New Opportunities for AOD Prevention

CREATING POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE THROUGH OUR SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

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The substance use prevention field is poised to advance to a sophisticated model of strengths-based approach infused in a key developmental context – school. As evidence of effective youth development systems and prevention practices expands, it is driving an emphasis on seamless blending of community and school based supports for youth. At the national level, the Safe and Supportive Schools Model and the National Standards for School Climate are the latest examples of this advance. Prevention providers are in an optimal position to leverage their relevant expertise through new and expanded partnerships with schools. The first step is to understand some of the fundamental elements of the focus on learning environments as a context for youth wellbeing. Then, identify opportunities and engage school partners in ways that align shared values and objectives.
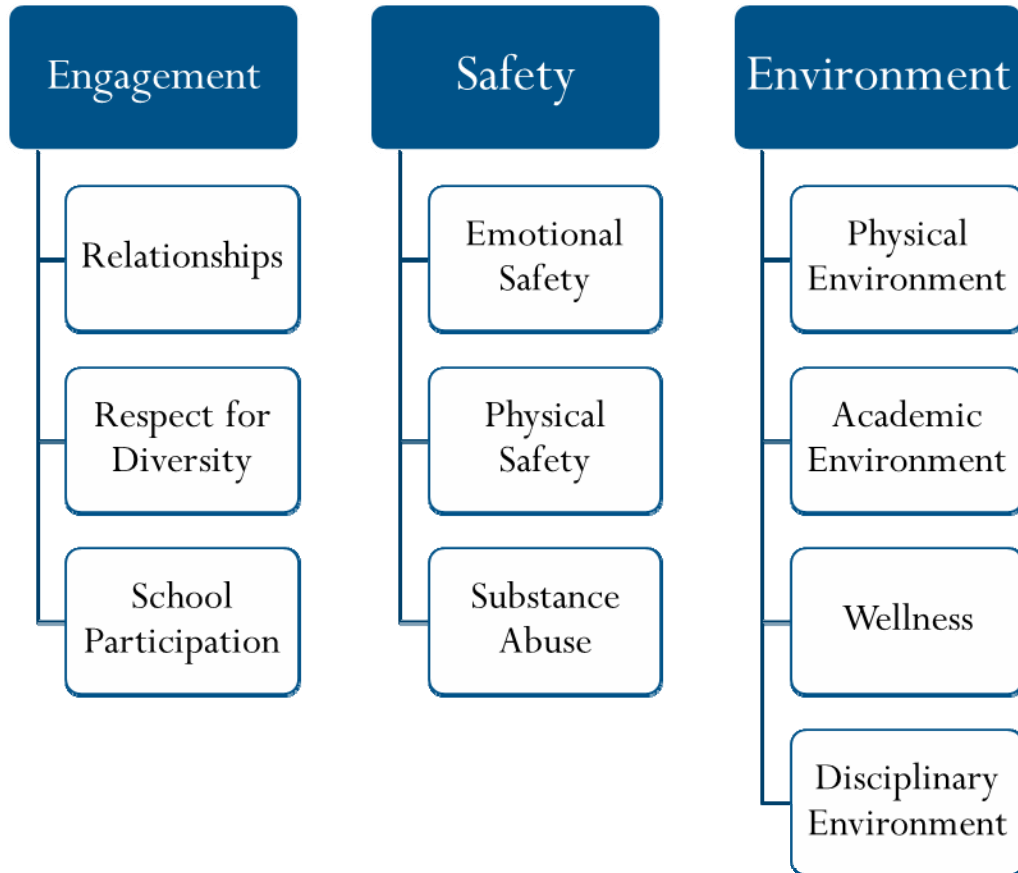
The Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) Model

The S3 model is based on the Safe and Drug Free Schools initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The approach entails engagement of every member of the school community, promotion of personal safety and security on campus, and a supportive and nurturing environment for learning. The federal agenda for education places a priority on:

- All students feeling they belong.
- All students feeling valued.
- All students feeling physically and emotionally safe.

S3 model

Engagement	Safety	Environment
Relationships	Emotional Safety	Physical Environment
Respect for Diversity	Physical Safety	Academic Environment
School Participation	Substance Abuse	Wellness
		Disciplinary Environment

The development of a safe and supportive school requires a strategy that is comprehensive, school-wide, and fully integrated into curriculum. Staff, students, and students' families interact as empowered and contributing members of a cooperative community. The systemic approach to creating and maintaining a safe and supportive learning community defines the culture of the school. It is not feasible to achieve the S3 Model through ad hoc linkage of services or a silo-based approach to problems. The National School Climate Standards provide insight into the details of instilling a cohesive culture of universal positive regard into an academic infrastructure in which youth thrive.

A Brief Review of the National School Climate National Standards

The National School Climate Council (NSCC) outlines a comprehensive framework for cultivating positive school climate. It is based on research and evidence contributed from numerous experts representing diverse perspectives. In 2009, a set of five primary goals accompanied by indicators and sub-indicators established guidelines that States may adopt or adapt to their education systems. The Standards encompass a broad range of factors that ensure a "clear, fair, and just" environment in which all students are engaged in the learning process. The five primary goal areas include:

1. Developing a **shared vision** and plan for promoting, enhancing and sustaining a positive school climate.
2. Developing **policies** that promote social, emotional, ethical, civic and intellectual learning as well as systems that address barriers to learning.
3. Promoting **practices** that promote the learning and positive social, emotional, ethical and civic development of students and student engagement as well as addressing barriers to learning.
4. Creating an environment where all members are **welcomed, supported, and feel safe** in school: socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.
5. Developing meaningful and engaging practices, activities and norms that **promote social and civic responsibilities and a commitment to social justice**.
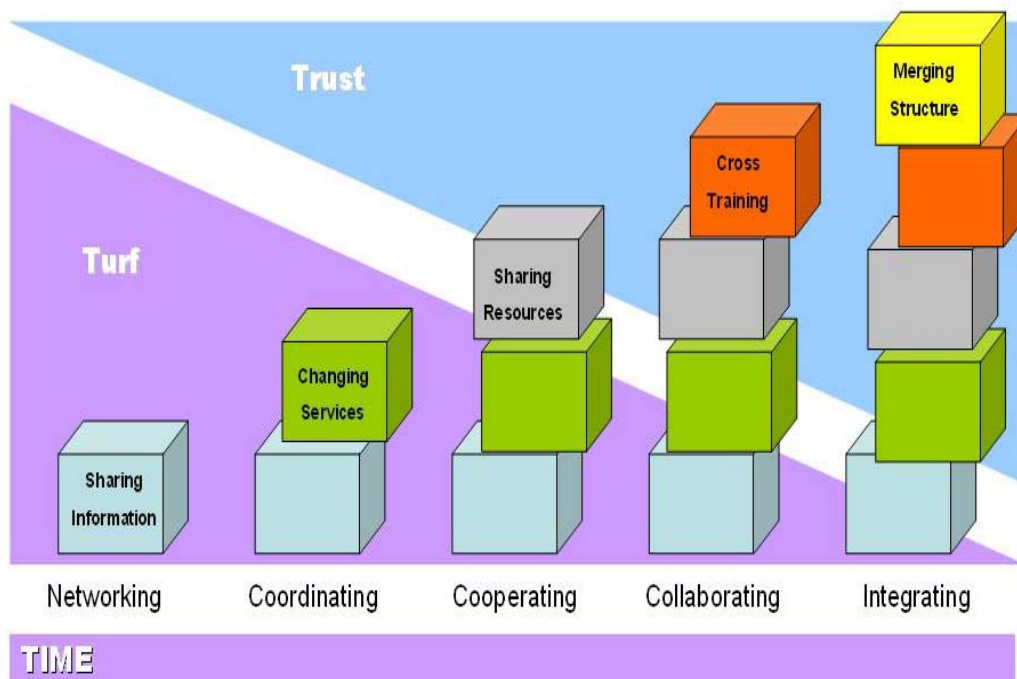
To see the complete set of Standards, visit the NSCC website at:
www.schoolclimate.org

The National School Climate Standards are informing new federal policy and funding. They provide a bridge to achieving the S3 model. Furthermore, they create ample space for inclusion of evidence-based and innovative Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (ATOD) prevention strategies. With this in mind, it is useful to reflect on partnerships that may benefit from a shared focus on changing school climate.

Collaborating for Positive School Climate

Strong alignment of substance use prevention priorities with the school climate agenda will depend on the quality of partnerships between prevention providers and educators. In anticipation of new and expanding relationships between these advocates for youth, let's review the Stages of Collaboration.

Whether ties to schools are formal or informal, prevention providers find themselves naturally aligned with educators' objectives to promote the welfare of young people. The current shift in focus from test scores to inclusive, interwoven systems of youth support only underscores the alliance between sectors. Maximizing the potential of this alliance, however, requires investment from each field. Recognizing where the partnership falls within the Stages of Collaboration will help guide it from "turf" to "trust" based function. Use the indicators below to assess the current stage of your agency's connection to local schools or districts. Then, use the next section, Change Agencies/Agents, to build the capacity of your partnerships to address school climate change.

Coordination
• Longer-term effort around a project or task • Some planning and division of roles • Some shared resources, rewards, and risks

Cooperation
• Shorter-term, informal relationships • Shared information only • Separate goals, resources, and structures

Collaboration
• More durable and pervasive relationships • New structure with commitment to common goals • All partners contribute resources, and share rewards and leadership

CHANGE AGENCIES/AGENTS

AGENCIES	INTERESTS	CHANGE AGENTS	PROMOTING POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE
Law Enforcement	Safety, Security	School Resource Officer, Community Liaison, Youth Task Forces, Chief or Captain	Reduce incidents before, during, after school, on trips, at events, traffic Increase social norms for safe, violence and drug free schools
District-wide School Leadership	Shared vision and plan Policies and System to Respond	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Administrator of Categorical Projects (Title 1), Board of Education	District Strategic Plan School Accountability Report Card (SARC) includes academics, discipline Increase Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Reduce tardiness rates, increase academic outcomes for subgroups of students: i.e. Special Education, English as Second Language Learners
School Site Staff	Curriculum Removing barriers to learning	U.S. History Teachers, English, English as Second Language, Journalism Advisor, Special Education,	Ethics and Responsibility, Ethics, Social Justice Increasing attendance, reduce tardiness Increase academic success Increase inclusion, support, safety for all students
Support Staff	Removing barriers to learning for vulnerable students	School Counselors, English Second Learners (ESL), Resource Teachers, Associated Student Body Advisor, Coaches/Advisors	National Counseling Standards: Social Emotional, Academic, and College/Career continue to be a method of defining comprehensive efforts Shared interests groups of students: ESL, Leadership; Code of Conduct for Athletes and Extracurricular Activities Reduce deficits: access, skills, disability challenges

AGENCIES	INTERESTS	CHANGE AGENTS	PROMOTING POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE
County Office of Education	Systems that increase individual and countywide academics; safety	County Leadership: Superintendent Offices, Child Welfare Attendance County, Special Education, Migrant Education, Homeless	Districts need to maintain systems that address academic failure to insure countywide academic achievement, reducing achievement gap impacting Hispanic and African American students Reduce county-facilitated expulsion appeals by creating an environment where students feel safe.
County Mental Health (MHSA) Prevention and Early Intervention	Reduce mental health referrals, students referred to and in Special Education.	Administrators discipline, Psychologists, Special Education teachers, Project Teachers, and District Administrators for Special Education, Homeless Liaison	Reduce student mental health problems that may result in use of limited MH services, number of students in Special Education that receive mandated services Reduce homelessness, drop outs, violence and AOD use, involvement in juvenile justice Increase in support for youth in foster care.
County Alcohol Drug Programs	Schools where students feel welcomed, supported and safe with systems that keep youth in school.	County Prevention Coordinators County Administrator Alcohol Drug Programs SDFSC District Coordinators (if there is one) Child Welfare Attendance	Increase collaboration between Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) Plan goals/objectives and schools. Sustaining or increasing use of evidence-based practices and programs. Reducing youth use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs (ATOD), suspensions, expulsions, arrests, driving under the influence.
Employment Development	Students graduate high school with work ethic and job skills	County Regional Occupational Development Coordinators Workability and Work Study in schools	Increasing graduation rates, attendance, academic skills that qualify students to enter college/careers. Reducing truancy, drop out rates, academic failure Increase awareness of drug-free workplace, drug testing.
Community	Safety, graduation, job skills and availability or access to AOD	County Supervisors, County Staff, Drug Free Community Coalitions, Real Estate Associations, Business Industry Association (BIA)	Promoting social and civic responsibility Shared vision and plan for a positive school climate Partnering with districts to develop and support policies that increase civic involvement, academic success and safety

The strategic alignment between prevention and education will no doubt smooth the way to offering all youth the advantages of a tightly knit fabric of services and support. By enhancing our partnerships, agencies will have the added advantage of cultivating cross-sector champions of prevention, sharing resources and pursuing creative funding opportunities. As the prevention field continues to advance, our experience and opportunities to partner advance as well. CARS is dedicated to supporting this transition. See our website for additional resources. www.cars-rp.org

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