



It Takes a Village

Lessons Learned in Establishing Leadership Teams to Support Comprehensive School Climate Interventions

22nd Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health

October 19, 2017



Presenters

- Brandon Stratford, Child Trends
 - Evaluator
- Iris Jacob, DC Office of Human Rights
 - Community Advisory Board Chair
- Dominique Parris, Child Trends
 - Technical Assistance Provider
- Michael McCoy, Child Trends
 - Technical Assistance Provider

Disclaimer

This project is supported by Award No. 2015-CK-BX-0016, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Objectives

1. Understand how a Core Leadership Team can support comprehensive school climate initiatives.
2. Learn about the benefits of developing a Core Leadership Team that represents a variety of perspectives including students and family members.
3. Identify potential solutions to common challenges in establishing an effective Core Leadership Team.

Agenda

- Overview of the 8 Core Elements of Safe Schools Certification
- A Deep Dive on the First 3 Core Elements
- Barriers & Solutions: Small Group Discussions



Why do Schools Need SSC?

- In 2011, the U.S. Department of Education reported that public schools implement on average nine separate prevention programs to reduce negative student behavior including violence and substance use.
- Of these, only 7.8 percent had strong evidence of efficacy, and less than half of schools that used evidence-based programs did so with fidelity.
- “...a tremendous amount of resources (e.g. for program materials and instructor time) is being allocated to activities of unproven worth”

Crosse, S., et al., *Prevalence and Implementation Fidelity of Research-Based Prevention Programs in Public Schools*. Final Report. 2011, US Department of Education.

What are the Goals of the SSC?

- Improve selection and fit of prevention programming in schools, saving valuable resources.
- Build capacity to understand data, respond to what is actually going on, and better support students.
- Sustain efforts by providing high-quality technical assistance centered on intentional planning.
- Achieve recognition and serve as an example for other schools to follow.

How Does the SSC Work?

- SSC is a framework, rather than a prescriptive curriculum, that consists of 8 core elements.
- SSC helps schools to coordinate existing efforts that are working, streamline those that are not, and select evidence-based interventions to target areas of need identified by data.
- Schools work through the framework and submit evidence of meeting the criteria to a Community Advisory Board for review and approval at specified intervals.
- Schools which complete this process are rewarded with public recognition of their work.

What are the 8 Core Elements?

| | | |
|----------|--|--|
| 1 | Leadership | Efforts are guided by teams representing the entire school community. |
| 2 | Buy-In to School Climate Improvement | Support and input is solicited from all members of the school's community. |
| 3 | Data & Data-Based Decision Making | Data-collection and evaluation drive decision making. |
| 4 | Policy and Enforcement | Rules for behavior are established, agreed upon by the school's community and enforced consistently. |
| 5 | Student Engagement | Students are actively encouraged to take a leadership role in shaping their school climates. |
| 6 | Family and Community Engagement | The vital role of families and communities is recognized, and they are integrated into schools' efforts. |
| 7 | Training | All staff, including school support staff, are trained. |
| 8 | Programs and Practices | Evidence-informed prevention and intervention programming focused on areas of identified need. |

What is the Community Advisory Board (CAB)?

- The board should consist of a diverse set of stakeholders.
- Reviews the evidence schools provide on their progress to certify that SSC criteria have been met.
- Provides an objective opinion on schools' efforts.
- Can find patterns and issues that can't be seen easily by those closely involved at the school level.

How Can Schools Establish an Effective CAB?

- Make sure that the members represent a variety of perspectives.
- Avoid tokenism.
- Engage individuals with familiarity with schools and a commitment to safe schools.
- Provide thorough training.
- Pay particular attention to the role of systems of oppression.

The Current Study

- Funded by the National Institute of Justice.
- Three-year randomized control trial including 24 middle and high schools in Washington, DC.
- All schools received the framework and supporting documentation.
- Intervention schools receive support from technical assistants.

School characteristics

| School | American Indian or Alaskan Native Non-Hispanic/Latino | Asian Non-Hispanic/Latino | Black/African American Non-Hispanic/Latino | Hispanic/Latino | Multi-Racial Non-Hispanic Latino | Native American/Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic Latino | White Non-Hispanic Latino |
|--------|---|---------------------------|--|-----------------|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 1 | 0% | 0% | 53% | 43% | 0% | 0% | 3% |
| 2 | 0% | 6% | 31% | 13% | 5% | 0% | 45% |
| 3 | 0% | 0% | 62% | 37% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 4 | 0% | 0% | 87% | 10% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 5 | 0% | 0% | 98% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 6 | 0% | 0% | 97% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 7 | 0% | 0% | 61% | 38% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 8 | 0% | 0% | 60% | 30% | 6% | 0% | 3% |
| 9 | 0% | 0% | 99% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 10 | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 11 | 0% | 5% | 42% | 7% | 6% | 0% | 40% |
| 12 | 12% | 0% | 88% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 13 | 0% | 0% | 95% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 4% |
| Mean | 1% | 1% | 67% | 14% | 1% | 0% | 7% |

The Timeline

| Milestone | Details |
|-----------------------|--|
| Year 1: Checkpoint 1 | School has met the desired states for the first three elements – Leadership, Data, and Buy-in. |
| Year 2: Checkpoint 2 | School has met the desired states for the final five elements – Policy & Enforcement, Student Engagement, Family and Community Engagement, Training, Programs & Practices. |
| Year 3: Certification | School has created a portfolio of its work documenting progress towards meeting the desired states in all eight elements. School is publicly recognized for establishing the foundation for a positive school climate. |

Core Element 1: Leadership

Desired States

1. The school has a Core Leadership Team (CLT) that meets at least once a month and includes administration, staff, students, as well as family and community members.
2. The school has a Student Leadership Team (SLT) that meets at least once a month and used the US Dept of Education's School Climate Survey (ED-SCLS) data to provide feedback specific to school climate improvement to the CLT. This group represents a diverse cross section of the school population.

Core Element 1: Leadership

Case examples

Parks Union Middle School is very excited about improving their school's climate as they enter the first year of SSC. In their first Core Leadership Team (CLT) meeting the group—composed of teachers, students, school leadership and support staff, reviews the data from the student surveys in order to identify issues and areas of focus. The CLT agrees to meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month at 2pm. They have chosen Ms. Rodriguez, the school counselor as the chairperson. She will monitor the progress of the group and report to the larger school staff.

Core Element 1: Leadership

Discussion

1. What is Parks Union MS doing right?
2. What is missing from their CLT?
3. Why might Parks Union MS have difficulty forming a complete CLT?

Core Element 2: Data

Desired States

1. There is an on-going process for the collection of school climate data through ED-SCLS.
2. An adequate response rate is obtained on student, parent, and staff school climate survey data collections.
3. Measurable targets or benchmarks are established based on review of ED-SCLS data reports.
4. Programs, trainings, and other efforts are clearly tied to needs presented in the data.

Core Element 2: Data

Case examples

The students and teachers are enjoying Spring Break and Community Academy of Arts and Science is quiet. Principal Jones is taking advantage of the time to review the student and staff responses from the EDSCLS survey. He identifies the following from the data:

1. The majority of students feel that athletes receive special treatment from administrators and staff.
2. Eighth grade girls report that they are bullied by their peers; especially on social media.
3. Students and staff report that they do not feel they have any meaningful input on what happens at the school.

Because he is eager to provide incentives for good behavior and establish consistency, Principal Jones decides to implement PBIS the following school year.

Core Element 2: Data

Discussion

1. Does Principal Jones' decision to implement PBIS reflect an understanding of the data? Why or why not?
2. What other considerations (if any) should Principal Jones have made before deciding to implement PBIS?

Core Element 3: Buy-in

Desired States

1. School staff support efforts to improve school climate.
2. School staff implement school climate improvement efforts with fidelity.

Core Element 3: Buy-in

Case examples

It is the beginning of the second semester at South Academy. After several months of increased conflict among the students, leadership at the school have decided to focus on improving school climate. After several meetings the members have decided to implement a zero tolerance policy. Students who make fun of their peers will meet with the counselors for strategies on how to improve their communication. Students who fight will attend Saturday Detention. Leadership will present this plan to the greater staff and parents next week.

Core Element 3: Buy-in

Discussion

1. Is this an effective strategy? Why or why not?
2. What actions can leadership take to both address student behavior and encourage buy-in among parents, teachers and staff?

Small group exercise

Read your scenario. Each group will focus on one of the first three core elements. Please respond to the following questions and be prepared to report out to the larger group:

- What is going well at your school?
- What challenges is your school facing?
- What are some potential solutions to the challenges your school is facing?

Large group discussion

1. What was going well related to each of the three core elements?
2. What challenges were schools facing related to each of the three core elements?
3. What are some potential solutions?

