

Wisconsin

Success Stories



Safe and Supportive
Schools (S3) Grant

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent



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"I hope you will be as impressed by this report as I am, and that it inspires you to replicate some of the steps taken by the participating Safe and Supportive Schools project high schools in Wisconsin."

—Tony Evers, PhD State Superintendent

Introduction

In 2010, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction successfully applied for the Safe and Supportive Schools federal discretionary grant program. The goal of this program was to explore strategies in select Wisconsin high schools in order to improve school safety, enhance student engagement, and create positive school climates.

Students need to feel safe in school. Incidents of bullying, harassment, and violence are detrimental to learning. Our schools need fewer suspensions and zero use of alcohol and other drugs by students to create an environment that truly supports academic achievement. As you will see in this report, the vast majority of schools improved their Index of Student Behavior and School Environment (ISBSE), which measures the impact of the interventions and the success of the project.

I could not be happier with the results of this project. The participating high schools demonstrate that with accurate and timely data, evidence-based strategies, and adequate financial and human resources, safe and supportive learning environments can be created, maintained, and even improved.

I hope this report inspires you to create safe and supportive school programming that will enable all students to meet their full academic potential.

Sincerely,

Tony Evers, PhD
State Superintendent



"The examples that follow demonstrate how far the schools came in creating these safe and engaging learning environments."

**—Tony Evers, PhD
State Superintendent**

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87%

of the participating schools improved their Index of Student Behavior and School Environment after implementing S3.

Outcome

Outcome data for the Safe and Supporting Schools Grant (S3) project shows that 87 percent of participating Wisconsin schools improved their Index of Student Behavior and School Environment. Schools not only successfully reduced suspensions and expulsions by an average 46 percent, but did so while improving the school's climate, increasing student engagement in school, and reducing negative behaviors such as alcohol use and bullying.

Safe and Supportive Schools Grant Background

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools awarded \$38.8 million in four-year Safe and Supportive School (S3) grants to eleven states. Wisconsin was awarded \$14 million to help high schools, which were selected based on need to reduce their suspension and expulsion rate. The major objectives of the grant were: to improve conditions for learning in the areas of school safety, school environment, and school engagement, and also increase capacity for making data driven decisions. Nineteen school districts participated, a combined total of 52 high schools, with each district receiving support from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in the form of funding, professional development, and technical assistance. Schools were also encouraged to use evidenced-based strategies in addressing their goals. At the time the grant was awarded to Wisconsin, State Superintendent Tony Evers stated, "Students need to feel safe in school. Incidents of bullying, harassment, or violence are detrimental to learning. Our schools need to have fewer suspensions and zero use of alcohol and other drugs by students to create an environment that truly supports academic achievement."

To monitor progress of the grant's goals, an Index of Student Behavior and School Environment Score (ISBSE) was developed for each school. The ISBSE was compiled using a weighted combination of the results from a statewide student survey called the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and a behavior score. The YRBS score was the average of nine of the survey questions based on violence, alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA), safety issues, and school climate. The behavior score consisted of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions divided by the total school enrollment, and converted to a rate per 1,000 students. The

behavior score and the YRBS average of nine key indicators each made up 50 percent of the total index. The statewide baseline average ISBSE score for project schools after the first year of the grant's implementation stood at 217.85. After year four, the average ISBSE score was 127.71, a 41 percent improvement.

“Students need to feel safe in school. Incidents of bullying, harassment, or violence are detrimental to learning. Our schools need to have fewer suspensions and zero use of alcohol and other drugs by students to create an environment that truly supports academic achievement.”

— Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent

S3 Grant Report Objectives

Participating S3 schools utilized many innovative evidenced-based interventions, which led to success. Many commonly used strategies are featured in this document, including: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), restorative justice practices, freshman transition programs such as Link Crew, SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment), Gay Straight Alliances, classroom management programming, LifeSkills Training, and policy updates. Also, detailed examples of how particular S3 grant schools used these interventions to achieve success will be spotlighted. Additionally, the critical factors of community engagement, collaboration, and sustainability will be discussed, along with specific culturally competent programming that worked well with disproportionately affected populations in project schools.

46%

fewer suspensions
and expulsions in
Wisconsin schools after
implementing S3 .



Objective 1

Improve School Safety

The use of out-of-school suspension and expulsion increased almost everywhere and dramatically so in some places. Nationally, the number of secondary school students suspended or expelled over the course of a school year increased roughly 40 percent between 1972 and 2009. In recent years, an estimated **two million students annually are suspended** from secondary schools. As a point of comparison, slightly more than three million students graduated high school in 2013.¹

– Center on Youth Justice at the Vera Institute of Justice

For the Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) grant, schools were selected based on their number or rate of suspension and expulsions. Suspensions and expulsions, in addition to failing to make schools safer, have a link to low academic achievement, which can create a path for students to drop out of school altogether, as well as having a disproportionately negative effect on minority populations.²

"... a minor school disciplinary offense should put a student in the principal's office and not a police precinct."

–Attorney General Eric Holder

541

fewer acts of endangering behaviors in Wisconsin schools since the implementation of S3.

For the past 25 years, zero tolerance policies have been promoted as the way to make schools safer. Many of these policies came in the wake of high profile incidents like the mass shooting at Columbine High School. While originally directed at weapon and drug possession in schools, these policies became over-generalized and led to unintended consequences. For example, an October 2011 report from the National Education Policy Center found that only five percent of suspensions nationally were for weapons or drugs, while the other 95 percent were for “disruptive behavior” or “other.”³

These policies can also have the unintended effect of strengthening the school-to-prison pipeline.⁴ As Attorney General Eric Holder said in a 2013 speech, “a minor school disciplinary offense should put a student in the principal’s office and not a police precinct.”

STRATEGY: Policy Change

All schools in the S3 grant project reported policy changes in the area of behavior. Many of the districts reported that this endeavor resulted in a significant shift in the way they responded to students’ problematic behaviors. For example, schools report that distinguishing between severe and non-severe behaviors not only clarifies discipline; it helps reduce the number of incidents for both levels of behavior. The data supports this claim; at the end of the 2012-13 school year, S3 project schools in Wisconsin reported a total of 541 fewer acts of endangering behaviors. Endangering behaviors are violent or threatening acts without physical injury. This is an 11 percent overall reduction, or approximately 10 fewer such acts per school per year.

OUTCOME: Reduced Suspensions and Improved Learning

MODEL 1: Mukwonago High School

Mukwonago High School is a school of 1,700 students situated 30 miles southwest of Milwaukee. Using support provided by the S3 grant, Mukwonago has implemented several highly successful evidenced-based practices, as well as a significant policy-based change in working with its students. Mukwonago shifted their policy on suspensions from one of punishment to one of engagement. During the 2010-11 school year, 106 students were suspended and these students missed a combined 347 days of learning. At the end of the 2013-14 school year, just 28 students (a 73 percent drop) had been suspended for a total of 55 days (an 84 percent drop). These positive results were partly achieved by adding academic support for students who were displaying minor negative behaviors. For instance, the school began offering the “Academic Success” program as an alternative learning environment for students who did not attend an assigned detention. Instead of suspending students out of school for an entire day for missing a detention, students spent half a day (or less) working with a certified teacher in this small environment of not more than five students at a time. Students were still held accountable, and they did not present as many negative behaviors as they had when suspensions were the primary tool. In fact, total office disciplinary referrals were cut by 75 percent by the last year of the grant’s implementation. Even the “Academic Success” program finds itself being reduced as fewer and fewer students need to take advantage of it; only 20 students participated in the program during the 2013-14 school year. As Lou Pawela, Mukwonago High School Assistant Principal states, “We’re not ignoring negative behavior; we’ve found a more effective way to prevent it.”

73%

fewer suspensions
at Mukwonago High
School from
2011 to 2014.

MODEL 2: Madison Metropolitan School District

Over 60 percent of S3 project schools implemented restorative justice practices. In an effort to make its disciplinary policy more supportive for students and less punitive, Madison Metropolitan School District, a district with a total enrollment of 25,000 students, has been on the cutting edge of restorative justice practices. Lonna Stoltzfus, a school social worker at La Follette High School in Madison, states the goal using the evidenced-based Restorative Practice model and thus reducing suspensions is: “to not lose instruction time, while not jeopardizing school safety

“The key ingredients are time, training, and a willingness to commit to respectful listening, but research shows that restorative practices reduce behavioral problems, including bullying.”⁵

– *neatoday.org*

or orderliness.” Through support from the S3 grant, 10 La Follette High School staff members have been trained in facilitating Restorative Circles. Additionally, through collaboration with the YWCA, 50 students have also been trained in facilitating a Restorative Circle.

Circles

In schools, “Circles” are groups of students (and possibly staff), who, usually due to a conflict of some sort, come together to repair relationships. In the Circle model, both sides of a conflict will be voluntarily brought together, whether they are groups or individuals, along with any other school community members affected by the conflict. If the conflict is a minor one, students may be the sole facilitators. These student facilitators have been through up to 10 hours of Circle training. If

a conflict is more serious, a Circle-trained staff member may also be facilitating. Participation in a Circle may reduce the need for student(s) to receive a suspension or may allow for a reduction of the suspension. At La Follette High School, the Circles take place in a comfortable classroom, whose renovation was supported by S3 funds. Ms. Stoltzfus points out that the use of restorative practices is in line with the district's new behavior education plan, which moves the district "away from a code of conduct based on a punitive model to one that provides students with an opportunity to learn positive behavior skills."⁶

"We have moved away from a code of conduct based on a punitive model to one that provides students with an opportunity to learn positive behavior skills."

— Lonna Stoltzfus, Social Worker, La Follette High School



13%

fewer suspensions at
Madison LaFollette
High School from
2011 to 2014.



Objective 2

Improve School Environment

A positive school environment is defined as a school having appropriate facilities, well-managed classrooms, available school-based health supports, and a clear, fair disciplinary policy. There are many hallmarks of the academic, disciplinary, and physical environments of schools with a positive climate.⁷

– Safe and Supportive Learning, Department of Education

"Everyone is working towards one goal."

–Principal Jim Darin

90%

of S3 project schools
received training in PBIS.

STRATEGY: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Improve School Environment

PBIS is a three-tiered system, which schools use to support all students. At the primary or universal tier, schools engage in activities for every student in the school. At the Tier 2 level, small groups are assembled, based on school-level data, and given targeted instruction-specific behaviors that need to be retaught to the approximately 10-15 percent of the school population who have not responded to the universal strategies. At the Tier 3 level, intensive one-to-one programming is developed for the roughly five percent of the school population, who need further instruction on pro-social skills. All schools in the S3 grant program were invited to participate in PBIS trainings. Over 90 percent of S3 project schools received training in PBIS and began addressing the universal tier of PBIS. Because PBIS creates systematic change it can take several years to fully implement all tiers. Several S3 schools, however, also developed Tier 2 and 3 interventions.

A primary tool used by S3 schools, at the universal tier, was a clear description of proactive, socially acceptable behaviors. These behaviors were then clearly posted throughout the school in an effort to proactively address unsafe or other negative behavior. The Tier 1 level also includes reinforcement of these pro-social behaviors.

MODEL 1: Mukwonago High School (PBIS)

Demonstrating the Power of a Positive School Environment

Upon receipt of their S3 grant, one of the first endeavors undertaken by Mukwonago High School was to develop a universal tier PBIS program. “The Mukwonago Way” is a behavioral matrix, which informs students of expectations for pro-social behavior throughout the school. The matrix spells out the expectations for behavior: Be On Time, Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe. Staff chose to concentrate on these behaviors, as they represent the top four reasons that students receive office disciplinary referrals. These specific expectations are set out in the matrix and illustrated differently for a variety of settings and times of day. For instance, to Be Safe Before/After School means to make good decisions and avoid conflict. In the hallways, it means walk and keep your hands and feet to yourself. In the cafeteria it means to walk, clean up

spills, and wash hands. In the parking lot, it means to wear a seat belt, follow the speed limit, and yield to pedestrians. Posters are used extensively throughout the school to remind students of the matrix in specific areas; classrooms, commons, hallways, and even outside of bathrooms. Positive behavior observed by an adult in any areas of the matrix or location in the school, can lead to a student earning a “MukBuck.” This token slip of paper is then good to redeem for a prize at the school store. One of the most important factors in a successful PBIS effort is to have the whole school involved in its development and implementation; students, staff, and administration. Or, as Principal Jim Darin describes PBIS at Mukwonago, “Everybody is working towards one goal.”

MODEL 2: Northwestern High School (PBIS)

Putting the Emphasis on “Positive” and Getting Results in a Variety of Areas

Systemic and effective change at the universal tier was also achieved through an all-staff effort towards positive transformation at Northwestern High School in Maple. Northwestern High School is a school of 440 students. Principal Steve High proclaims there is “an effort by all of us to change student behavior.” He adds that since beginning PBIS at the school, punishment is no longer a focus; now the school, “tries to change behavior and get to what is causing the problem.” Principal High notes that, “almost every week we have an assembly celebrating success.” Northwestern High School also incorporated a reward system for positive behavior, which allows a student to earn a “Tiger Ticket,” which is put into a bowl for a drawing at the end of each week. For example, students who have exhibited positive behavior could win a gift certificate to a local store. Because positive behavior was being modeled and reinforced throughout the school day, Mr. High reports, “students have noticed a change in behavior and feel recognized.” Data verifies Mr. High’s statement of positive change: out of all S3 project schools, Northwestern showed the most improvement (43 percent) in their YRBS score. In fact, Northwestern ended the grant program with the lowest (best) overall YRBS numbers. In comparing Northwestern’s 2011 YRBS scores with 2014 YRBS, students reported that they felt safer, used fewer drugs or alcohol, and were more likely to feel that their teacher’s care about them and give them encouragement. Great strides were also achieved in the overall ISBSE score.

"PBIS...includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behavior to create positive school environments." ⁸

—PBIS.org

84%

improvement in the "school safety score" at Mukwonago High school as measured by the index for student behavior and school environment.

MODEL 3: Mukwonago High School (PBIS Tier 2)

Continuous Feedback to Struggling Students

Mukwonago High School not only created an effective universal tier PBIS intervention, it has support for those students who do not respond to it. Mukwonago used the evidenced-based Check In/Check Out (CICO) Tier 2 intervention. CICO provided selected students with daily adult contact, structured feedback and recognition, instruction on positive skills, home-school collaboration, and built-in monitoring of progress. CICO involved students meeting with an adult before school to 'check in.' As the day progressed, each teacher who had the student in class gave the student a score from 0 to 2. At the end of the day, the student met with the original adult to go over the score sheet and 'check out.' Encouragement is a main ingredient of CICO. Students were selected for this intervention based on a referral from the Positive Services Team (made up of administrators, counselors, academic specialist, a social worker, a psychologist, and the at-risk coordinator). This team met two times per month to go over student referral data. In the past, many of the students selected for CICO would have been suspended; however, as Assistant Principal Pawela points out, "if Tier 2 and 3 kids aren't in school, you can't help them." CICO is one way for Mukwonago High School, and other PBIS schools, to effectively work with students who are struggling.

MODEL 4: Northwestern High School (PBIS Tier 2)

Extra Support to Struggling Students

In addition to having a proactive universal tier program, Northwestern High School also has an effective way to meet the needs of those who do not respond to the universal activities. Called the Empowerment Half Hour, students can self refer or are chosen based on data. They attend an additional half hour before school to get caught up on schoolwork in a positive and supportive environment with teachers. Generally, teachers referred students to this Tier 2 program, but the Student Assistance Program Team (administrators, at-risk coordinator, and counselor) can also make referrals after a quarterly review of data.

STRATEGY: Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)

What is SBIRT?

SBIRT is a well-established health care model, which is readily adapted for delivery in middle and high schools to address student alcohol/other drug (AOD) use. SBIRT fits with response to intervention and the results from initial pilot projects showed statistically significant and clinically meaningful reductions in student AOD use frequency and related problem symptoms. SBIRT has potential to expand student services capacity for addressing student AOD use and a range of other behavioral health concerns.

Depending on whether the SBIRT screening is delivered to small groups of students or individual students, it may be considered either a PBIS Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention. SBIRT was originally designed to screen for AOD concerns, but in recent years it has been used to screen for a variety of behavioral and mental health issues including: internalizing disorders, externalizing disorders, and crime/violence. A pre- and post-screening tool, which can also measure progress over time, called the Global Appraiser of Individual Needs-Short Screener (GAIN-SS) is used at the outset of the protocol and provides a baseline measurement of the above disorders as well as AODA concerns. Based on the results of the GAINS-SS, the student being screened will attend one to four sessions lasting 10-20 minutes each (a time-saving measure for school staff). This is the Brief Intervention component of the protocol. Depending on how the student responds to the Brief Intervention (based on a second administering of the GAINS-SS), the student will either be excused from the program as a success or referred for treatment outside of the school setting. Almost 20 percent of S3 project schools implemented SBIRT.

53%

drop in AOD use
at Hayward High
School after the
implementation of the
S3 grant.

MODEL 5: Hayward High School

Supporting Struggling Students with SBIRT

Hayward High School is located in the “Northwoods” of Wisconsin and enrolls nearly 600 students. Hayward Community Schools Superintendent Craig Olson believes that the key to success of the S3 project in his school is the staff’s interaction with students. He stated, “there are high expectations for all staff members to talk with kids and build relationships with them.”

The SBIRT program was used at Hayward High School as a primary prevention tool. Teachers, students, and others were able to fill out a confidential report to counselors regarding their concerns about a student’s AODA, mental health, or any other issue. A counselor trained in the SBIRT model would contact the student and meet with him or her three to four times in order to complete a needs assessment. Based on the results of this assessment, the student would potentially be referred to an agency member of the Sawyer County Prevention Coalition. The school reported that as a prevention method, this program has helped reduce their expulsion rate to zero. Furthermore, since the implementation of the S3 grant, the YRBS scores for 12-month AOD use dropped 53 percent in the high school.

Other S3 project schools which use the SBIRT model include: the School District of West Allis-West Milwaukee, Racine Unified School District, Kenosha Unified School District, Maple High School, Bayfield High School, and Madison Public Schools.

“there are high expectations for all staff members to talk with kids and build relationships with them.”

– Craig Olson, Hayward Community Schools Superintendent







Objective 3

Improve School Engagement

Students who feel connected to their school are more likely to have better academic achievements, have better school attendance, and stay in school longer.

– *Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2104)*⁹

School engagement may be the most important objective of the Safe and Supportive Schools grant. Even schools that are physically safe and provide a positive climate may struggle with engaging students who are not finding behavioral or academic success. The S3 grant provided schools with the resources to utilize several evidenced-based model programs to improve a necessary, but tenuous aspect of education: school engagement.

60%

improvement in the "school safety score" at Greenfield High school as measured by the index for student behavior and school environment.

STRATEGY: Engage Freshman using "Link Crew"

Even when students feel safe and informed, they may not successfully transition into a new school if they do not develop a sense of connection. In every transition in our lives we need to feel a sense of connection to the new situation. This is true whether we are connecting to a new job, a new child, or a new reality in our own lives. The more connected students are to their new school, the better they will do in all the measures that are important in tracking their success: grades, test scores, attendance, and

"Link Crew creates a structure that connects every incoming freshman with a caring upperclassman from their first day through the end of their freshman year."¹⁰

– *The Boomerang Project*

discipline. All these measures are positively affected when students are connected. Link Crew creates a structure that connects every incoming freshman with a caring upperclassman from their first day through the end of their freshman year.¹⁰

Link Crew is a freshman transition program, which acclimatizes ninth grade students to the high school setting. There are three basic training components to Link Crew: first, staff advisors must be trained in order to train upperclassmen to be positive role models; second, once advisors train the upperclassmen, these students can effectively work with the freshman students. The third component of the program may be the most visible and memorable: a freshman orientation day, using the Link Leaders to facilitate fun and meaningful activities, kicks off the school year by building a sense of safety and community. These initial activities set the stage for the ongoing mentoring relationships that will continue between Link Leaders and small groups of freshmen throughout the year. Link Crew's goal is to provide schools with a structure whereby students make real connections

with each other; increasing school safety and reducing incidents of bullying.¹¹ In most schools, Link Crew begins as a freshman orientation day before the school year starts. On this day, team-building activities are undertaken, tours are given, and relationships are built between the freshman and upper classmen. Link Crew does not stop there. During the school year, upperclassmen mentors provide both structured and unstructured follow-ups. A structured follow-up may be a special lunch period just for mentors and freshmen. An unstructured follow-up may be as simple as an upperclassman intentionally taking time to say “hi” to a freshman during a passing period. Over 60 percent of S3 program schools implement Link Crew or a similar freshman transition program.

MODEL 1: Greenfield High School (Link Crew)

Freshman Feel Like They Belong

Greenfield High School is located in Milwaukee County and serves nearly 1,300 students, grades 9 through 12. Greenfield High School targeted entering ninth graders for additional engagement activities through Link Crew. These efforts were in addition to a solid PBIS foundation that encouraged students to: Respect Self, Respect Others, and Respect the Environment. From the first day of school at Greenfield High School, the freshmen had the support of their Link Crew mentors. School-based reports indicated that students who are attending Greenfield schools for the first time as freshmen especially appreciated Link Crew. Activities that helped support freshmen throughout the school year included academic support at mid-year and end-of year finals, when “Cocoa and Cram” sessions are organized by Link Crew mentors. Some of the data that supports the success of Link Crew at Greenfield High School include a 17 percent increase in students who reported that “they belong at this school,” and a 27 percent improvement in students who reported “having at least one adult to talk to if you have a problem.”

Greenfield’s overall ISBSE score also reflected the positive outcomes that are attributable to programs like Link Crew and PBIS.

27%

improvement in students who reported having at least one adult to talk to if having a problem since the S3 grant.

86%

improvement in the "school safety score" at Bayview High school as measured by the index for student behavior and school environment.

STRATEGY: Classroom Organization and Management Program (COMP)

What is COMP?

COMP's goal for teachers is to help improve their overall instructional and behavioral management skills through planning, implementing, and maintaining effective classroom practices. Such practices provide a framework for order and organization in classrooms and provide opportunities for students to begin to manage their own learning opportunities. Additional goals are to improve student

"COMP's goal for teachers is to help improve their overall instructional and behavioral management skills through planning, implementing, and maintaining effective classroom practices."

– *Classroom Organization and Management Program*

task engagement, reduce inappropriate and disruptive student behavior, promote student responsibility for academic work and behavior, and improve student academic achievement.¹²

Classroom Organization and Management Program (COMP) training was undertaken by over a quarter of the districts in the S3 grant program including Milwaukee Public Schools, Madison Metropolitan School District, Hayward High School, West Allis-West Milwaukee, Maple School District, Bayfield School District, and Racine Unified School District. Recently, through support of DPI, six local S3 teams completed a Trainers of Trainers. These trainings were not only free of charge to S3 project schools, but supporting costs such as curriculum guides and paying for substitute teachers were covered with S3 grant funds.

COMP training has occurred in the Milwaukee Public Schools since 1999. Previous trainings, mostly due to costs and logistics, were offered only at the elementary and middle school levels. S3 grant funding allowed the COMP trainings to expand to the high school level and provide the district with cohesiveness in its practices across all grade levels. Beth Herman, S3 Project Grant Manager for DPI and certified COMP Trainer of Trainers, reports that data on the success of COMP in the Milwaukee Public School system is noted in several publications.

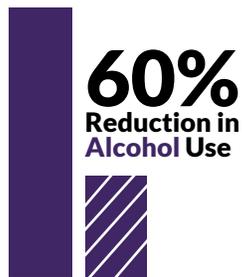
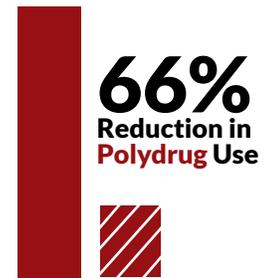
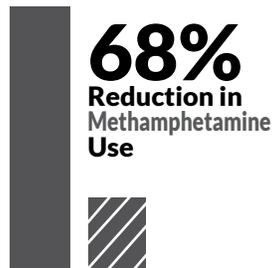
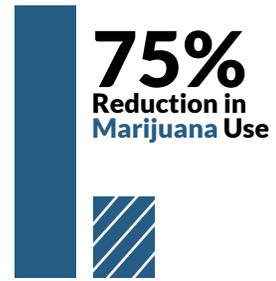
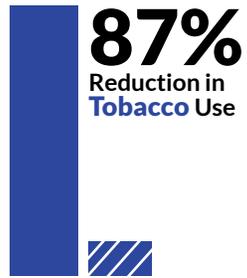
STRATEGY: LifeSkills Training (LST)

The LifeSkills Training (LST) has three major objectives: 1) Personal Self-management Skills – students develop strategies for making healthy decisions, reducing stress, and managing anger; 2) General Social Skills – students strengthen their communication skills and learn how to build healthy relationships; 3) Drug Resistance Skills – students understand the consequences of substance use, risk-taking, and the influences of the media. This program can be used as a universal tier prevention program in health classes or as a Tier 2 targeted-intervention for students with AODA concerns.

LifeSkills Training curriculum helps adolescents navigate the challenges of the high school years and prepares them for the independence and responsibilities that they will encounter as young adults.¹³

– LifeSkills Training Program

30 years of Positive Lifeskills Training (LST) Outcomes¹⁴



■ Did not
Receive LST

▨ Received LST

Critical Factors That Improve Engagement and Encourage Sustainability: Collaboration and Cultural Competency

SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) is a 5-step planning process to guide the selection, implementation, and evaluation of effective, culturally appropriate, and sustainable prevention activities. When thinking about collaboration, consider both traditional and non-traditional partners. Important champions for prevention may be found in the local media, and in the legislature, faith, or business communities. Best practice challenges us to think about sustainability more contextually; to consider the multiple factors that contribute to program success--such as the existence of stable prevention infrastructure, available training systems, and community support--and work toward sustaining these contributors. Cultural competence helps to ensure that the needs of all community members are identified and addressed.¹⁵

MODEL 2: Hayward High School ("Like a Cane")

Building Community Engagement and Sustainability through Collaboration

Although the "Like a Cane" campaign ("The Hurricanes" being the district's mascot) was originally designed to engage students at the high school level, the phrase is now used to engage the Hayward community. The phrase originated as a universal tier intervention within the high school to remind students of appropriate behavioral and academic expectations (e.g. "Achieve Like a Cane," "Graduate Like A Cane" ...) The "Like a Cane" campaign, however, is no longer limited to just the high school.

The campaign is now embraced by, and reinforced in, the community. As part of a community engagement effort, the school developed partnerships with local businesses expressing their catch phrase "Like a Cane." The effort was also a fundraiser for the district as businesses purchased banners through the district to express their support for the Hayward schools. Rob Novak, an American Family Insurance agent in Hayward, stated that the campaign is, "a good way to get businesses involved. I get satisfaction knowing I am part of the community." Businesses can purchase and display banners which have specific tie-ins with their businesses, like American Family Insurance's "Protect Your Dreams Like a

32%

improvement in the "school safety score" at Hayward High school as measured by the index for student behavior and school environment.

Cane,” or they can display simple banners of support like the Marketplace Foods, which prominently proclaims, “Proud to Be a Cane.” Jon Leblanc, the manager of the Marketplace, felt that the signs were, “all about pride, spirit and ownership...kids know they have the support of the community.” So many businesses have joined the campaign that Mr. Novak reports even tourists to Hayward are likely to be heard saying, “There’s another one of those signs!”

Hayward’s engagement of the community with the “Like a Cane” program not only highlights how collaboration builds engagement, but because it is economically viable, it has a built in sustainability factor. Diane Tremblay, Hayward’s S3 grant coordinator, noted, “the S3 grant gave us the funding to begin these activities.”



STRATEGY: Building Cultural Competency Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)

Green Bay Area Public School District's GSAs Improve Engagement for ALL Students and Professional Learning Communities Demonstrate Sustainability

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) are clubs made up of students – gay and straight – who think that anti-LGBT bullying, harassment, and discrimination is wrong. Members work together to make sure their school is a safe, supportive environment for ALL students.¹⁶

Nearly 40 percent of S3 project schools implemented a program to address the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) students. Forty-three percent of project schools also report a decrease in bullying on the YRBS survey. Green Bay Area Public School System has been working to support LGBTQ students since the late 1990's. The S3 grant, however, gave the district the ability to formalize its efforts. The grant allowed the district to collaborate with the Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools (GSAFE). Through working with GSAFE, the school district could not only begin GSAs at each school, but make these sustainable programs through the use of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) around the subject of assisting LGBTQ students.

A PLC is an extended learning opportunity to foster collaborative learning among colleagues within a particular work environment or field. It is often used in schools as a way to organize teachers into working groups. It is an ongoing process used to establish a school-wide culture that is based on a fundamental belief in building teacher leadership in school improvement efforts.¹⁷ In reference to how the PLC around LGBTQ issues affects Green Bay High Schools, Brian Juchems, Director of GSAFE stated, "the systematic change that PLCs provide means long lasting change that benefits LGBTQ youth." Mr. Juchems reported that having administrators, teachers, and GSA advisors work in a PLC gave staff an opportunity to "raise awareness, learn best practices, and help other staff." He further stated that,

"S3 funding helped us say let's do this and let's do this right."

*–Brian Juchems
GSAFE Director of
Education and Policy
(Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools)*

33%

decrease in bullying and harassment at Hayward High school since the S3 grant.

“S3 funding helped us say let’s do this and let’s do this right.” The benefits to LGBTQ students at Green Bay East High School are evidenced in the improvements in YRBS scores in the areas of: belonging, teacher caring and bullying, AOD use, and violence in the last 12 months. Elizabeth Wetzel-Gracyalny, Green Bay East High School social worker and S3 coordinator, reported that the district will continue to support the GSA program and the improvements it has made through additional DPI grant funding, which will place GSA advisors at each of the district’s four high schools and one middle school.

STRATEGY: Building Cultural Competency- American Indian Student Initiative Increases Engagement to School

“If you engage a child, you can teach a child. Once you address climate and engagement together, you address safety”

-Don Rosen, Education Consultant, American Indian Student Initiative

The American Indian Student Initiative (AISI) grew out of a collaborative endeavor between DPI and the Marshfield Clinic, a well-respected health care system that serves northern Wisconsin with two hospitals and 58 clinics. Bob Kovar, program manager for Tribal Services of the Marshfield Clinic for Community Outreach, drew attention to the fact that, “American Indian students have disproportionately lower high school completion rates (74 percent vs. 92 percent), higher suspension rates (seven percent vs. two percent), and higher expulsion rates (.14 percent vs. .06 percent) compared to white students in Wisconsin.”¹⁹ To develop positive outcomes for American Indian students, S3 grant funds were used to put together a team to provide professional development to three S3 schools, which served large numbers

of American Indian students. The three schools selected were Hayward High School, Bowler High School, and Bayfield High School. The team included Bob Kovar, as well as Don Rosen and RunningHorse Livingston, who are both well-known education consultants and members of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. The training consisted of organizational work, school-wide professional development and hands-on examples of how to run a culturally competent classroom.

Positive Outcomes:

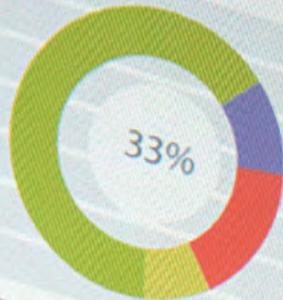
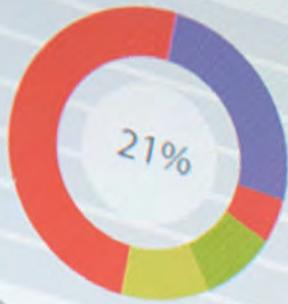
Hayward High School: Improved YRBS scores in seven of the nine ISBSE questions, with a significant improvement in bullying and harassment (down 33 percent). In another AISI program positive result, staff reported feeling more comfortable in their relationship with the local Lac Courte Oreilles reservation, based on pre- and post-testing. To sustain this improved comfort level, this fall, new teachers to the school will spend a full orientation day at the reservation.

Bowler High School: A school of 150 students, it is located 60 miles northwest of Green Bay. The Stockbridge-Munsee Indian Reservation sends students to the district. The school was able to improve their overall ISBSE score by 13 percent, as well as their YRBS 12-month bullying score by 35 percent. Additionally, Bob Kovar of the AISI program reported that the school's procedures for parent communications and involvement have become more inclusive. The school moved parent/teacher conferences to a location more convenient for the community so that more parents would be able to attend. AISI results show that staff understanding of the history and cultures of tribes in Wisconsin improved from 51 percent to 61 percent. Also, their numbers of culturally responsive classrooms improved from 62 percent to 74 percent.

(Bayfield High School's highly successful results are reported under the Model Programming: Putting it All Together section)

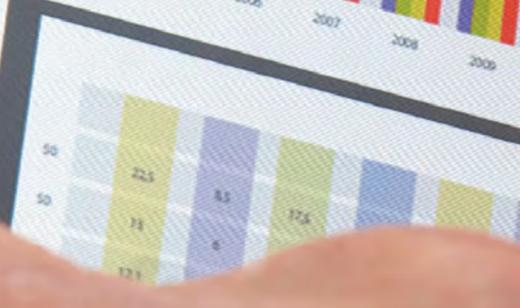
74%

Number of culturally responsive classrooms at Bowler High school.



Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

60	22.5	8.5	17.5	1.5
50	11	6	20	2.50
40	12.1	18.1	11.1	6.1
30	8.21	28.1	7.4	13.4
20	12.2	7.3	3.21	3.2
10	11.2	0.2	0.1	1.1
	2005	2006	2007	2008



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Objective 4

Making Data Driven Decisions

The effective collection and use of data to make decisions, establish priorities and gauge progress is a critical component of PBIS. As PBIS teams at the school buildings look at data it is critical that the data that is collected and analyzed be tied directly to the building's desired outcomes. Data can be qualitative or quantitative and most school buildings successfully implementing PBIS use both types of data. Data should also be collected, analyzed and shared with multiple audiences on a regular basis.¹⁸

– Lincoln (NE) Public Schools-PBIS

Increasing the capacity for schools to make data-driven decisions represents one of the most successful endeavors of the S3 project. Because over 90 percent of project schools began PBIS activities, and making data-driven decisions is a major component in the implementation of PBIS, this was a built-in process for the schools. In a survey of S3 project schools, PBIS was identified as having the greatest impact of all practices in the project. S3 schools routinely engage in data discussions, as the Mukwonago Positive Success team described in a previous section. These teams looked at

87%

graduation rate of
Superior High School's
Senior Mentor Program
Students.

student behavioral and academic data in order to make informed decisions on what interventions are the most appropriate for a given student or group of students. A benefit of using data to determine need is that it provides baseline information for evaluation of the success of current interventions, and indicates what areas may need new or additional interventions.

MODEL: Superior High School

Senior Mentor Program and the Use of Data

"Our Senior Mentor program is starting its fifth year and we have found it to be the most successful intervention program at Superior High School.

Our goal is to have at least 80 percent of the mentees to be on track to graduate at the end of their freshmen year and we have met that goal every year. The program has also been very successful in helping the freshmen students involved to be successful students as they advance through their high school careers and graduate. Our first group of mentees graduated this year and of the 30 that were in that pilot year, 26 of them graduated with their class (87 percent)."

-Marc Caldwell, SHS Senior Mentor Advisor

Much like the Link Crew program, the Senior Mentor Program at Superior High School was a freshman level initiative that aimed to provide academic support, personal accountability, and positive relationships in order to give students the tools to be successful in high school. Mentor program advisor Marc Caldwell explained how the program worked: “the program identifies the most at-risk freshmen students and pairs them with a senior student who mentors them in an academic advisory role throughout the school year.” Mr. Caldwell also added that the Senior Mentors monitored their mentees’ grades and notified advisors about any concerns with their mentees both inside and outside of school. Along with the mentors, each student had a freshman and senior level teacher who are the advisors for the academic advisory period. A guidance counselor was also assigned to academic advisories. These advisors assisted in the mentor selection process, helped with the training of the mentors, and were the “go to” staff for the mentors to seek out with any issues regarding their mentees.

Kent Bergum, Superior High School principal, felt that “without a doubt the Senior Mentor Program has been strengthened by the S3 grant.” In addition he believed the grant’s emphasis on data and provision of funding for professional development helped the school reach its goal of increasing student engagement. He stated “specifically, the grant provided a focus on data collection and analysis that was not in place prior to the grant. While the data showed attendance and academic gains for the population served by the Senior Mentor Program, it also highlighted a need to continue to develop system-wide interventions beyond the ninth grade. As a result of the grant, we now have a system for providing academic support through guided study halls for all students. Every three weeks, students who are failing are identified and supported through guided study halls and tutoring. The ninth grade Senior Mentor Program has become a cornerstone for supporting the eighth to ninth grade transition.”

"the program identifies the most at-risk freshmen students and pairs them with a senior student who mentors them in an academic advisory role throughout the school year."

—Marc Caldwell,
Mentor Program Advisor

MODEL: Bayfield High School

Multidimensional Approach to Improve School Safety and Environment

The S3 grant gave us the spark to get going; it brought an awareness to what we were doing and an across the board change in attitude.”

-Sandy Raspotnik, Director of Pupil Services, Bayfield School District

Bayfield High School, enrollment of 130 students, is a rural school bordering Lake Superior. Nearly 80 percent of students in the district come from the Red Cliff Reservation. The free and reduced lunch rate is over 85 percent. During the course of the S3 grant, Bayfield High School made impressive gains in school safety and environment. Through its efforts, the school has engaged students and the community. Bayfield High School achieved their success through the use of several evidenced-based strategies.

“Strive for Five” PBIS Matrix

The “Strive for Five” universal tier behavioral matrix educated students on the behaviors of: responsibility, cooperation, respect, kindness, and honesty. This matrix was displayed at the entrance to the school, in the locker hallway, in the cafeteria, and throughout academic and non-academic settings in the school. The matrix clearly defined behavioral expectations in each setting. In the locker area, for instance, “Strive for Five” was defined as: Responsibility—Keep area graffiti free, Cooperation—Keep area clean, Respect—Leave other students’ property alone, Kindness—Be kind to your locker, Honesty—Do not steal, be honest.

PBIS Interventions

- **COMP:** three teachers used it in their classroom and two staff members were Trainers of Trainers (building in sustainability).
- **SBIRT:** both school counselors received training in SBIRT, and this coming year there will be a full-time mental health professional on site to whom to refer students who need further mental health or substance abuse assistance. This programming will make available to Bayfield High School all three tiers of PBIS and in so doing, increase sustainability and collaboration.
- **Trauma Informed Curriculum:** piloted as a classroom curriculum at the elementary and middle school levels and available to high school staff. This curriculum helps students develop strategies and life skills, which can alleviate and/or protect them from the negative effects of trauma.
- **The AlcoholEDU:** a two-and-a-half-hour program to educate all 10th grade students on safe and healthy decision making with respect to alcohol.
- **Delta 9:** a marijuana curriculum, which teaches social norms, refusal skills, and effects on the brain, and is taught by the high school health teacher and alternative education teacher.
- **School-Connect:** a freshman half-semester class designed to improve high school students' social, emotional, and academic skills and strengthen relationships among students and teachers.
- **Jump Start:** a freshman transition program that acculturates all ninth grade students to life at the high school, and continues throughout the school year.

86%

improvement in the "school safety score" at Bayfield High school as measured by the index for student behavior and school environment.

Bayfield is a PBIS School of Merit

In 2012, the Wisconsin PBIS Network designated Bayfield High School as a School of Merit, due to their implementation of the Universal Tier 1 with fidelity, their use of data to make informed decisions in order to improve student outcomes, and their regular use of fidelity tools to self-assess and plan implementation efforts.

Bayfield High School and the American Indian Student Initiative

The AISI project has greatly benefited Bayfield High School, its students, and the community. The school benefited by engaging in self-reflection and updating its mission statement to include Ojibwe words. Students benefited from classrooms that were responsive to their culture. Finally, the community benefited from being engaged through regular meetings between the Red Cliff Band and the school board. One of the highlights of these meetings was that language immersion will be available to students, grades K-6. These efforts created an important dialogue to respond to the concerns of the school community. As education consultant, Don Rosen noted "parents want to belong." The result of this dialogue and subsequent changes in practice are clearly evident in the improvement of the school's ISBSE.

Summary

The federal Safe and Supportive Schools grant provided funding to 19 school districts to improve conditions for learning in the areas of school safety, school climate, and school engagement, and to promote the use of data-driven decision making. All S3 project schools made policy changes, frequently eliminating zero tolerance programs. Over 90 percent of the districts implemented Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, which not only mandates developing positive behavioral matrices, but also incorporates the effective use of data in its process. Results of the four-year grant program show that 87 percent of the participating schools improved their ISBSE score (suspensions/expulsion rate plus school climate measurement). Project schools also showed an improvement in alcohol and drug abuse measures, and 40 percent of schools reported a reduction in bullying.

Programs contributing to the improvement in school safety, school environment, and engagement, in addition to policy changes and PBIS implementation, include: restorative justice practices, freshman transition programs such as Link Crew, SBIRT, Gay Straight Alliances, classroom management programming, and LifeSkills Training. Programs that build sustainability through collaboration, such as GSA's and the American Indian Student Initiative also contributed to the S3 program's success. Finally, the making of data-driven decisions was a way for S3 schools to match their programming to their needs and measure success.

87%

of S3 Grant Schools
improved their ISBSE
score.

What People Are Saying About the S3 Project:

“We were able to use the funds to make dramatic shifts in our school culture. The S3 grant gave St. Francis the ability to try and implement a number of different interventions and programs that we would not have been able to afford without the funding.”

- Mike Lewandowski, St. Francis High School

“We used S3 grant funds to provide in-school suspension supervision, adult tutoring after school two days per week, fund student leadership training, and fund student incentives. Additionally, we enhanced security by adding 34 cameras around the building. All of these efforts were centered on two main goals throughout all three years of the grant: getting students to feel more connected to school; and reducing out-of-school suspensions from one year to the next.”

- Steven High, Principal, Northwestern High School

“The S3 grant provided technical assistance, guidance, and fiscal opportunity to develop consciousness of targeted data points. We have an increased awareness of the specific sub-groups who need additional supports and interventions in order to be successful in our schools. We have engaged parents, community agencies, and staff in these efforts.”

- Kim Schanock, Green Bay Public Schools

“It (the S3 project) has forced us to look at factors not previously considered when measuring student achievement. Looking at data has been eye-opening for many school staff members.”

- David Coyle, West Allis School District

“It (the S3 project) has helped us to use the YRBS data in a much more significant manner.”

- Elizabeth Heflin, West Allis School District

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