Creating a Safe, Supportive & Engaging School Climate

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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State Superintendent
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What Is School Climate?

The conditions and quality of the learning environment that affect the attitudes, behaviors, and performance of students, staff, and parents.

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Why Do We Care About School Climate?

Outcomes for Students

- Improved academic achievement
- Improved attendance & graduation
- Improved mental health
- Improved self-esteem
- Reduced problem behavior
- Reduced substance use

Outcomes for Staff

- Improved staff retention
- Improved staff job satisfaction

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School Climate, Common Core and Local Control and Accountability Plan

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- **Local Control and Accountability Plan** (LCAP) is required to address school climate as a state priority.
- Other state priorities include parental involvement and pupil engagement.
- **Common Core** calls for development of high-order 'non-cognitive' skills students need to prepare students for college or career:
  - Critical thinking
  - Communication
  - Problem solving
  - Persistence

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Academic Performance and School Demographics

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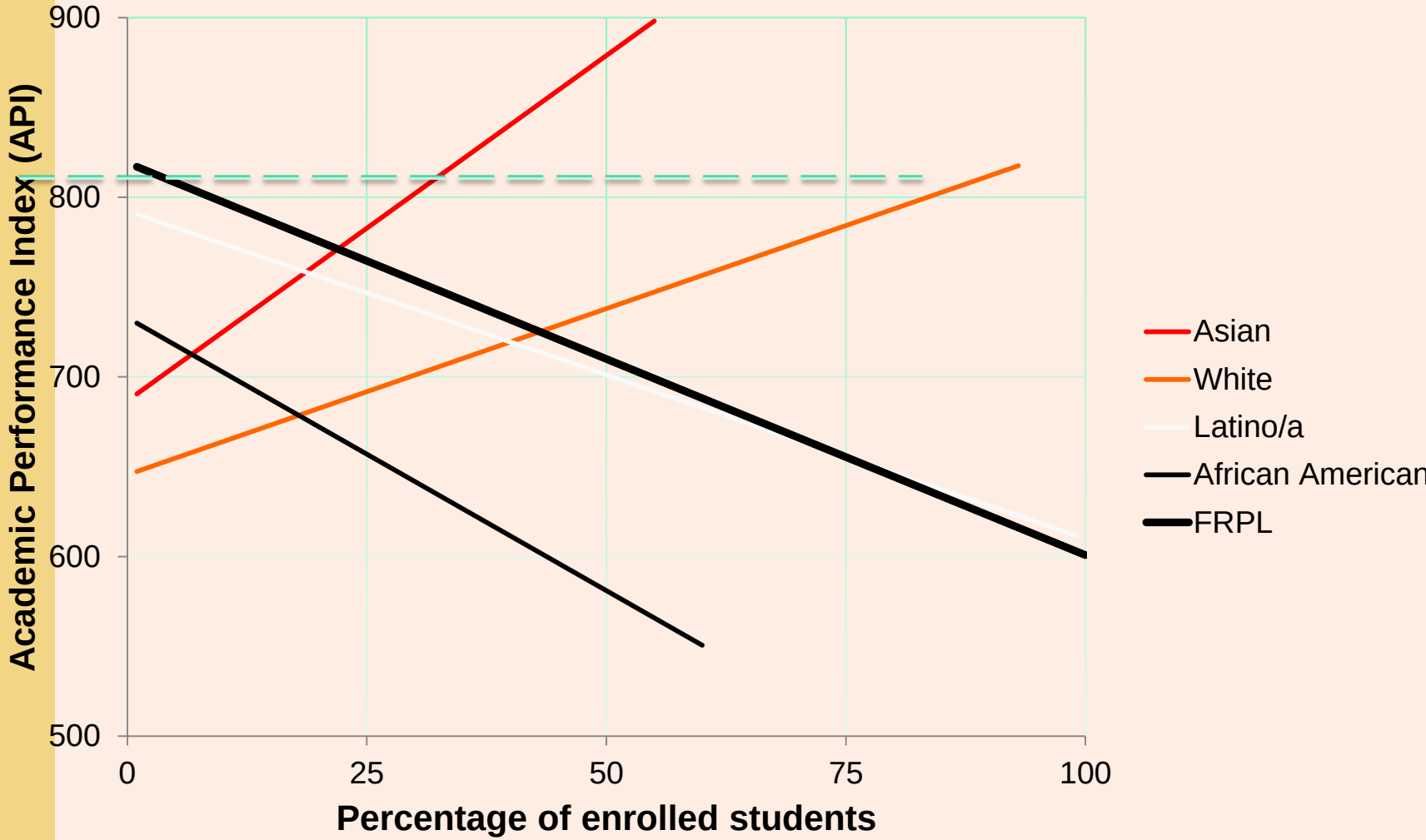

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Beating the Odds Study*

- Successful California schools have extraordinarily positive climates
- Consistently poorest performing schools have significantly poorer climates
- A positive school climate can reduce the effects of poverty on academic achievements
- School climate improvement could be low cost, and easily implemented
- Not WHAT you do but HOW you go about doing what you do
- Easily sustainable

- *“A Climate for Academic Success” Report Summary http://www.wested.org/cs/we/view/rs/1308

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School Climate in California

- 1/3 of California's 9th graders report being bullied or harassed at school
- 40% of California's 9th graders do not feel safe at school
- 30% of California's 9th graders and 40% of 11th graders use alcohol or other illegal drug in the last 30 days
- 30% of California's high school students report chronic sadness

2009-11 California Healthy Kids Survey Statewide Report http://chks.wested.org/reports

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More about California School Climate

- 45% of California's 9th graders cannot report at least one **caring adults** at school
- 30% of California's high school students report no teacher or adult at school believes that they will be a success (**low expectation**)
- 35% of California's 9th graders report doing things that makes a difference in school (**meaningful participation)**

2009-11 California Healthy Kids Survey Statewide Report
http://chks.wested.org/reports

California Safe and Supportive Schools Program

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California is one of 11 states to receive the federal four-year Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) grant to…

- Improve school climate and safety in high schools with the greatest need
- Build data-driven decision-making capacity
- Integrate school climate reform into school-wide academic improvement efforts

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58 schools, 26 districts

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CA S3 Intervention Model

- Tiered interventions to address SCI needs of general population and at-risk populations - *What Works Briefs*
- Referral-intervention process – *Student Assistance Program*
- Youth Development Strategies
- Parent and Community Engagement
- Staff Development – *Single School Culture*
- Evidence based strategies and approaches

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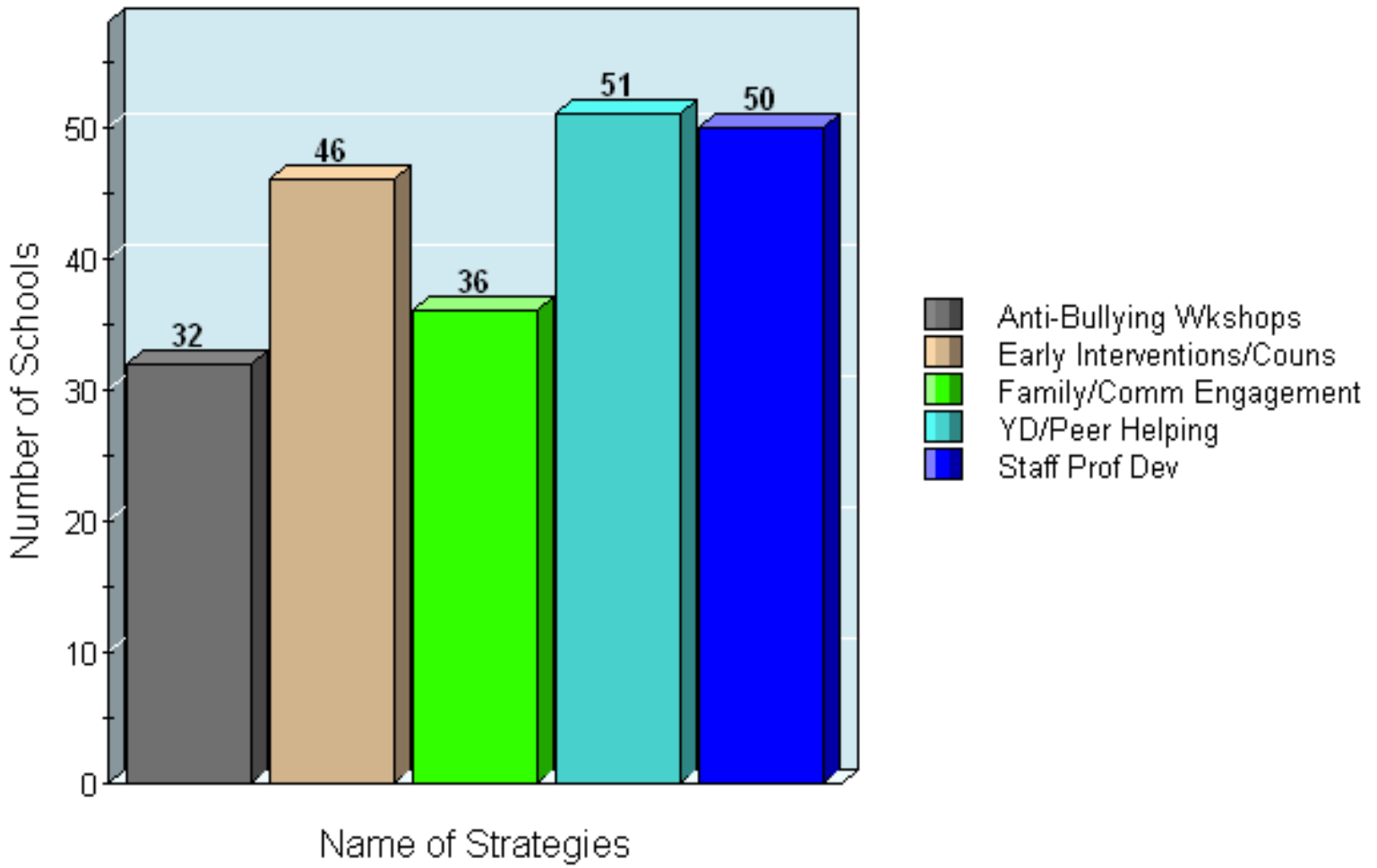
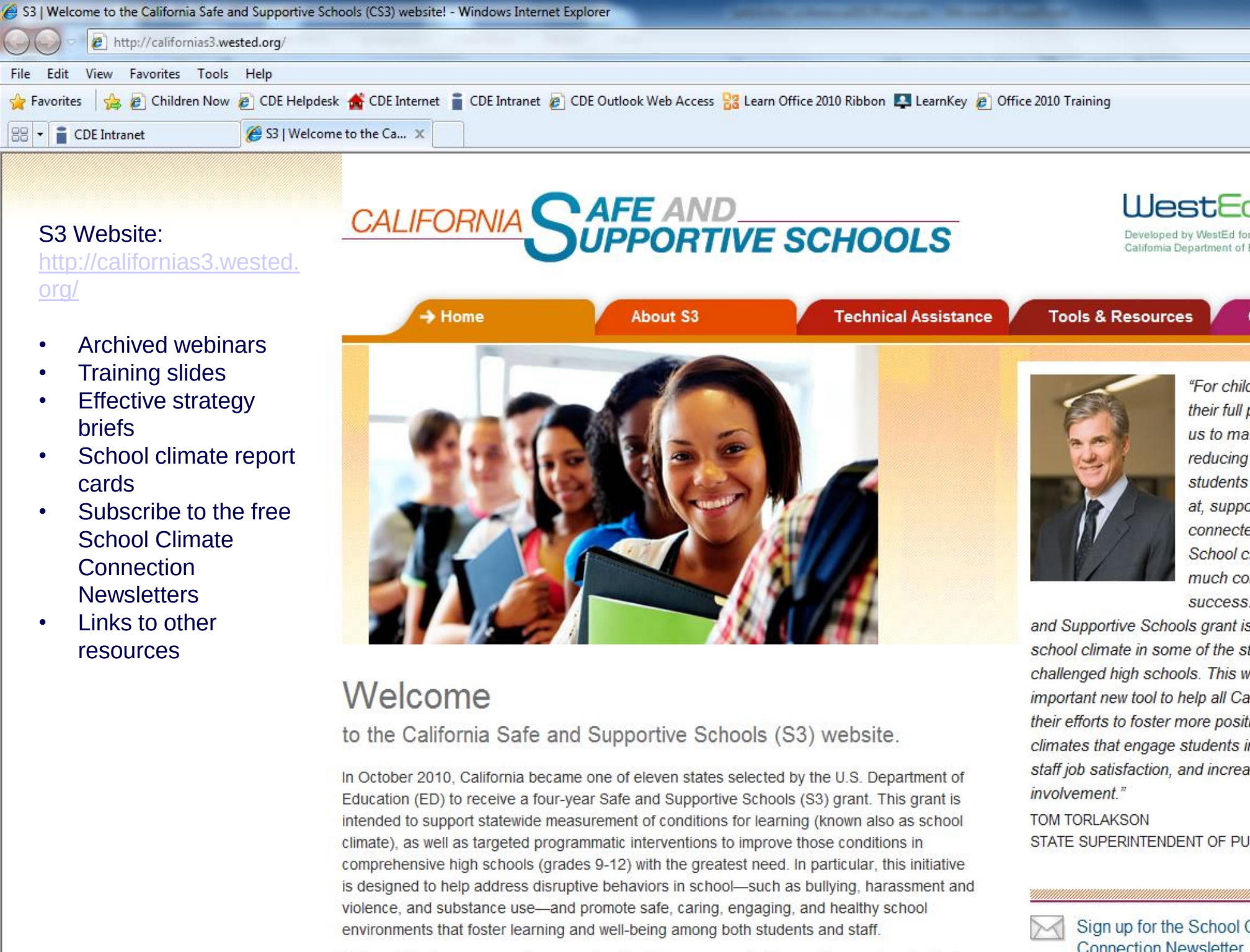
Top 5 Intervention Strategies used by CA S3 Schools



S3 Website: http://californias3.wested.org/

- Archived webinars
- Training slides
- Effective strategy briefs
- School climate report cards
- Subscribe to the free School Climate Connection Newsletters
- Links to other resources



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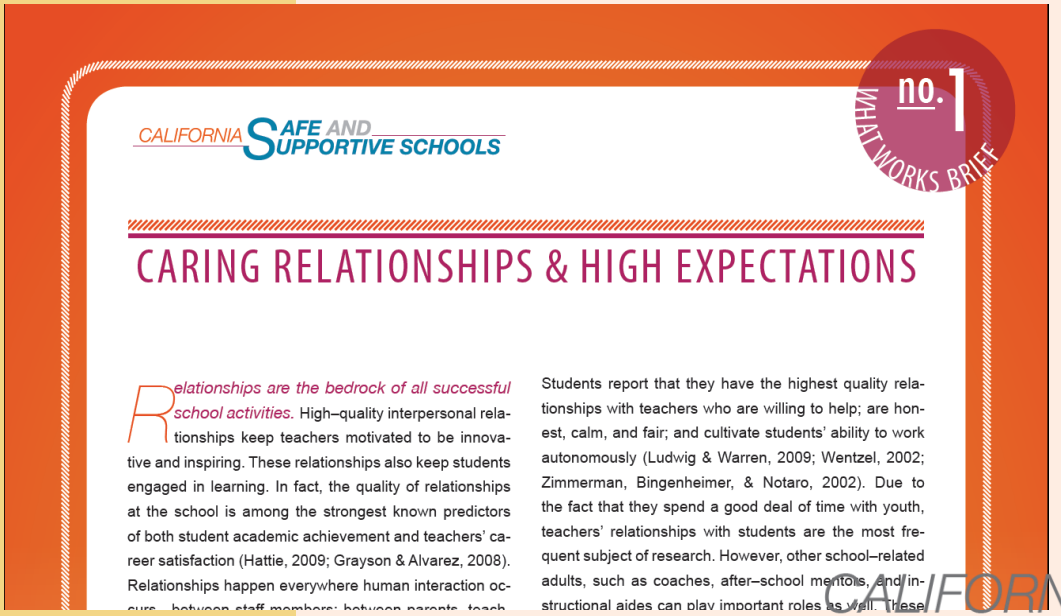
S3 What Works Briefs

(californiaS3.wested.org/tools)

1. Caring relationships and high expectations
2. Opportunities for meaningful participation
3. Perceptions of Safety
4. School Connectedness
5. Physical and emotional violence perpetration
6. Physical and emotional violence victimization
7. Harassment and bullying
8. Substance use at school
9. Family engagement
10. Staff climate

Quick Wins, Universal Supports, Targeted Supports



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no. 1 WHAT WORKS BRIEF

CARING RELATIONSHIPS & HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Relationships are the bedrock of all successful school activities. High–quality interpersonal relationships keep teachers motivated to be innovative and inspiring. These relationships also keep students engaged in learning. In fact, the quality of relationships at the school is among the strongest known predictors of both student academic achievement and teachers' career satisfaction (Hattie, 2009; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). Relationships happen everywhere human interaction occurs—between staff members; between parents, teach-

Students report that they have the highest quality relationships with teachers who are willing to help; are honest, calm, and fair; and cultivate students' ability to work autonomously (Ludwig & Warren, 2009; Wentzel, 2002; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). Due to the fact that they spend a good deal of time with youth, teachers' relationships with students are the most frequent subject of research. However, other school–related adults, such as coaches, after–school mentors, and instructional aides can play important roles as well. These

Climate Connection Toolkit

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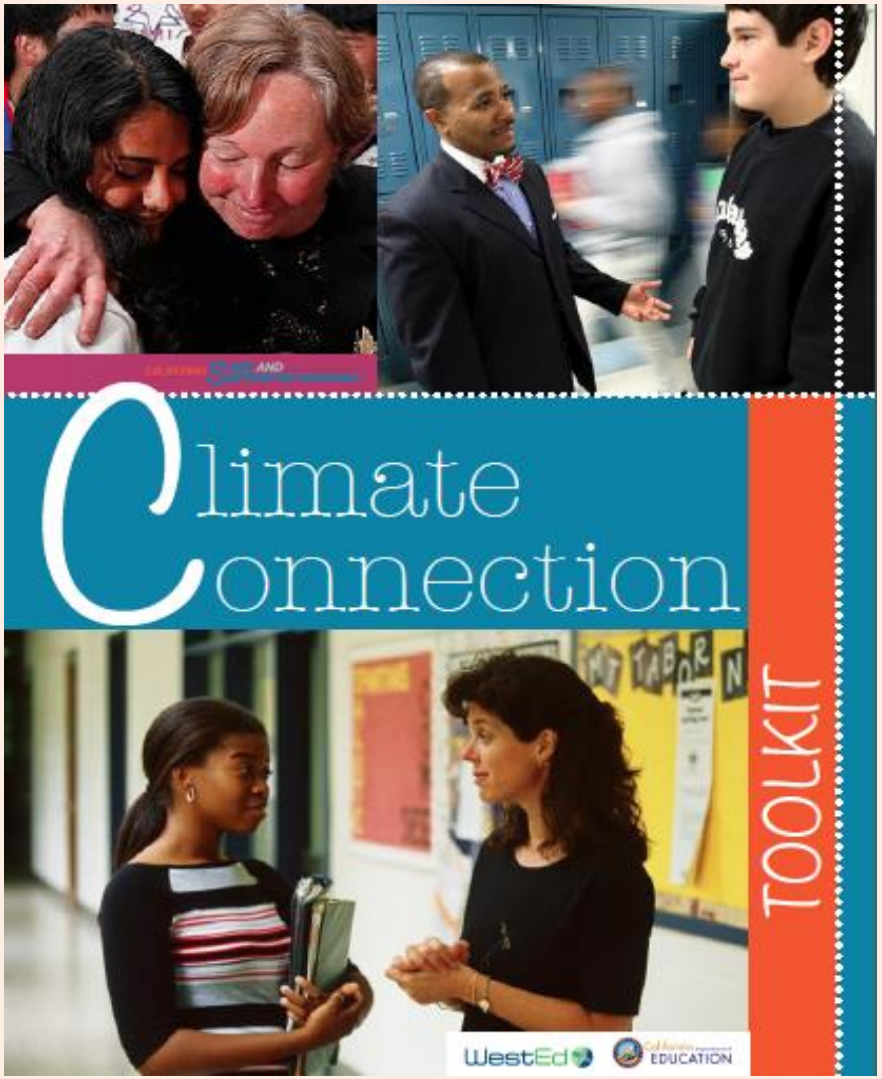

- Low or no-cost school climate improvement strategies

ACTIVITY 1

"That's Who We Are"

What

Members of the school community create a motivational, confirming message to be repeated daily.

Why

Establishing a motivational, confirming message helps community members start to attribute positive experiences to the behavior and effort of their friends, colleagues, and to themselves. Repeating a motivational, confirming message regularly helps school community members attend more carefully to the experiences during the day that confirm that message. As the number of experiences accumulates, the community starts to expect positive experiences from the school because "that's who we are."

What You Need

Materials

1. Chart paper
2. Red dot stickers
3. Note paper for all participants
4. Pencils/pens and marker
5. School Climate Prompt (see Tools, p. 6)
6. Using the Language of Behavior (see Tools, p. 6)
7. Example of a Daily Message (see Tools, p. 6)
8. Snacks

Who

- A cross-section of staff, students, and parents
- Individuals representing different staff stakeholder groups (e.g., classified staff, certificated staff, security personnel)
- Individuals representing different student groups (e.g., age, ethnicity, level of school involvement)
- No "pre-set" number of participants

Space

- Meeting room large enough for all participants
- Room should be equipped with tables for small group work

Time

- Preparation: 30 minutes
- Facilitation: 2 hours
- Follow-Up: 2 hours

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Program Spotlight; Cal-SCHLS Corner; Social Emotional Learning; Healthy Students; Student & Family Engagement; Professional Dev; In the Blog; Resources & Upcoming Events

School Climate CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

WestEd
WestEd.org
Developed by WestEd for the California Department of Education

OCTOBER is *National Bullying Prevention Month*

Program Spotlight:

Challenge Day Club: College Park Students Tell their Story

Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) grantee, College Park High School (Mount Diablo USD), hosted a Challenge Day Event to reduce bullying and substance use on campus. By blending S3 events and support systems, they created life-changing enthusiasm among students and staff, and are working to make it sustainable. Read the students' success stories.

Want to share your school's success story? Send it to sccnews@wested.org. School success stories will also be posted on the CaliforniaS3 website.

Cal-SCHLS Corner

New and Improved Healthy Kids Survey Expands Assessment

Forward to a Friend

SCCN #22 09/17/13

In this issue:

- Program Spotlight
- Cal-SCHLS Corner
- Socio-Emotional Learning
- Healthy Students
- Student Engagement
- Family Engagement
- Professional Dev
- In the Blog
- CHK Resource Center
- Resources
- Upcoming Events

CHK Resource Center

Safe School Ambassadors

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S3 Outcomes

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In the beginning (2010-11)…

- Av API 689 (state av 741)
  - 67% scored below state median
- 80% non-white enrollment
- Two-thirds FRPM
- Av SCI 254 (state av 300)
  - State percentile ranking: 16

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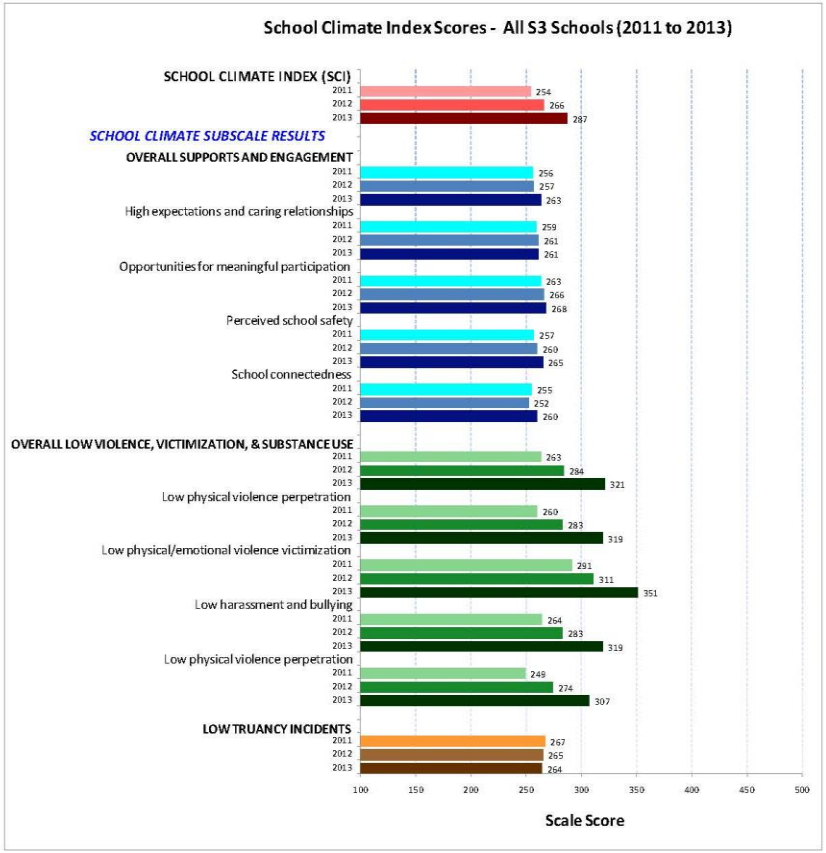
School Climate Report Card—Spring 2013

California S3 High Schools

Date prepared: 1 Oct 2013

School Climate Index (SCI)

	2011	2012	2013	Change
SCI Score[A]	254[B]	266[C]	287[B]	+33
SCI State Percentile[D]	16	25	44	+28



[A] 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%).

[B] 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.

[C] 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.

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

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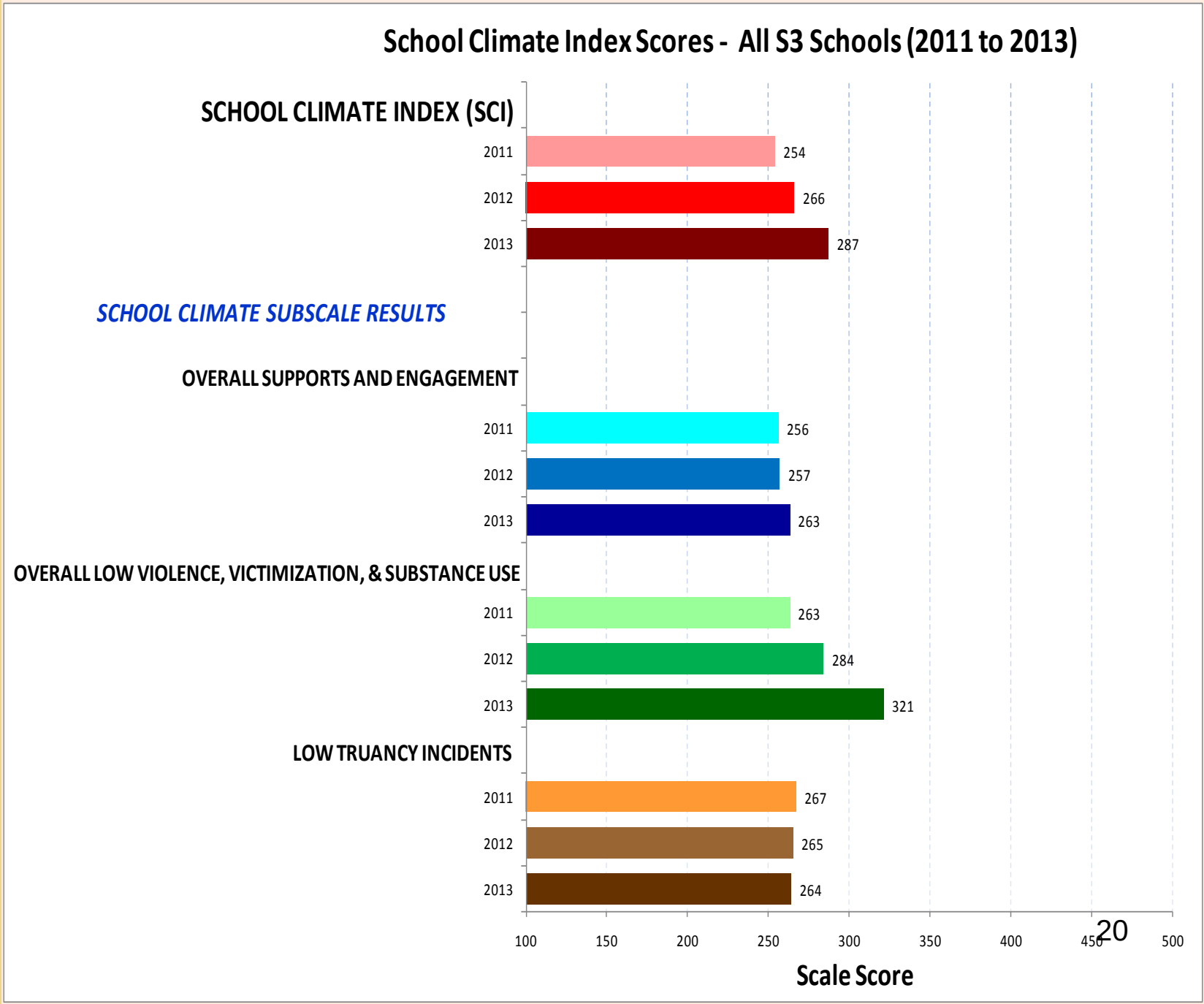

All S3 Schools – Changes from 2011-2014

	School Climate Index (SCI)		Supports and Engagement		Low Violence /Substance Use	
Number of Schools	N	%	N	%	N	%
Increased	**42**	**72%**	**29**	**34%**	**53**	**91%**
No Change	**12**	**21%**	**9**	**16%**	**1**	**2%**
Declined	**4**	**7%**	**29**	**50%**	**4**	**7%**
Total	**58**	**100%**	**58**	**100%**	**57**	**100%**

Outcomes – Changes from 2011-2014

	30-day Alcohol Use		Harassment or Bullying		Suspensions for Violence w/o injury	
Number of Schools	N	%	N	%	N	%
Declined	**51**	**86%**	**25**	**43%**	**23**	**45%**
No Change	**2**	**3%**	**10**	**17%**	**2**	**4%**
Increased	**6**	**10%**	**23**	**40%**	**26**	**51%**
Total	**58**	**100%**	**58**	**100%**	**58**	**100%**

Outcomes – Changes from 2011-2014

	School Connectedness		School Supportive and Inviting		Parent Input Encouraged	
Number of Schools	N	%	N	%	N	%
Declined	**32**	**55%**	**41**	**71%**	**16**	**27%**
No Change	**7**	**12%**	**1**	**2%**	**3**	**7%**
Increased	**19**	**33%**	**16**	**28%**	**39**	**87%**
Total	**58**	**100%**	**58**	**100%**	**45**	**100%**

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