the School Climate Team attend regularly and participate fully in Team meetings.	70%	20%	10%

A little more than one-half of the schools received ratings of 'developing' or 'advanced' for their efforts to contact parents and for efforts to make parents feel welcome on campus. Ratings were not as strong for the two measures of actual parent participation: their recruitment for participation in program activities and their attendance at and contributions to the School Climate Team. In these efforts, over two-thirds of schools were still at the 'beginning' stages.

The large majority of S3 school Principals and S3 Coordinators interviewed reported that they had started their parent involvement work by the end of the first year. This was confirmed by a resounding majority of parents interviewed, who described the ways in which their school was clearly working harder to involve parents in school life, as evidenced by:

- Increased level and frequency of communications from the school sites, including parent newsletters and the use of social media networks (Facebook and Twitter), along with increased use of the school's website as a portal for disseminating information
- Expanded opportunities to volunteer for campus events
- Development of a parent survey aimed at assessing the needs of parents and their level of interest in volunteering on campus
- New parent nights, some with a multi-cultural emphasis
- Addition of a Parent Liaison to some schools' staff members
- Offering parent workshops
- Sponsoring parent outreach meetings
- Creating family events such as BBQs and theme nights
- Developing or expanding family resource centers

Additionally, a majority of parent respondents indicated that their schools have included or reinstated a designated time for parents to meet with Principals, for example, coffee hour with the Principal and breakfast with the Principal as a means of increasing involvement and awareness among parents. Another site reported developing a School and Community Relationship Committee as a result of the information gleaned from the Student Listening Circle activity. The Committee is tasked with making connections with families and community members to increase awareness of the school and resources available to families.

No interviewed parents indicated that they felt unwelcomed or unwanted on campus[3]. In fact, most respondents were effusive in their descriptions of the schools' efforts. Typical parent comments included:

- "There appears to be a genuine open door policy at this school."
- "I feel very welcome and treated positively while on campus."
- "I am welcomed with open arms by everyone."
- "The staff truly wanted me on campus."

Nearly all the parents who were interviewed felt that their opinions were not only sought, but respected and appreciated as well. One typical statement was, "I get called a lot about opinions, ideas, and input," and another said, "they are always looking for ways to improve. . . so always asking for input." Parents generally felt that with an increase in communication about their students, campus events, and general school information schools could continue and/or develop a level of trust among parents. It was reported by a few parents that their schools have begun doing more to increase the level of trust and inclusions of families. For example, since the S3 grant began parents in several schools mentioned increased outreach to the Hispanic populations of their communities by utilizing Parent Liaisons, recruiting parents for an English Learner Advisory Committee, and offering additional translators when needed. While parents who were interviewed indicated that in general their schools seem to be trying to include parents in campus life and build trust among parents, these efforts were still in the beginning stages (as would be expected with such a new program).

Although all parents reported being personally welcomed at school, three parents in two schools reported that they did not believe that their school was trying harder to include parents in school life by the end of the 2012 school year. One parent commented that although hearing the school was trying harder to involve parents "I haven't really seen it," and another stated, "there was not much outreach." The Technical Assistance Specialists in these schools (and a few others) confirmed these parent comments by recording that they did not have a clear and systematic plan for improving parent involvement, support, and welcoming. For example, one TAS noted that, "parents are only included at the notification level" when referring to parental participation on the School Climate Team, while another TAS indicated that specific technical assistance would be beneficial in regards to expanding the current S3 Work Plan approaches to parent participation.

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[3] The reader is reminded that the school leadership provided a convenience sample of parents to be interviewed, not a representative sample.

Overall, a vast majority of the parents interviewed felt welcomed on campus and treated fairly by staff members and administration, and reported that their opinions were valued. Most of the S3 Work Plans include an established path for increasing parent involvement on campus that includes increased communication between school staff and parents, an increase in opportunities for parents to be on campus, and an increase in outreach to all parents.

Policies and Rules

Approximately one-third of the program schools reported changes in policies or rules since the S3 grant was awarded. Although staff members were not asked to report specific changes to the rules or policies, the following topics were mentioned during interviews:

- Discipline review and referral to services
- Campus safety
- Inclusion of Saturday School
- Harassment and bullying
- Hat and cap policy
- Suspension replacement program

Another one-third of the schools reported that the S3 grant was motivating them to reexamine current policies and rules and consider possible revisions. The policies and rules being considered for revision by program schools included:

- Discipline
- Harassment and bullying
- Substance use on campus
- Attendance and truancy
- Dress codes
- Referral procedures

The remaining schools did not report changes in or immediate plans to change school policies.

Challenges and Obstacles

Over ninety percent of the S3 schools cited at least one challenge or obstacle to grant implementation. The following challenges were identified most commonly:

- Lack of staff buy-in: respondents in about thirty percent of sites reported that some or many staff members are reluctant to participate in the S3 program. Some reasons given for staff resistance were resistance to pulling students out of class for S3 services, the perception of the S3 grant as "yet another program" or "one more thing on their plate," a concern about program start-—up--with new funding and —staffing—at that same time that some other staff were receiving layoff notices, and new requirements for classroom management and discipline procedures

- Delay in hiring the S3 Coordinator: about one-third of sites still had not hired an S3 Coordinator due to administrative challenges and long time frames in the district hiring process. As a result, S3 Coordinator responsibilities were often shared by administrators and/or staff for the first months of the grant, with no one individual focusing solely on the program.

- Staff/Administrator turnover or reductions: one-quarter of sites experienced the loss of key S3 team members and/or administrators due to layoffs or reassignments to other schools. These changes inevitably led to delays in implementing program plans.

- Delay in receipt of S3 funding: most schools received funding about two-thirds of the way through the school year. Approximately one-quarter of schools reported this as a significant barrier, citing challenges in starting new programs and services after staff, parents, and students were already in the pattern of the current year.

- Lack of available time to meet/implement the grant: this finding was strongly related to the prior barrier described above; most staff were already committed to the existing school year programs and services

California S3 Website

Just short of one-half of the staff and parents reported having used the California Department of Education's S3 website at the time of the interview. The majority of those who used the website found it "helpful," "useful for gathering information about S3," and "informative." Those few interviewees that reported having found it less than helpful indicated that it was "difficult to navigate" and "needed more specifics on what programs are considered evidence-based."

S3 Schools Technical Assistance Needs

Principals and S3 Coordinators reported to the TAS's the following examples of topics on which the local programs would like to receive technical assistance and training. The topics reference the approximate number of sites who mentioned each one:

- *Project Record Keeping* (over one-third of sites): requests were for detail about what records must be kept and good systems/practices for doing so: program enrollment, attendance (one time or over multiple days for multi-session programs), etc.

- *CDE Reporting* (over one-third of sites): Sites wanted additional information on fiscal reporting, examples of program reporting narratives, and a definition of clients "served" [Work Plan language] for reporting purposes.

- *Interpreting and further analysis of CalSCHLS data* (about one-third of sites)

- *Developing at-risk student referral systems* (a few asked for help; one-third of sites had no system in place.)

- *Conducting staff training, including the Fixen quality factors* (over two-thirds of sites unaware of these)

- *Improving general program management* (over one-third of sites)

- *Increasing Parent Participation* (over two-thirds of sites)

- *Building Student Assistance Programs* (more than 10 sites)

- *Peer Mediation* (more than 10 sites)

- *Substance use prevention* (fewer than 10 sites)

General Program Administration Factors

The following factors and ratings address general program administration that does not fit neatly into any of the preceding categories. These factors were either noted as important in the grant application or are among the key implementation factors in Fixen's work.

Table 9
Implementation Factors of General Program Administration

Implementation Factors — General Program Administration	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
S3 Coordinator helps staff members understand how to make time for the new grant practices.	67%	13%	20%
Principal works to help staff members understand how to make time for new program practices (in addition to existing job requirements).	66%	33%	1%
S3 Coordinator has adopted strategies to determine if assigned staff members are implementing the grant practices.	72%	22%	6%
Principal checks with staff members to see if the new grant practices are being implemented as planned.	55%	40%	5%

Implementation Factors — General Program Administration	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
In collaboration with administration, the S3 Coordinator provides resources necessary for grant implementation.	70%	20%	10%
Principal makes efforts to ensure resources are available to support the grant.	55%	20%	25%
S3 Coordinator has adopted strategies to systematically collect and keep records on the number of students, parents and staff members served.	48%	20%	32%

The two implementation factors with the largest number of "Advanced" ratings (each at about one-third of schools) were for resolving and for developing systems to collect and record program data. The factors with the weakest ratings (most ratings of "Beginning") were strategies to assure assigned staff members were conducting grant work and the provision of resources for program implementation. Although it would clearly be ideal to see a higher percentage of schools with these Advanced ratings (across all factors), the reader is reminded that most schools had only been funded for several months at the time of the site visits.

Statewide Summary of Work Plan Matrix Activity Ratings

Table 10 provides an average of all ratings across all quality program implementation factors for both the Principal and S3 Coordinator interviews. Overall, 65 percent of factors were rated "beginning," with the remaining ratings about evenly divided among "developing" and "advanced.". No expectation was set prior to funding for what ratings would be preferred by the end of the first funding year, but it seems clear that it would have been more desirable to see a larger number of ratings in at least the "developing" category, given that these ratings only require modest planning efforts or a single meeting on the given topic.

Table 10
Statewide Summary of Work Plan Matrix Ratings

Statewide Summary of Work Plan Matrix Ratings (with Rubrics)	Percent
BEGINNING: Activity planning is not clear or systematic, no meetings have been held to support it, no documents have been drafted, and/or the activity is not yet underway	65%
DEVELOPING: Activity planning has begun with some ideas, one meeting may have occurred, may have some drafted documents, and/or the activity may be in initial stages of implementation	18%
ADVANCED: Activity planning is clear and systematic, several meetings have been held to support it, final documents supporting it may have been developed, and/or the activity is in final stages of full implementation.	17%

Listening Circle Action Item Review Findings

Student Listening Circle activities were one of the primary components of the fall site visits. The Circle[4] Activity is a data–driven, research–based process for increasing youth voice, promoting resilience, strengthening adult–youth connections, and ultimately, for improving schools. A Student Listening Circle is a special type of focus group involving eight to ten student participants who respond to five or six questions gleaned from the school's California Healthy Kids Survey data. A facilitator works with the students as they prepare their answers to the questions posed. The School Climate Team members then join the student group and are asked to listen to the questions and students' answers without comment. The reversal of formal roles makes a strong impression on students and adults alike. Youth and adults learn what students really think and have impetus to work in partnership to develop strategies for change. This process helps these groups hear and better meet the needs of students. Action Items to address the issues that come up during the group were documented and became the responsibility of the School Climate Teams.

The spring evaluation site visit included a review of Action Items from the Student Listening Circle

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[4] *Guide to a Student–Family–School–Community Partnership:* Using A Student & Data Driven Process to Improve School Environments & Promote Student Success. Created by Bonnie Bernard, MSW and Carol Burgoa; Written by Carol Burgoa and Jo Ann Izu, PhD with Jamie Hillenberg. November 2010

Activity. The review was designed to determine the extent to which the Action Items from the Listening Circle had been addressed. Table 11 below shows the percentage, across all S3 grant school sites, of Action Items that were dropped, in-progress, completed, or undecided at the time of the site visit.

Table 11
Status of Student Listening Circle Action Items
Statewide Summary

Status of Action Items	Percentage
DROPPED: The Action Item has been thoroughly reviewed and it has been determined that it cannot or otherwise will not be operationalized.	25%
IN-PROGRESS: The Action Item is in the process of being operationalized as described.	25%
COMPLETED: The Action Item has been operationalized as described.	25%
UNDECIDED: The Action Item has been reviewed and SCT has not made a decision on course of action.	25%

The category "dropped" was developed because some of the action items were simply unrealistic or inappropriate for consideration. The other items were split evenly between the remaining three rating categories. Considering the relatively late timing of most Listening Circles (about February-March 2012), the finding that 25 percent of the items were operationalized by May should be considered a positive outcome. Perhaps the most important finding, however, is that the vast majority of sites were taking the action items seriously and following through with the promises made during the activity to take the recommendations seriously.

School Climate Report Card Findings

School-level SCRC

About two-thirds of school staff members, parents, and community members reported being familiar with their School Climate Report Card (SCRC). The majority of respondents who reported having seen the SCRC expressed a clear understanding of how this resource could be used. In general, most of these

respondents understood the SCRC's value in the program planning process, with many expecting it to be valuable in assessing program progress. Examples given included:

- "It gave us a sense of reality. . ."
- "Illuminating, because some results were unexpected."
- "People had intense misconceptions [about school climate]. . .it didn't give people the opportunity to dismiss the data."
- "It was being used to address problems related to student disenfranchisement at the school."

Nearly all of the individuals who were part of the evaluation interviews or phone surveys were known to have key roles in the S3 project, such as principals, coordinators, SC Team members (including parents), and other parents with some knowledge of the project. Although all S3 Coordinators and nearly all principals were familiar with the SCRC, the fact that more than one-third of these other individuals were not at all familiar with the SCRC—which played a key role in the first site visit and for which wide dissemination in the school community was encouraged—provides evidence that not all schools fully exploited the use of this tool as a key part of the project.

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.asp

State-level SCRC

The School Climate Report Card (SCRC), featuring the School Climate Index (SCI), is one of several products related to CDE's recently funded federal Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) Grant. In 2010-11, the SCI was generated for about 170 schools participating in the S3 data collection phase. In 2011-12, the SCI was generated for 58 schools that received S3 grants for programmatic interventions. The SCI is an "individual school-level" measure that assesses environmental resources conducive to learning in high schools. "School Climate" most commonly refers to the conditions or quality of the learning environments that affect the subjective school experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and performance of both students and staff. Scores on the SCI are based on student California Healthy Kids Survey data and school-level truancy incident data. SCI scores range from 100 to 500, with an average of 300. Higher scores represent more positive school climates.

The SCRC includes this index score, but also translates this score to a normed percentile, so that schools can see exactly where they stand compared to other schools in California. In addition to the overall SCI score, the SCRC contains several interrelated subscales of school climate, including High Expectations, School Connectedness, Low Harassment, Perceived School Safety, and others.
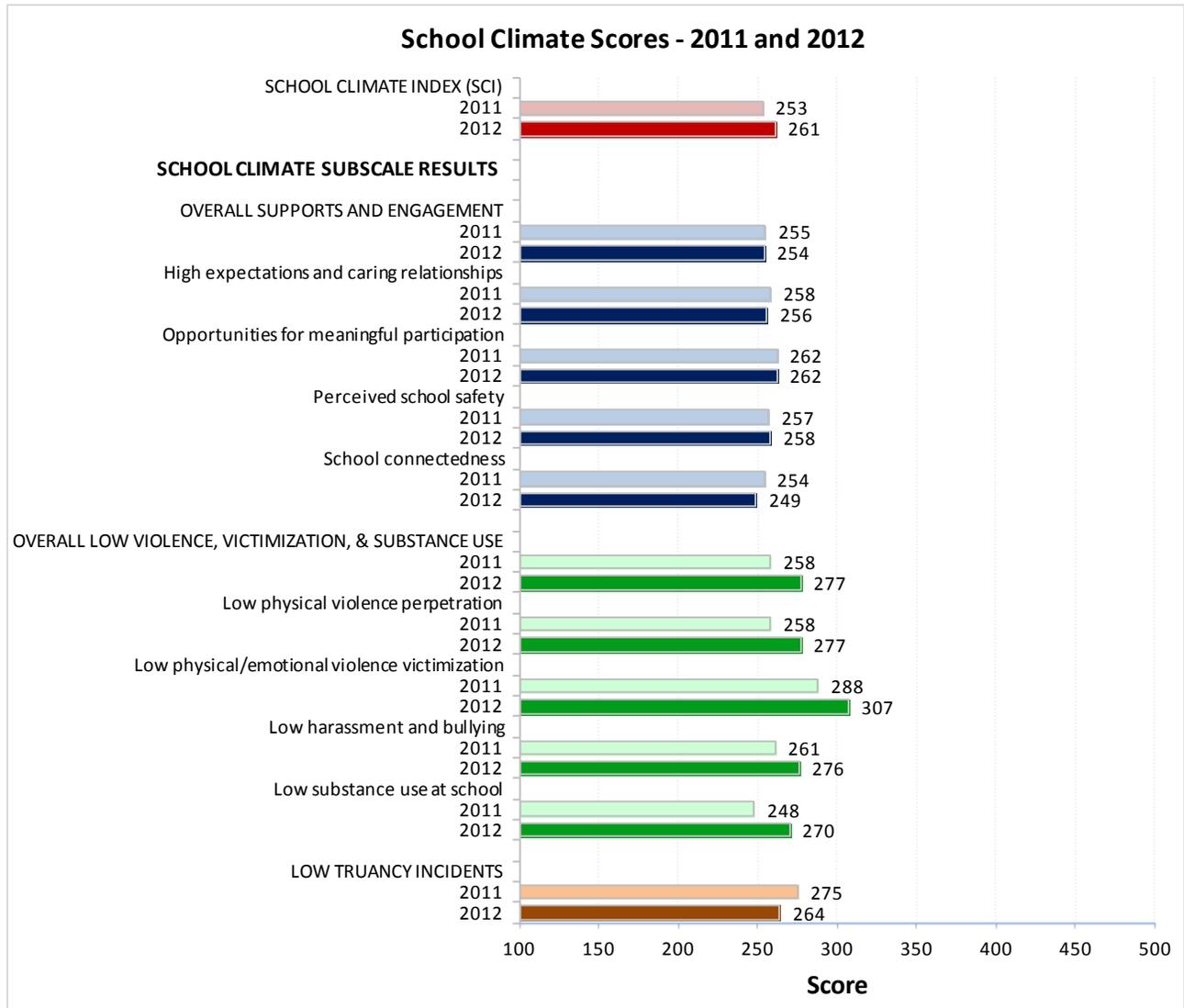
The aggregate SCRC for the 59 S3 schools is shown on the following pages. Analyses of the 2010-11 and 2011-12 data collected from schools with programmatic intervention grants indicated that there was substantial variation in school-level scores across the two-year period. Because of this instability, estimates of change between 2010-11 and 2011-12 are imprecise. Observed school-level changes across the two time periods may not precisely reflect true changes in school climate because of the high levels of temporal variability in scores. Users should therefore exercise caution when comparing 2011-12 scores to 2010-11 scores.

The top of the SCRC displays data for the full SCI and subscales between the 2010-11 and 2011-12 years are shown. In raw score, the SCI increased in 2011-12 from 253 to 261, and in state percentile improved from the 15th to the 21st percentile. Examination of the subscale scores suggest that most of this improvement came from the Overall Low Violence, Victimization, and Substance Use components of the SCI, rather than the Supports and Engagement subscales. The evaluation model did not predict changes in the SCI as a result of one-half year's funding, when most schools' programs were just getting underway. Also, although an interesting assessment of measured changes, these data were not part of the more complex statistical model that will be employed to examine the baseline (2010-11) to year four (2013-14) changes, a model that may uncover a causal relationship between program interventions and SCI outcomes. For now, the data presented here provides hints about the domains that seem to have changed from the baseline to first year of funding.

Other indicators on the SCRC include S3 Objectives, but these are not addressed in the evaluation design until 2013-14.

Aggregate School Climate Report Card for 58 S3 Schools: 2012

Climate Index (SCI)	2011	2012	Change
SCI Score[E]	253[F]	261[B]	+8
SCI State Percentile[G]	15	21	+6

School Climate Scores - 2011 and 2012

SCHOOL CLIMATE INDEX (SCI)
- 2011: 253
- 2012: 261

SCHOOL CLIMATE SUBSCALE RESULTS

OVERALL SUPPORTS AND ENGAGEMENT
- 2011: 255
- 2012: 254

High expectations and caring relationships
- 2011: 258
- 2012: 256

Opportunities for meaningful participation
- 2011: 262
- 2012: 262

Perceived school safety
- 2011: 257
- 2012: 258

School connectedness
- 2011: 254
- 2012: 249

OVERALL LOW VIOLENCE, VICTIMIZATION, & SUBSTANCE USE
- 2011: 258
- 2012: 277

Low physical violence perpetration
- 2011: 258
- 2012: 277

Low physical/emotional violence victimization
- 2011: 288
- 2012: 307

Low harassment and bullying
- 2011: 261
- 2012: 276

Low substance use at school
- 2011: 248
- 2012: 270

LOW TRUANCY INCIDENTS
- 2011: 275
- 2012: 264

Score (axis: 100 150 200 250 300 350 400 450 500)

[E]The School Climate Index (SCI) is a global, school-level measure based on California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) results for Supports and Engagement (45%); Violence, Victimization, & Substance Use at School (45%); and Truancy Incident data (10%).

[F]Scores range from approximately 100 to 500, with high scores representing more positive school climates; higher supports and engagement; lower levels of violence, victimization, and substance use at school; and lower truancy incidents.

[G]The higher the percentile score, the more positive the school climate. The State Percentile compares California S3 high schools to the state average.

School Climate Subscale Results

	SCI Scores		
	2011	**2012**	**Change**
Overall Supports and Engagement	**255**	**254**	**-1**
High expectations and caring relationships	258	256	-2
Opportunities for meaningful participation	262	262	0
Perceived school safety	257	258	+1
School connectedness	254	249	-5
Overall Low Violence, Victimization, & Substance Use	**258**	**277**	**+19**
Low physical violence perpetration	258	277	+19
Low physical/emotional violence victimization	288	307	+19
Low harassment and bullying	261	276	+15
Low substance use at school	248	270	+22
Overall Low Truancy Incidents	**275**	**264**	**-11**

Other Indicators

Academic Performance

	2011	2012	Change
Academic Performance Index (API) Score	689	699	+10

Safe and Supportive Schools Implementation Objectives and Measures

	2011	2012	Change
Objective 1. School-wide commitment to create safe and supportive learning environment			
Staff: Work hard to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment	N/A[8]	84%	—
Parent: School has a supportive learning environment for my child	N/A[D]	79%	—
Parent: School is a safe place for my child	69%	72%	+3
Objective 2. Engage in systematic data-driven decision-making for school improvements			
Staff: Objective data (e.g., surveys) are integral in making school improvement decisions	N/A[D]	80%	—
Objective 3. Involve students, staff, and parents in program design and implementation			
Staff: School promotes personnel participation in decision-making	64%	62%	-2
Parent: School actively seeks input of parents before making important decisions	N/A[D]	55%	—
Objective 4. Address program needs of general student population & high-risk students			
Implementation evaluation findings	N/A[D]	In Process	—
Objective 5. Implement evidence-based/research-based program with full fidelity			
Implementation evaluation findings	N/A[D]	In Process	—

Safe and Supportive Schools Outcome Measures

	2011	2012	Change
Students: Harassed or bullied at school	32%	31%	-1
Students: 30-day alcohol use	31%	28%	-3
Incident data: Suspension rate (violence incidents w/o physical injury)	1.45 per 100	1.86 per 100	+0.41 per 100

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[8]N/A-Data were not collected in 2011.

What is the School Climate Index (SCI)?

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) 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) Violence, Victimization, and Substance Use at School (45%)
  - o Physical violence perpetration on school property (7 items)
  - o Physical and emotional violence victimization at school (6 items)
  - o Harassment and bullying at school (5 items)
  - o Substance use at school (4 items)
- (3) Truancy Incidents (10%)
  - o Habitual Truancy Rate (1 indicator)

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/) or by contacting Tom Hanson at 562-799-5170 or thanson@WestEd.org.

State Percentile

The *State Percentile* 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 25 means that 25 percent of high schools in the state had the same SCI score as, or a lower SCI score than, the average score for 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.

Appendix A

S3 Coordinator Interview - Factor Rating Rubrics

General Program Administration			
Question	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
1) Help staff members find time for new grant practices	The S3 Coordinator expresses little understanding of the time challenges faced by implementers and has not discussed the challenges with staff implementers.	The S3 Coordinator expresses some understanding of the time challenges faced by implementers and has discussed the challenges with some implementing staff members based on their requests for help.	The S3 Coordinator expresses a clear understanding of the time challenges the implementers may face and has worked pro-actively with most implementing staff members regarding time Factors.
(2) Coordinate with the Principal regarding S3 and other program conflicts	There have been no conversations on this topic.	There has been one conversation regarding conflicts, or regarding anticipating and avoiding such conflicts.	There has been more than one conversation or planning session with the Principal (and perhaps others) where challenges between existing programs and the S3 grant are discussed, and/or regarding anticipating and avoiding such conflicts.
(3) Monitoring staff members implementing the new grant practices	The S3 Coordinator expressed no clear, systematic plan for how to accomplish this and has not done other than informal, unplanned, inconsistent checking with staff members.	The S3 Coordinator expressed some ideas for how to accomplish this task in a systematic way (such as by systematic visits, coaching, training meetings, email reminders, activity logs, etc.) and may have started these activities.	The S3 Coordinator expressed a clear vision and plan for systematic, structured monitoring of implementing staff members and has begun using this system.
(4) Frequency of staff member communication for program practice monitoring	No clear, systematic plan for how often to contact staff members has been developed.	The S3 Coordinator has a moderately clear and systematic plan for contact that will result in three or fewer individual contacts with each implementing staff members per school year.	The S3 Coordinator has a clear, systematic plan for contact that will result in four or more individual contacts with each implementing staff members per school year and has begun contact.

General Program Administration			
Question	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
(5) Available Resources	Not Applicable: A clear, rational case was made that no special training, space, materials or equipment are needed.	Although staff members have expressed a need for resources, or the S3 Coordinator admits the need for resources, implementing staff members do not yet have them.	Staff members have expressed a need for resources, or the S3 Coordinator admits the need for resources, and the S3 Coordinator has been able to obtain some but not all needed resources.
(6) Strategy for tracking/recording individuals served by the grant	The S3 Coordinator expressed no clear, systematic plan for counting served individuals and has not done other than informal, unplanned, inconsistent checking with staff members.	The S3 Coordinator expressed some ideas for how to accomplish this task in a systematic way, and/or has started collecting information in a somewhat structured way.	The S3 Coordinator expressed a clear vision for a structured system of monitoring and has begun using this system.
(7) Features are in place to assure that the referral plan will be used consistently and systematically by all individuals making referrals	No plan has been developed yet, or it does not contain features that assure it will systematically and fairly identify students.	The S3 Coordinator outlined a reasonably clear plan that includes features that assure it will systematically and fairly identify students.	There is a specific, clear, written plan (or collection of referral system documents) that assures systematic and fair student identification.
At-Risk Student Referral			
(8) Student identification Criteria	The referral system (if any) does not have written, standardized, clearly defined criteria for identifying students.	The referral system has some standardized, clearly defined criteria, but it is not finalized yet or fully functioning yet.	The referral system has fully standardized, clearly defined criteria and is fully functioning.
(9) Referral system successful identification	The plan (if any) does not include a strategy to identify the correct number of students.	The plan criteria include a strategy that indicates the correct number of students might be identified, but is not in place yet.	The plan criteria include a strategy that indicates the correct number of students will be identified, and is currently operational.
(10) Referral data system	No data system has been planned, although written records of referrals may have been kept.	The S3 Coordinator expressed some ideas for a data system, but it has not been fully developed yet.	The referral data system has been fully developed and is functioning.

School Climate Team			
Question	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
(11) Team meeting frequency and member composition	Team met once or not at all (not counting today) since grant approval; member composition is two or more positions less than required in RFA.	Team met less than once a month since grant approval, or less than specified in their work plan; member composition is missing one required position.	Team has been meeting monthly since grant approval, or as specified in their work plan; member composition as required in RFA.
(12) Meeting facilitation	Team leadership and facilitation is not determined.	The S3 Coordinator has some role in meeting facilitation.	The S3 Coordinator is the clear facilitator of Team meetings.
Community Partnerships			
(13) Status of agency relationship	No discussions or planning with agency partners yet.	Meetings have been held to discuss school/agency relationship.	Agency planning final, agency may have begun offering services.
(14) Partner agency contributions to meaningful student contributions	Planning may have started, but is not finalized.	Implementation has started.	Implementation is fully underway.
Staff members Training			
(15) Training includes demonstrations of new behaviors.	The training as planned or conducted does not include demonstrations of the new behaviors.	The training as planned or conducted includes demonstrations of a few of the new behaviors, but can't be considered a core component of training.	The training as planned or conducted includes extensive demonstrations of the new behaviors, and can be considered a core component of training.
(16) Training includes behavior rehearsal	The training as planned or conducted does not include demonstrations of the new behaviors.	The training as planned or conducted includes demonstrations of a few of the new behaviors, but can't be considered a core component of training.	The training as planned or conducted includes extensive demonstrations of the new behaviors and can be considered a core component of training.

Staff Member Training			
Question	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
(17) Training includes guidance on allowable variations	The training as planned or conducted does not include guidance to trainees on the degree to which variation in trained behaviors acceptable.	The training as planned or conducted includes some content on the acceptability of variations in trained behaviors, but does not including demonstrations of options by the trainer.	The training as planned or conducted includes significant content on the acceptability of variations in trained behaviors and included demonstrations of options by the trainer.
(18) Training includes trainee observation	The training as planned or conducted does not include observation of the new behaviors.	The training as planned or conducted includes occasional and informal observations, but can't be considered a core component of training.	The training as planned or conducted includes systematic, repeated observations of trainees' new practices and can be considered a core component of training.
(19) Coaching observations	The training as planned or conducted does not include performance improvement advice after coaching observations.	The training as planned or conducted includes occasional and informal feedback and advising, but can't be considered a core component of training.	The training as planned or conducted includes systematic, repeated feedback and advising regarding trainees' new practices and can be considered a core component of training.
(20) Training of trainer	The coach may have read some training materials but was not trained by an expert.	The coach may have read some training materials and may have received related training, but did not participate in a coach training specific to this grant.	The coach participated in a specific coach-training program led by a qualified expert.

Parent Involvement and Support/Welcoming			
(21) Parent contact for engagement	The plan (if any) does not have clear, systematic strategies for contacting parents and encouraging their participation.	The plan criteria include reasonably clear, systematic strategies for contacting parents and encouraging their participation, but it is not in place yet.	The plan has clear, systematic strategies for contacting parents and encouraging their participation, and is currently operational.
(22) Status of parent recruitment	The program has not yet begun activities to recruit parents.	The program has started to contact parents and some parents are agreeing to engage or have started to engage.	The program plan to contact parents is fully underway and they are making significant progress in reaching their parent participation goal.
Parent Involvement and Support/Welcoming			
Question	Beginning	Developing	Advanced
(23) Progress making parents feel welcomed and supported at school	The plan (if any) is not systematic and does not have written, standardized, clearly defined criteria.	The S3 Coordinator outlined a reasonably clear plan that includes some standardized, clearly defined criteria, but it is not finalized yet.	There is a written plan that includes a standardized, structured system with clearly defined criteria.
(24) School Climate Team parent members' attendance and participation	Most parent members attend less than one-half of the meetings.	Most parent members attend more than half the meetings and speak at some meetings.	Parent members rarely miss meetings and most freely contribute comments and ideas to the group.