| | |
|---|---|
| **Document Title:** | **The Atlanta Comprehensive School Safety Initiative, Final Study Report** |
| **Author(s):** | **Jenna Terrell, Christopher Henrich, Amanda Nabors, Kathryn Grogan, Joseph McCrary, Ryan Miskell** |
| **Document Number:** | 305463 |
| **Date Received:** | October 2022 |
| **Award Number:** | 2015-CK-BX-K001 |

# The Atlanta Comprehensive School Safety Initiative

## Final Study Report

Jenna Terrell, Christopher Henrich, Amanda Nabors, Kathryn Grogan, Joseph McCrary, and Ryan Miskell

**Atlanta CSSI Final Study Report**

# Table of Contents

# Introduction

School districts and states around the country are grappling with a variety of safety and security challenges following recent school shootings. Although school violence is on the rise, national statistics have revealed that schools are still the safest places for children (Fox & Fridel, 2018); the rates of violence in schools are far lower than the rates of violence in many neighborhoods across the country (Nekvasil et al., 2015). Still, school districts and states are struggling to understand what practices make schools safe and how to effectively identify safety and security challenges before a tragic event occurs.

The Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI) is a research-focused initiative that was launched by the National Institute of Justice in response to high-profile incidents of school violence. The CSSI grant program aims to identify and understand the root causes of school violence and identify effective strategies for responding to and resolving safety and security issues. The Atlanta Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (Atlanta CSSI) project was funded in 2016 under the CSSI grant program and is a partnership between researchers and practitioners that is centered around the fundamental question of how to design and implement safe and supportive learning environments for students in Atlanta Public Schools (APS). The project aims to achieve four distinct but related goals: (1) develop and implement a comprehensive, districtwide process leading to safe and supportive schools; (2) study the implementation of the process to understand which factors aid or inhibit implementation; (3) describe the extent to which the process is associated with enhanced safety and supportive learning environments; and (4) disseminate project learning nationally. Since 2014, district leadership from APS and researchers from WestEd and Georgia State University (GSU) have developed a blended research and technical assistance approach to make progress towards

these goals and to test the effectiveness of the approach.[1] This report describes the ways the APS, WestEd, and GSU project team developed that approach; the process by which stakeholders have identified and deployed a set of aligned interventions; and findings from implementation. The findings are based on data gathered through (1) focus groups with school- and district-based staff, (2) observational protocols and meeting notes, and (3) school-level student climate and discipline data gathered by the state.

## Program Theory and Research Questions

Researchers have found that students who report feeling physically and emotionally safe at school are more likely to attend school and less likely to engage in problematic behaviors (Kuperminc et al., 2001; Thapa et al., 2013). Conversely, students who are suspended and expelled from school are more likely to experience negative outcomes such as truancy and delinquent behaviors (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003; Hemphill et al., 2006), academic failure leading to high dropout rates and the failure to graduate on time (Arcia, 2006; Vaughn et al., 2013), drug use (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003; Hemphill et al., 2012), and gang involvement (Bradshaw et al., 2014). Negative student outcomes such as these can be precursors to a developmental trajectory towards crime and future placement in the juvenile and/or prison system (Christle et al., 2005). These challenges are exacerbated for certain groups of students, which include males, disabled students, and students of color; some researchers have indicated that these student groups are disproportionately suspended and expelled (Hemphill et al., 2014; Smith & Harper, 2015). The issues that drive students to feel less safe at school include bullying, cyberbullying, and victimization. Although the percentage of students ages 12 through 18 who have reported being bullied or called hate-related words in school has decreased since 2007, the percentage of students who report being cyberbullied has

---

[1] Specifically, this approach has involved district staff from the APS Offices of Safety & Security, Student Services, and Social and Emotional Learning; school staff from eight middle and high schools; research and technical assistance staff from WestEd; and research staff from GSU.

nearly doubled (Lessne & Yanez, 2018; Patchin & Hindujah, 2016). Researchers who have conducted systematic reviews and meta-analyses have demonstrated the negative effects of bullying on students, including various mental and behavioral health outcomes such as low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and suicide (Gaffney et al., 2019; Zych et al., 2015). Other school issues such as access to illegal drugs and weapons on school grounds can also cause students and staff to feel less safe in their schools. In 2017, 20 percent of 9th-12th -grade students reported that illegal drugs were made available or sold at their schools during the previous school year (Musu et al., 2019). Although national estimates suggest that weapon carrying on school grounds is at a record low, many experts and members of the educational field have cited challenges in school safety and security following active shooter events in the last two decades (Perumean-Chaney & Sutton, 2013). These events have also affected student perceptions of school safety; more 6th-12th grade students are afraid of being attacked or harmed at school than they are when they are away from school (Musu et al., 2019).

As a result of these events and heightened media attention, schools across America are reacting by implementing physical security measures and examining their behavioral response structures. Additionally, federal agencies and state educational agencies are promoting programs that aim to improve school safety. Given the number of factors influencing school safety and related outcomes, responses to improving school safety and student and staff perceptions of safety should be comprehensive and should not only improve the physical safety and security of a school but also improve relationships, positive behavioral supports, and the mental health of students and staff at the school (Cowen et al., 2013). This approach is complex for districts and schools nationwide.

The Atlanta CSSI grant was awarded in 2016 to WestEd, GSU, and APS to develop, test, and implement a comprehensive school safety initiative. Our first goal for this project was to develop and implement a comprehensive, districtwide process that would lead to safe and supportive schools. We began the project by developing a model for safe and supportive

schools; we knew that to develop and test an approach, we needed a framework with common definitions. The Atlanta CSSI approach being tested maintains that school safety, as well as feelings of safety and support, can be positively impacted when schools and their districts undertake a comprehensive examination of data to identify needs and then address those needs by using coordinated, evidence-based practices. Stated another way, the program theory for this project is the following:

---

*A comprehensive approach to school safety can be successfully attained through a multilayered, systematic approach to examining needs and gaps, leading to the coordination of service delivery designed to address students' physical, intellectual, and emotional needs, resulting in improved school climate and connectedness and, ultimately, leading to safer and more supportive schools.*

---

Since its inception, the Atlanta CSSI project has been structured around several successive phases of work, each of which has built upon the knowledge gained from the last. The beginning of the grant included a project kickoff and launch phase. This phase began by convening an Executive Steering Committee, which was composed of several work groups that covered different topic areas; these groups included community members, APS staff, and WestEd staff.[2] The research team also used existing literature to establish a theoretical model of and a measurement system for "safe and supportive schools," which was refined by the Executive Steering Committee and the work groups.

---

[2] The work groups included: Measurement and Model; Information Systems and Data Reporting; Policing and Safety; Student Supports; Policies, Programs, and Finance; and Family and Community Engagement.

**Figure 1: Timeline of Phases**

| Jan. 2016– Feb. 2017 | Feb. 2017– May 2018 | June 2018– Fall 2020 | Spring 2020– Fall 2021 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Project Kickoff Phase** | **Needs Assessment Phase** | **Implementation Phase** | **Research Phase** |
| • Develop Safe and Supportive Schools Model<br>• Work Groups<br>  • Family & Community Engagement<br>  • Information Systems & Data Reporting<br>  • Measurement & Model<br>  • Policies, Programs, and Finance<br>  • Policing & Safety<br>  • Student Supports | • Informational Meetings<br>• School-Level Data<br>  • Data Sharing Agreement<br>  • Development of School Profiles<br>• Develop and Administer Surveys<br>  • Cognitive Interviews<br>  • IRB & NIJ HSPO approval | • Visitor Management System<br>• School-by-School Safety Review and Emergency Planning<br>• School Coordination and Integration Efforts<br>• SEL Improvement Science Work<br>• SEL Theory of Change | •District Department Focus Groups<br>•C&I School Team Focus Groups<br>•WestEd TA Team Focus Groups |

The next phase of the project was the Needs Assessment Phase, which we started by using the constructs identified in our model development to lay the groundwork for conducting an extensive needs assessment that was driven by both primary data and extant data collection (see Chapter 3 for a complete description of the Needs Assessment Phase). Using our findings, we identified and deployed a set of processes and activities that we hypothesized would address needs assessment findings in the Implementation Phase. The Atlanta CSSI team conceptualized the processes as requiring implementation at two levels: at the broad level of the district and the individual school level. Several classes of activities were identified, some of which focused on changes at the district level and some of which were matched to schools' specific needs.

The project goals for studying the implementation of the process and describing the extent to which the process is associated with enhanced safety and supportive learning environments led to the Research Phase, in which we implemented a series of data collection activities to learn and understand whether and how the comprehensive approach led to safer

schools. WestEd established a "wall of separation" between the research team and technical assistance team to ensure the independence of research findings. As part of that separation, the co-PI from GSU led the collection and analysis of implementation data to further mitigate against any potential conflicts of interest.

Grounded in these four phases are a set of overarching research questions that served to guide the project. While each phase of work was aligned to its own set of specific learning goals, the following research questions shaped the overall direction of the project and helped ensure that the Atlanta CSSI project was responsive to the needs of our partners at APS:

1. Activities and Perceived Impacts: What activities and perceived impacts can be attributed to the comprehensive school safety approach (at the district and school levels)?

    a. What activities have been implemented under the comprehensive school safety approach?

    b. What are the outputs and perceived impacts of the comprehensive school safety approach?

    c. To what extent are these activities sustainable?

2. Broader Learning: To what extent can the lessons learned from the comprehensive school safety approach be generalized for other school districts?

    a. Did the Atlanta CSSI succeed in creating a comprehensive approach for improving coordination within district offices and between the district and schools?

    b. What can be learned about the district- and school-level conditions that are associated with successful implementation?

We begin this report by providing the context about APS and explaining how the district addressed specific safety and security challenges during the grant period. We then present findings from the study concerning the Atlanta CSSI's grant activities.

# Chapter 1: Atlanta Public Schools

## Background and Context

Atlanta Public Schools is a large, urban school district located in Atlanta, Georgia. As of 2021, the district serves over 50,000 students in over 89 locations. Students served by the district are predominantly Black (73 percent), and more than 62 percent of students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches. The district's four-year graduation rate was 79 percent in 2018. The district operates its campuses in nine clusters that consist of a high school that is connected to middle and elementary schools (see Figure 2). According to APS, the cluster model allows the schools within each cluster to provide more collaborative and strategic supports that can improve student outcomes.[3] In 2016, before the CSSI grant, APS became a "Charter System" in which the state provides principals, educators, parents, and community members more autonomy to make decisions than they would have at other non-charter-system schools.

---

[3] https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/cms/lib/GA01000924/Centricity/Domain/9279/cluster%20model-map_APS_2014-15.pdf

**Figure 2: Atlanta Public Schools Cluster Map, 2020–2021**
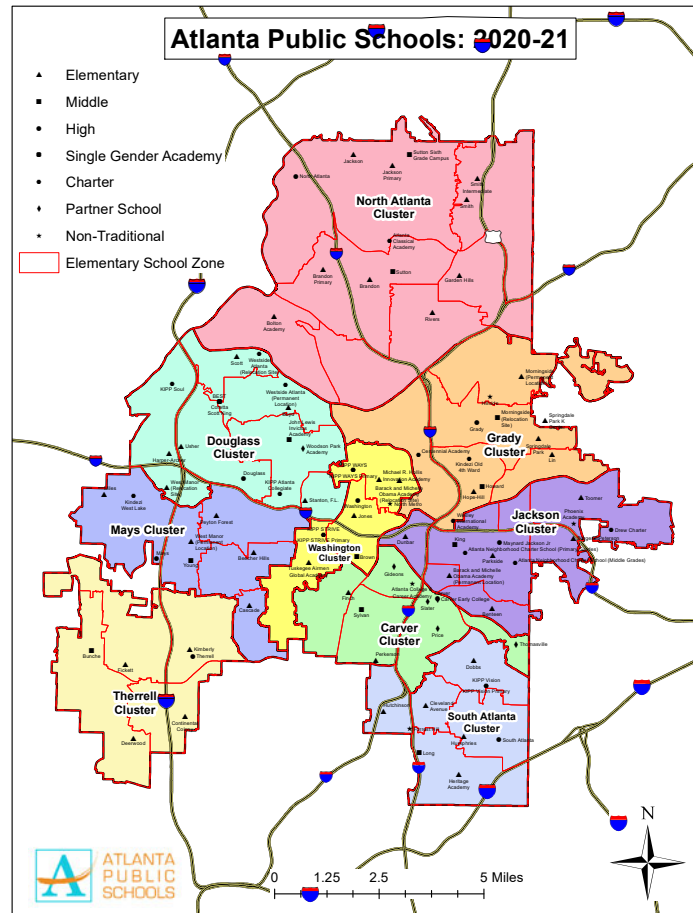


In 2016, following the CSSI grant award, APS instituted its own police department (the Office of Safety and Security). Previously, APS had contracted with the city's police force to perform SRO duties. APS's in-house police department utilizes the national TRIAD model that involves police officers serving as law enforcers, informal counselors, and educators (National Association of School Resource Officers, 2012). According to APS, the TRIAD provides a more efficient and effective way to serve schools and promotes more positive relationships between students and law enforcement.[4] Before the COVID-19 pandemic, each middle and high school had a designated SRO at each school. Elementary schools received SRO support as needed.

---

[4] https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/domain/15473

Currently, the Office of Safety and Security is led by a chief, two commanders, and four sergeants and is supported by a data analyst. These individuals were key contributors and partners in the implementation of the grant activities.

In 2015–2016, APS began the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) district program by creating the SEL District Office. The rollout of SEL began in phases, beginning with all schools in the South Atlanta and Carver clusters as well as all district middle schools (regardless of cluster) and all district single-gender schools in 2015–2016. Additional clusters and schools began implementing SEL programming, with the district reaching full implementation by 2017–2018. APS uses dedicated time during the school day to carry out explicit SEL instruction that includes a curriculum that has been approved by the SEL District Office. APS utilized the CASEL SEL Competencies to develop its districtwide SEL programming. The SEL District Office is comprised of an SEL director and three SEL coordinators, who are assigned to elementary, middle, or high schools. These individuals were partners and collaborators in the CSSI grant activities.

## District Turnover

APS experienced turnover in several of the leadership and support positions that were vital to the success and implementation of the project. The turnover most often led to delays in implementation since staff spent time becoming acquainted with the project, its goals, and scope of activities. First, in summer 2018, the Director of the Office of Safety and Security and collaborator on the grant proposal left APS to pursue other career opportunities. APS promptly promoted the existing chief of police to the Director position; he remained in the Director position and continued to serve as Chief of Police throughout the grant period. Additionally, the grant hired four individuals to fill the vital project manager position over the grant period. This position was key to the implementation of districtwide initiatives since the project manager acts as a liaison between WestEd, the district, and the schools. Inconsistent staffing of this position

led to several delays in implementation and inconsistent communication between the technical assistance team at WestEd and APS. Towards the end of the grant, the responsibilities of this role most often fell on a WestEd technical assistance team staff member and the data analyst from the APS Police Department. Finally, in summer 2020, APS decided not to renew the contract with Superintendent Meria Carstarphen. Dr. Carstarphen was a champion of the Atlanta CSSI project at APS, attending the Executive Steering Committee meetings and supporting the grant implementation activities with the schools. The new superintendent, Dr. Herring, continued to support the work of the grant while the project's implementation was winding down.

### Impacts of COVID-19 and Racial Injustice

Like much of the country, APS was greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and racial injustices in 2020. These challenges negatively impacted the community, schools, and students that participated in the CSSI grant activities, as well as the implementation of grant activities and the study. In March 2020, due to the pandemic, APS switched from in-person learning to fully remote learning. Before the 2020–2021 school year, APS conducted several community town hall meetings and administered parent and teacher surveys to gauge the interest in and feasibility of returning to in-person learning. However, the state of Georgia and the city of Atlanta's infection rates remained high, which prevented the district from returning to in-person learning during the 2020–2021 school year. The district expanded academic and mental health services for students following the year of virtual learning and plans to implement an academic and mental health screener during the 2021–2022 school year when they returned to in-person learning.[5] Many students, teachers, and parents experienced sickness and loss, among other tragedies related to the pandemic. Furthermore, the district was impacted by the racial injustices and police brutality of summer 2020. Specifically, the controversial police killing

---

[5] https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/atlanta-public-schools-expanding-mental-health-services-for-students

of Rayshard Brooks occurred in the parking lot of one of the few fast-food restaurants in a community where an Atlanta CSSI school is located. Atlanta, like many other major cities, experienced protests and clashes with local police during the summer and fall of 2020. Together, these two events posed significant challenges to the community of Atlanta and impacted the implementation of the grant activities during the Implementation Phase, as well as the research and data collection during the Research Phase. Throughout this report, we identify where these events caused challenges for the grant, although reader recognition of the broader impacts these events have had on the Atlanta community is warranted.

# Chapter 2. Executive Summary of Activities and Perceived Impacts

## What Activities Have Been Implemented Under the Comprehensive School Safety Approach?

Activities funded by the Atlanta CSSI grant and APS occurred districtwide and within individual schools. During the initial phase of the Atlanta CSSI, we identified and planned for activities after conducting a needs assessment in February 2017 through May 2018 (see Chapter 3). WestEd and Georgia State University conducted both primary and secondary data collection to identify the district's strengths and areas for improvement. Based on the needs assessment findings and in consultation with the Executive Steering Committee in June 2018, we proposed several district- and school-level activities, including:

- a districtwide visitor management system (VMS);

- school-by-school and districtwide reviews of physical safety;

- school-by-school and districtwide reviews of emergency responses and the continuity of operations plans;

- a coordination and integration process for safety and supports for students across district offices and schools, with a particular focus on the SEL District Department and SEL programming in the schools.

Table 1 provides an overview of these activities and illustrates how they connected to the needs assessment findings. Detailed information about each activity is included in the cited appendices.

**Table 1: Overview of Needs Assessment Findings**

| Key Needs Assessment Finding | Supporting Needs Assessment Source | Selected Activities | Activities Timeline |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unauthorized visitors; the lack of visitor management is a challenge. | Administrator survey; SRO survey. | Creating a districtwide visitor management system with a station located in each school. | Fall 2019/Spring 2020. |
| The lack of current data regarding the physical safety of APS buildings and schools. | Informational meetings. | School-by-school and districtwide reviews of physical safety. | Fall 2019 |
| The lack of comprehensive emergency management plans. | Administrator survey; SRO survey; informational meetings. | School-by-school and districtwide reviews of emergency responses and the continuity of operations. | Spring/Summer 2020 |
| Uncoordinated activities and responses across district offices; safety and student support operations spread across a dozen different offices. | Informational meetings. | Implementing the Coordination and Integration (C&I) Process with select APS schools; conducting improvement science training with the Department of SEL and select APS schools. | Winter 2019–Spring 2021 |
| Schools with different challenges and needs; school autonomy. | Extant data. | Implementing the Coordination and Integration (C&I) Process with select APS schools; conducting improvement science training with the Department of SEL and select APS schools. | Winter 2019–Spring 2021 |

## What Are the Outputs and Perceived Impacts of the Comprehensive School Safety Approach?

This section summarizes the research questions, the methodology used, and the main findings for each activity that was selected based on the needs assessment. The summaries include findings about the extent to which activities are sustainable beyond the grant period. A summary of the needs assessment is in chapter 3. Detailed descriptions of the CSSI implementation activities that resulted from the needs assessment are in chapters 4-6.

### School-Level Coordination & Integration (C&I) Process

The *coordination and integration* (C&I) approach emerged in response to the needs assessment that was conducted during the second year of the grant. Several key findings from the needs assessment include the following: 1) safety and security functions spanned dozens of offices; 2) data systems and responses were often uncoordinated; and 3) schools also served students with many different needs and challenges, making it difficult for the district to support schools and for schools to support their students and staff. The purpose of using the C&I

approach was to guide the district and participating schools in a structured strategic planning effort (see Chapter 4). The purpose of using the C&I approach was to guide the district and participating schools in a structured strategic planning effort that accomplished the following objectives:

1. Identifying needs and gaps based on data that described the prevalence of the problem (e.g., bullying) and the extent to which the infrastructure, processes, services, supports, opportunities, and/or resources that should have addressed the problem were lacking.

2. Creating subgoals to describe longer-term impacts and specifying objectives to identify the changes that needed to be made.

3. Outlining activities to attain the objectives that should lead to the achievement of the subgoals.

4. Identifying partners and resources that were needed to conduct the activities.

5. Identifying process measures to document the implementation of the activities.

6. Aligning outcome measures and performance measures with objectives and sub-goals.

Research questions on the school-level C&I process addressed (1) school teams' capacities to engage in the process, the challenges they faced, and the ways they found technical assistance to be helpful; (2) the extent to which school teams collaborated to generate shared visions and goals; (3) what the plans and activities entailed, and how were they affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; and (4) the ways school teams addressed sustainability. The results based on focus groups that were conducted with the WestEd team and school teams, as well as observational protocols that were conducted in C&I meetings, indicate the following:

1. School teams' capacities were limited, and the pandemic exacerbated these capacity issues. The process of applying for funding from the grant for planned activities presented the largest challenge to schools, although with the assistance of the Atlanta CSSI technical assistance team, schools that stuck with the process were successfully obtained funding for their proposed activities.

2. Assistant principals emerged as important and highly engaged participants in school teams. School teams were collaborative, and they reported using data to generate shared visions and goals for the process.

3. Half of the schools that were initially enrolled in the C&I process developed a plan that met the C&I criteria and received funding from the grant to carry out activities. The activities varied according to the needs of each school and included undergoing professional development, hiring additional staff, contracting with community organizations, and purchasing equipment. Many school teams felt that the activities were having an impact, even though the pandemic was preventing them from fully implementing or assessing the impact of the activities.

4. Little evidence demonstrated that school plans to sustain the C&I process or activities were funded by the C&I, although some school teams expressed hope that they could leverage the pilot funds for continued funding from APS.

### Visitor Management System (VMS)

The recommendation to implement a VMS derived from instances of unauthorized access to school buildings and to better track those coming in and out of school buildings. That is, by having a system that can scan the identification of every visitor and print a pass for them, school staff and SROs can more easily identify someone on school grounds who should not be there. Because the VMS searches the National Sex Offender Registry when a visitor's

identification is scanned, school administrators can be made aware of those who wish to enter a school who have previously committed sexual offenses. With this knowledge, school staff can better make decisions about accompanying and restricting access to those who may be identified as sexual offenders but still have a legitimate reason to be in the school, such as being a parent of a student.

The research questions about the VMS addressed (1) to what extent comprehensive district-level policies are developed for the VMS; (2) how district-level policies for the VMS are communicated to stakeholders, and how well stakeholders understand these policies; and (3) to what extent schools utilize the VMS. The results from the document reviews and VMS usage data indicated the following findings:

1. APS developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) during summer 2019 that explain that all visitors must check in by scanning a valid identification through the VMS; the SOPs outline the steps required in the event of a positive match with criminal records.[6] APS developed another document to guide schools in setting up and staffing their VMS.

2. The vendor of the VMS provided training sessions and materials to APS. By the end of 2020, 165 staff members had attended a VMS training at APS.

3. Before school building closures due to the pandemic (from fall 2019 to March 2020), schools recorded an average of 339 entries in their VMSs, and this number of entries varied widely from school to school (from a maximum of 1,662 to a minimum of 1). Parents constituted most VMS entries at the schools. The VMS had limited use for the remaining duration of the grant period because of school closures and remote learning.

---

[6] The VMS at APS is connected to the National Sex Offender Registry and uses a visitor's valid identification to search against the database.

## School Safety reviews

The school safety reviews, which were conducted by a third-party vendor (Safe Havens International), consisted of an examination of the physical building structures and any potential safety issues, along with assessments of staff's readiness to respond to crises through computer-based scenarios (see Chapter 5). The school safety reviews also included the development of other plans such as a continuity of operations plan (COOP), an emergency management and response preparedness plan, and a prevention and mitigation plan.

The research questions about the school safety reviews are concerned with (1) the extent to which the district develop district-level plans based on the district-level recommendations and implemented priority items at the district level and (2) whether schools developed plans based on the school-level report recommendations and implemented priority items at the school-level. Results from two waves of focus groups that were held with the Office of Safety and Security, as well as meetings with the third-party vendor, indicated the following (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed description of the school safety reviews and research findings):

1. Although APS has not developed formal plans to carry out the recommendations to date (due to the pandemic), they have implemented several recommendations that were made in the district-level report. As a result of the school safety reviews, APS hired an emergency manager, and APSPD received additional personnel lines.

2. Schools have not developed formal plans to date, but anecdotal evidence indicates that the Office of Safety and Security is working with schools to implement some new safety measures that were recommended in the plans.

## Improvement Science for SEL

The WestEd CSSI team proposed using an improvement science approach to help schools develop a process for identifying needs and goals within SEL and apply a structured

approach to using data to track and measure progress (see Chapter 6). Improvement science is an approach to improving organizations that prioritizes the abilities to develop, adapt, and implement reliable processes to produce a specific outcome (Bryk et al., 2015; Langley et al., 2009). It is an ongoing, disciplined effort to improve that takes a systemic perspective, is problem-oriented, uses a disciplined methodology, and engages the front line of implementation. Improvement science guides and structures organizational learning by connecting disciplined inquiries to focused improvement goals (Dolle et al., 2018).

The purpose of this process was to build capacity at the school level to track SEL activities and use data to make informed decisions about any adaptations or improvements to existing implementation efforts. Although the schools use a set curriculum and receive district support, SEL implementation may still look different at each school.[7] APS values school autonomy and allows flexibility in the implementation of district-supported SEL efforts. This makes it difficult to develop or implement a standard measurement tool. Furthermore, there are no current or universally accepted SEL measurement tools, and members of the field are concerned that the existing climate assessments may lead to a focus on fostering compliance rather than improving implementation. Given these limitations and concerns, the improvement science approach can serve two purposes to support the SEL Department.

First, utilizing this approach would help build the schools' capacities to track and measure implementation and outcomes. The schools would focus on a priority area under SEL, identify appropriate data to provide rapid feedback, and decide whether their approach is working. The schools would understand what activities are currently implemented under SEL at their schools and how to track those activities at a deeper level. The process would also allow

---

7 This is based on the Hanover implementation report and discussions with the SEL District Leadership Team. For example, some schools may have dedicated SEL staff, utilize coaches and district resources more often, or integrate SEL into their curriculum differently.

the schools to identify *if* and *why* what they are implementing is making a difference in outcomes without fearing that the findings would be used for accountability purposes.

Second, the district would gain a deeper understanding of implementation efforts at the schools and the measures that are being used to track progress and outcomes. Additionally, this process would allow the district to understand what works, when it works, and for whom it works. For example, the district would have access to data to uncover where certain SEL practices are implemented particularly well and whether certain practices work better for different groups of students. This would support the district's capacity to understand how to appropriately measure implementation activities and provide effective and targeted SEL implementation support to specific schools.

The research questions addressed (1) the district team's approach to building its capacity to lead and implement improvement science at the district, as well as the school teams' approach to building their capacities to implement improvement science in their schools; (2) the challenging parts of the improvement science process; (3) successful factors; (4) stakeholders' perceptions of the progress that they have made towards their aim statement; and (5) the extent to which improvement science can improve SEL implementation. The results from the focus groups that were conducted with the SEL district team and staff at six improvement science schools indicated the following:

1. The Atlanta CSSI technical assistance team successfully worked to develop the capacity of the central office SEL team to support schools and then worked with that team to develop the capacity of SEL staff at schools to support the fidelity of implementation. This work occurred through a series of district meetings and training sessions with school staff.

2. The COVID-19 pandemic and transition to virtual learning were the most challenging factors. School building closures also made data collection challenging.

3. According to the participants, the flexibility and adaption of the WestEd CSSI facilitators and the improvement science process for navigating through the challenges were the main factors in the success of this grant activity.

4. Participating schools made progress in identifying their aim statements and implementing change ideas, although many fell short of collecting and analyzing the outcome data because of the challenges posed by the pandemic.

5. The participants saw improvement science as a valuable way to improve SEL implementation at their schools. One appeal of the improvement science process was that it focuses on making relatively small changes that are designed to make large impacts. Another appeal was that it forces schools to try to understand the root causes of their problem statements before formulating solutions. Because of these appealing aspects of the process, the participants believed it would be sustained after the end of the grant.

# Chapter 3: The Needs Assessment

## Overview

Schools and districts can positively influence school safety and feelings of safety and support through purposeful and sustained efforts. A needs assessment enables schools and districts to comprehensively examine data to identify needs and gaps that can be addressed to support safety. Through the CSSI grant, we collaborated with APS staff to document and measure a process through which staff could use data to better understand their needs, gaps, and resources around school safety and student supports and use that knowledge to target the CSSI funds to areas where school safety challenges were identified. A needs assessment was planned and implemented in Year 2 of the grant to answer research questions related to the organizational components of school safety and efforts to ensure school safety:

1. How are school safety and student supports organized in APS? What internal departments are involved in addressing school safety, social and emotional needs, and mental health services?

2. How is school safety conceptualized and measured? What data is currently collected on student and staff safety and security?

3. What steps are taken to assure the physical safety of school buildings, students, and staff?

4. What gaps exist in the safety and supports of students and staff at the district and school levels?

WestEd and GSU conducted a systematic needs assessment of safety and supports in the district to identify successful areas and areas for improvement at specific schools. We used a variety of data sources to document how school safety is organized across the district, to identify strengths and areas for improvement at the schools, and to make recommendations about an initial set of district-level interventions. The following sections briefly describe these data sources and findings.

## Needs Assessment Informational Sources

**Informational Meetings**

In February and March 2017, WestEd and GSU researchers conducted informational meetings with twelve key departments from APS: Summer and Afterschool, Facilities, Transportation, Nutrition, Finance, Student Discipline, the Office of Safety and Security, Communications, Policy and Governance, Family and Community Engagement, Athletics, and Human Resources. During each hour-long meeting, district department heads were asked about the following topics:

1. How are disciplinary problems addressed in schools? When are problems handled internally, and when are external law enforcement authorities brought in? Are these decisions made systematically (according to district policy), or are they based on the discretion of the schools? Do disparities affect how discipline is applied?

2. What training for supporting school safety and social and emotional needs is provided and to whom?

3. What is the availability of mental health services? How are these coordinated with schools and parents? What are the barriers to involvement?

4. Who are the key stakeholders (internal and external)? How are they involved? What are their barriers to involvement? What stakeholders are not involved but should be?

5. What is the current state of the school culture and climate, school and student engagement, and disciplinary problems (such as crimes, suspensions, and expulsions)?

Through an iterative coding process, we identified five primary areas of interactions and communications from the interviews: social and emotional learning (SEL), after-school programs, buildings and property, family engagement, and student discipline. The WestEd and GSU team members then coded notes from each of the informational meetings according to these five categories. Those relationships were then mapped into a network using NodeXL, assuming bidirectional connections between departments (see Figure 3 for the network map).
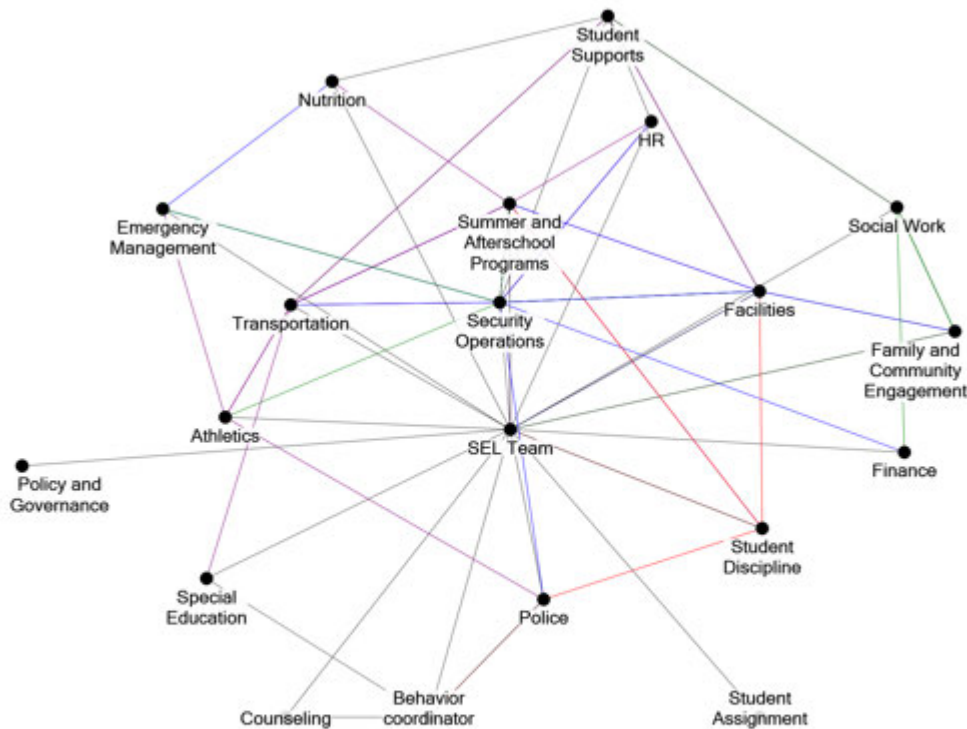
Student Discipline | Student Socio-emotional support services | Afterschool Activities | Family Engagement | Building/ Property

**Districtwide Surveys**

In March and April 2018, we sent online surveys to administrators and SROs to learn about their perceptions of school safety and student supports. The administrator survey consisted of six major sections that focused on specific topics: background and current role, safety and security, school resource officers, information sources, student social-emotional support services, and family and community engagement. The SRO survey consisted of seven major sections that covered specific topics: background and current assignment, professional development, SEL and restorative practices, school-based staff, students and parents, building access, and school safety plans (see Appendix A for the SRO and administrator needs

assessment survey protocols). The surveys contained Likert-scale questions, multiple-choice questions, and space for open-ended comments.

Overall, 109 administrators from 61 campuses (68.5 percent of all schools) and 60 SROs (98.4 percent of all officers) participated in the online surveys.[8] Descriptive statistics for the quantitative survey data and qualitatively coded open-ended survey responses were calculated to present overarching themes for both surveys.

**Extant Data**

Extant data were collected from four distinct sources. The Georgia Department of Education provided data that related to student enrollment, student discipline, and free and reduced-price lunch statistics. The Governor's Office of Student Achievement shared data related to graduation and drop-out rates, student enrollment by sub-groups, attendance, and mobility data. APS provided data that related to school and cluster information, facility information, SEL implementation and training, APSPD incident reports, visitor monitoring systems, turnaround schools, and data collected from interviews with school and district staff.

The Georgia Department of Education also administers an annual school climate survey to elementary, middle, and high school students, parents, and personnel statewide. The state uses items from the survey, as well as other state-collected data (e.g., suspensions, behavioral incidents, and attendance) to calculate its school rating index used in the state's accountability system. Because the state climate survey results are included in a school's accountability score statewide, the survey has a generally high response rate from schools and provides an opportunity for year-to-year comparisons. We utilized this survey as a main source of information about school climates and cultures. WestEd and GSU aligned these items to domains in the safe and supportive schools model and utilized standard nine ("stanine") scoring

---

[8] It is important to note that the survey was administered less than one month after the Parkland school shooting, so responses may be biased.

to develop standardized scores using a nine-point scale that provides a measure of each school's performance relative to the district average (see Appendix A for the Safe and Supportive Schools to Stanine Scoring Alignment). Finally, domain stanine scores were fed into larger school and cluster snapshots that included school overviews, school-police-involved incidents, and discipline responses to visualize strengths and areas for improvement (see Terrell, Henrich, Nabors, Grogan, & McCrary, 2020 for more detail on the stanine scoring process and dashboard development). Middle and high schools were ranked according to their stanine scores and behavioral incidence and response data.

## Needs Assessment Findings

The findings of the needs assessment highlighted (a) the interconnectedness of the many district departments that were involved in safety and security issues and (b) the lack of connectedness between safety and security activities across district departments and the district and schools.

### District-Level Strengths

- High feelings of safety: Most administrators reported feeling safe or very safe on campus, especially during the school day.

- High satisfaction with SROs: Administrators were highly satisfied with SROs and the relationships and communication between SROs and parents, students, administrators, and teaching staff.

- SROs felt integrated into schools: SROs reported feeling integrated into the school culture and actively participating in school activities.

- Safety and security activities spanned across multiple district departments.

**District-Level Needs**

- Comprehensive emergency preparedness and enhanced building management: Administrators and SROs frequently cited physical issues with school buildings, including building access, as safety and security challenges. Administrators also requested additional training for crisis/active-shooter/intruder alerts.

- Enhanced communication and outreach: Parents and administrators lacked understanding of the role of SROs. Both administrators and SROs requested additional communication about safety policies and procedures.

- Integrated, timely data on safety: noticeable silos across APS affected data sharing; this issue involved limited external data-sharing agreements and no centralized database for integrated data.

- SEL Fidelity of Implementation and Measurement: significant variance affected the SEL fidelity of implementation of explicit instruction and access to professional learning.

The research team developed school snapshots using the extant data and reviewed the snapshots of middle and high schools with district personnel to select the first cohort of schools to be invited to participate in grant activities. While reviewing the stanine domain and subdomain scores, as well as the supporting information, we looked for different relative strength and risk patterns. Two distinct patterns emerged from the data and were validated by district personnel. These two distinct patterns were: (1) schools with relatively low achievement scores, low feelings of physical and emotional safety, and high weapons incidents and (2) schools with relatively high achievement scores, high feelings of physical safety, low feelings of emotional safety, and relatively low weapons incidents. The research team also examined the behavioral incident data to see how these scores may have translated to discipline incidents and responses throughout the school year. Schools with lower feelings of safety and lower achievement scores experienced higher rates of behavioral incidents than schools with higher

feelings of safety and higher achievement scores. The research team presented its initial recommendations of schools for two intervention cohorts to district leadership. Through those discussions, we incorporated the district leadership's knowledge of readiness, need, and likely willingness to participate and chose two school cohorts. Each cohort initially contained two sets of feeder middle schools and high schools and an additional middle school.

Based on these findings and on the consultation with the Executive Steering Committee in June 2018, we proposed and received approval for several district-level interventions, including a districtwide visitor management system, school-by-school and districtwide reviews of physical safety, school-by-school and districtwide reviews of emergency response and continuity of operations plans, a focus on improving SEL fidelity and coordinated implementation across the district, and more coordinated safety and support for students across district offices and schools through the coordination and integration process. We describe each of these activities in the following chapters.

# Chapter 4: The School-Based Coordination and Integration Approach

## Overview

The *coordination and integration* (C&I) approach emerged in response to the needs assessment that was conducted during the second year of the grant. The purpose of using the C&I approach was to guide the district and participating schools in a structured strategic planning effort that accomplished the following objectives (See Appendix B text for the C&I Guide):

1. Identifying needs and gaps based on data that described the prevalence of the problem (e.g., bullying) and the extent to which the infrastructure, processes, services, supports, opportunities, and/or resources that should have addressed the problem were lacking.

2. Creating subgoals to describe longer-term impacts and specifying objectives to identify the changes that needed to be made.

3. Outlining activities to attain the objectives that should lead to the achievement of the subgoals.

4. Identifying partners and resources that were needed to conduct the activities.

5. Identifying process measures to document the implementation of the activities.

6. Aligning outcome measures and performance measures with objectives and sub-goals.

The C&I process used for this project was adapted by the Georgia AWARE project, a SAMHSA-funded grant where WestEd provided technical assistance to the Georgia Department of Education. That project used a C&I planning process that helped the participants strategically

align efforts with a coherent vision to support students and staff with similar goals to APS, as well as a multitiered system of support frameworks to organize their implementation efforts.

The district leaders agreed that using the C&I process at both the district and school levels would be an effective means of accomplishing their goals under the CSSI grant. Although the researchers and district staff conducted most of the needs assessment through a top-down approach, the school-based C&I process was designed to occur through a bottom-up approach in which those responsible for implementation could assess their needs and gaps based on data and identify evidence-based interventions (Sabatier, 1986). This function was important for two reasons: the first was that the needs assessment indicated that the schools face a range of different challenges, services, programs, and partners; and the second was that local autonomy at the school level was a priority for the APS district (i.e., schools have significant control over their own operations and budgets). Bottom-up strategies allow local actors to drive important implementation decisions, which we hypothesized would increase buy-in and the likelihood of implementation success (Honig, 2004; Sabatier, 1986).

The C&I process was guided by the following three guiding goals, which were developed by the district departments:

1. Enhance education and awareness of mental health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional health, behavioral health, and school safety;

2. Build and strengthen internal and external relationships within the APS school community; and

3. Develop and improve environments that are conducive to teaching and learning.

The Atlanta CSSI TA team facilitated the C&I process to help the schools identify their student and staff safety concerns using comprehensive sets of data that were guided and curated by the Atlanta CSSI research team. Each school then developed a comprehensive plan that was essentially a map of what the school and district knew from their data, outlined goals based on needs identified using the data, aligned activities and partners to meet those goals,

and identified measures and outcomes to determine whether the school or district met its goals. Each C&I plan was guided by the above goals and was attuned to the local contexts of schools that were developing and implementing their plans.

## CSSI C&I Activities

### The CSSI C&I Process

The first step of the C&I process with APS involved facilitating school teams' data-driven identification of their schools' needs, gaps, and available resources. The planning process began with each school team participating in *data equity walks* that allowed the schools to assess several pieces of data that were specific to safety and student support. The data evaluated included data elements selected both by the schools and the research team to ensure that the priority areas of student services, safety and security, SEL, and academics were represented. A comprehensive picture of the school was also available for the data equity walks. During these data equity walks, the parties evaluated their own school's safety and student support strengths and weaknesses and identified their own needs and gaps, which contrasted with having an external party evaluate the data and identify the schools' needs unilaterally (Education Trust West, 2018). The Atlanta CSSI TA team assisted the school teams in articulating each set of needs and gaps that they identified through their data equity walk by writing out needs and problem statements and including as much baseline data as was available.

Next, the Atlanta CSSI TA team led the schools through resource mapping to identify existing services and programs that were intended to impact specific needs and student subgroups that were identified during the data equity walks. Throughout this process, the teams identified not only the array of resources and programs that they were undertaking but also identified where those programs and resources overlapped. Next, each team created goals and objectives that were based on their data-driven needs and gaps. For instance, a school that

identified having needs and gaps around a bullying problem might set a goal to reduce reported bullying and an objective to reduce the proportion of students who respond negatively to a survey question about the prevalence of bullying at their school by the end of the school year. The Atlanta CSSI TA team worked with the school teams to develop goals that aligned with the North Star project goals and specific objectives that aligned with the needs and gaps identified during previous steps.

Based on these goals and objectives, the next step involved schools identifying resources from the resource mapping activity that could potentially meet their needs, fill the gaps, and fulfill their goals and objectives. If the schools did not have an existing resource to meet a need, then the Atlanta CSSI TA team attempted to coordinate with district offices and local providers to address this gap. If needs and gaps could not be met through district services and resources, then the schools could submit funding requests to use grant funds to develop a new program or add a resource. The school teams were tasked with identifying partners to facilitate these activities, ranging from internal staff driving efforts at a school level to outside partners such as community organizations and professional development providers partnering with the schools.

The final steps involved developing measures to monitor progress toward the goals and objectives. The school teams were asked to develop both process measures and outcome measures to evaluate ongoing implementation progress and progress that was made towards the end goals and objectives. For instance, a team might track how many of their teachers participated in a professional development program and how many follow-up coaching sessions they attended as a process measure while also tracking longer-term measures that directly related to the objective that the professional development was meant to address. As the school teams completed the C&I planning process, they submitted funding requests to receive up to $40,000 per school from the CSSI grant to help support the implementation of their planned C&I

activities and assess their outcomes. were scheduled to mainly occur during the subsequent school year (See Appendix B for the school-level funding requests).

The COVID-19 pandemic began to unfold while the C&I process was wrapping up for many of the schools. APS ceased in-school learning in March 2020, and much of the subsequent school year consisted of virtual learning. These changes and the associated challenges that the district faced when figuring out how to serve the needs of students and their families during the pandemic significantly impacted the activities in which schools were able to engage, as well as the safety-related data that was used to assess the success of these activities.
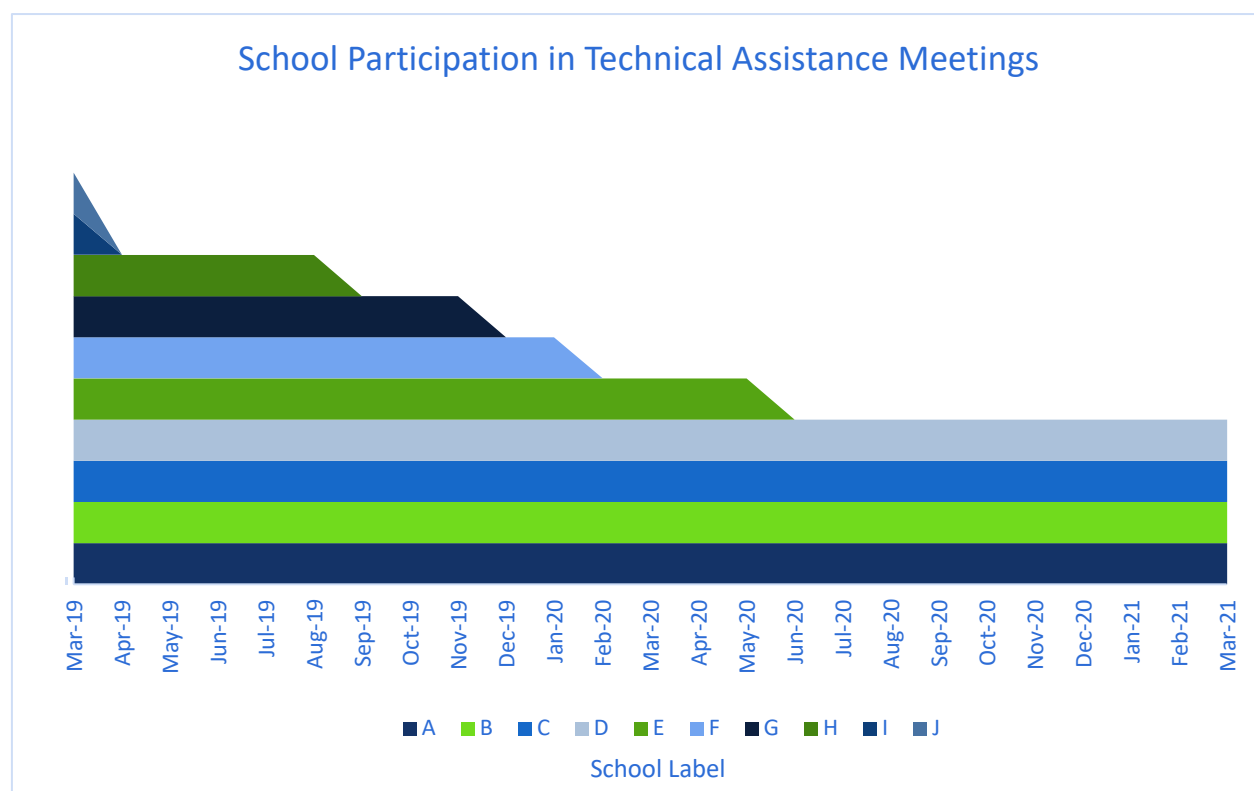
**School Selection**

Ten middle and high schools were recruited to take part in the C&I process. We initially identified schools with elevated and diverse safety and security needs from an analysis of state data on school climates, student mental health issues, and behavioral incidents. Based on this data, the research team recommended recruiting schools from two APS clusters. The schools in one cluster had consistently lower climate schools and higher behavioral incidents than other schools did, and the schools in the second cluster had particularly high weapons-related challenges. District leadership also proposed selecting several schools from beyond those two clusters—specifically, two schools that, while relatively high performing, had student bodies that experienced unique mental health challenges. During the final analysis, the researchers and district leaders settled on the recruitment of 10 schools in two cohorts based on the safety and behavioral challenges represented in the data, district priorities, and perceptions of school leadership.

The schools were invited to participate in the C&I process during a kickoff meeting that was held in February 2019, and school-based C&I meetings between the Atlanta CSSI TA team and school teams began in March 2019. Four of the school teams had stopped participating in

meetings by January 2020 (see Figure 4). Three of these teams did not complete their C&I plans or funding requests. Two of the schools that dropped out early did so because the administrators felt that the work was too much for the money provided. Two additional schools completed C&I plans, received funding, and implemented C&I activities but stopped participating in TA meetings during the 2020-2021 school year. The remaining four schools continued to participate in TA meetings throughout the 2020–2021 school year, and three of them received funding and implemented C&I activities. The fourth school received some of the funding they requested but had not yet been able to start using it by the end of the school year.

**Figure 4: School Participation in C&I TA Meetings**

## Research

### Data Sources

When designing the data collection plan for evaluating the schools' C&I processes, we developed a mixed-methods approach that included focus groups, interviews, observational protocols and checklists, and document analysis. Specifically, the results derived from (a) observational protocols and checklists; (b) focus groups and interviews that were conducted by the Atlanta CSSI TA team in April 2020 and again in May 2021; (c) focus groups and interviews that were conducted with five of the schools' C&I teams conducted in late May and early June 2020 and again with six school teams in May 2021; and (d) a review of school teams' C&I plans, funding requests, and summary reports (see Appendix B for these artifacts).

### Observational Analysis

Throughout the C&I process, GSU graduate research assistants observed school C&I meetings, completed observational protocols and checklists, and took meeting notes according to a structured protocol. These observational protocols and checklists were completed for 53 of the meetings.[9] These protocols assess the types and structure of activities, any progress made during meetings, and the participation and engagement levels and behaviors of meeting attendees. The research team developed a codebook for the protocols and established acceptable levels of inter-coder agreement

### Content Analysis

We used virtual focus groups and interviews to gather participants' perceptions about the C&I process. We focused on team members' C&I participation, teams' shared visions and goals, the impact of the process on schools and its sustainability, and experiences with technical assistance. During the first round of focus groups, the school teams had not

---

[9] The observational protocols that were used were adapted from WestEd's evaluation of the Communities of Practice initiative and Community Matters' Whole School Climate 360 assessment.

implemented most C&I plan activities. The second round of focus groups was conducted in May 2021 following the implementation of plan activities.

A qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the focus group and interview data (e.g., Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Schreier, 2014). We developed protocols for coding data and examining reliability and approached the data analysis using methods that were designed to ensure the integrity of the data (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992; Morrow, 2005; Newman & Clare, 2016) (See Appendix B for Coding Frame). Although we were informed by the research questions described previously, we kept in mind that developing a coding frame is a data-driven process where themes encountered in the data are added as categories to the coding frame. The process of content analysis unfolded over several steps that utilized a collaborative analytic approach (Cornish et al., 2014), which  was an iterative process during which coders went back and re-analyzed prior transcripts whenever changes were made to the coding frame until they came to consensus. The coding frame was also applied to the analyses of the focus groups and interviews that were conducted in May 2021; we used a similar consensus coding approach to that described previously.

We also analyzed the content of the C&I plans to determine (a) the extent to which goals and objectives outlined in the C&I plans aligned with the district's goals, (b) activities and/or partners that were identified in each school's plans to help meet their objectives, and (c) the resources that were mapped.

## Findings

### Research Question 1: What were school teams' capacities for engaging in the process of developing and implementing plans? What challenges did school teams face, and in what ways did they find technical assistance to be helpful?

The school teams and the Atlanta CSSI TA team faced a variety of challenges related to the C&I planning process. A key issue that emerged during the focus groups with the Atlanta CSSI TA team concerned issues related to capacity — namely how administrators' leadership

styles affected the process, schools' lack of readiness to make data-driven decisions, and challenges regarding the channels of communication between the district and its schools. The Atlanta CSSI TA team members discussed how the C&I process started abruptly, particularly for schools in the first cohort, and would have benefited from more advanced legwork to determine schools' capacities for data-driven decision-making and principals' leadership styles and facilitate communication about the process between the district leaders and the schools. Doing so would have helped tailor the C&I process to better meet the needs of individual schools and the WestEd facilitators so that they could work with the administrators more successfully. The Atlanta CSSI TA team also expressed concern that the process started particularly abruptly for the highest need and least ready schools because one of the criteria used to identify schools for participating in the initial cohort was their safety-related needs, which led to the process being less successful for some of the schools that it could have benefited the most.

The school teams reported some common barriers that included team members' time and bandwidth and the burden of added work for staff that related to the C&I process. To help offset these concerns, the TA team held some C&I meetings outside of the school day with stipends that were provided to school teams to cover the extra meeting time. The school teams also identified challenges related to working with district departments and offices. For example, one school hired an attendance officer as part of their C&I plan and experienced frustration and delays with having the position approved by human resources.

Staff turnover at schools was another challenge that the school teams encountered, which was often an impediment to the teams' progress. Most of the schools experienced at least some turnover that affected their C&I teams. Two schools had their principals leave during the school year. At one school, the whole C&I team left the school. However, in one instance, turnover may have helped facilitate implementation activities: a new principal came on board with a clear vision for the school. Because his vision aligned with components of the C&I plan developed by the previous school team and addressed issues about social-emotional learning

and mental health, he was able to submit a new funding request tied to this vision and have it approved relatively quickly. According to the Atlanta CSSI TA team, he essentially bypassed the C&I process.

School teams had mixed assessments of the C&I process but were more positive about it than the Atlanta CSSI TA team. Generally, they indicated that the process was ultimately useful, but some reported that they initially thought it was confusing.

One aspect of the process that the school teams and the Atlanta CSSI TA team identified as problematic was the funding request process for up to $40,000 from the grant to support C&I activities. Several schools and the Atlanta CSSI TA team expressed frustration with the funding request process and how much time and effort it took to get funding requests approved. They expressed that the process lacked clarity, consistency, and transparency.

The funding request process also took the focus away from the C&I goals since the school teams turned their attention to figuring out what to submit to successfully receive the funding. The school teams said they were grateful for the Atlanta CSSI TA team's assistance with funding requests. Ultimately, the six school teams that participated through the C&I process had funding requests approved.

One positive response to the C&I process is that many of the school teams who were interviewed had strong praise for the help that the Atlanta CSSI TA team offered. Two aspects of assistance that were highlighted as particularly helpful were the resource mapping exercises and assistance with using data to help school teams identify needs, resources, and intervention strategies. One school team's focus group referred to the technical assistance team as "data gurus." The school teams felt positive about the skills that they gained for analyzing school and district data through the C&I process and found an enormous amount of value in the review of data. All of them commented on how the Atlanta CSSI TA team worked very closely with them and made themselves available between scheduled meetings to provide support.

## Research Question 2: How and to what extent did school teams collaborate to generate shared visions and goals for the process?

**School Team Composition**

The composition of school C&I teams varied between schools and changed over the course of the process. In general, the teams were relatively large at the beginning of the process and winnowed over time. For example, the largest school team initially comprised 10 people, and by the end of the planning year, only two of those initial 10 were still actively engaged in meetings with the Atlanta CSSI TA team. For that school, some of the winnowing was caused by turnover. In contrast, another school had a consistent group of seven people who attended most of the sessions over two years.

Overall, the principals were present at just under 40 percent of the C&I meetings, although principal participation and engagement varied substantially from school to school. At one of the schools, the principal attended every meeting; at another school, the principal attended only one C&I meeting. The assistant principals were more likely to consistently attend meetings and were present at virtually all the C&I meetings. When in attendance, school administrators were rated as highly engaged by observers most of the time, and this level of engagement was consistent across schools.

Given the safety focus of the grant and the District Office of Safety and Security's role in grant leadership, the school teams were designed to include SROs as important participants. However, the SROs' participation and engagement in school teams were low. They participated in fewer than 20% of the meetings, and—as illustrated in Figure 5—were rated as less engaged than the other participants in the meetings they did attend. In fact, the SROs did not attend a single meeting with the Atlanta CSSI TA team after September 2019. This lack of participation may have been caused by the shifting of SRO responsibilities during the pandemic when schools were closed for in-person learning, at least in part. But the SROs' meeting attendance also dropped six months before the pandemic
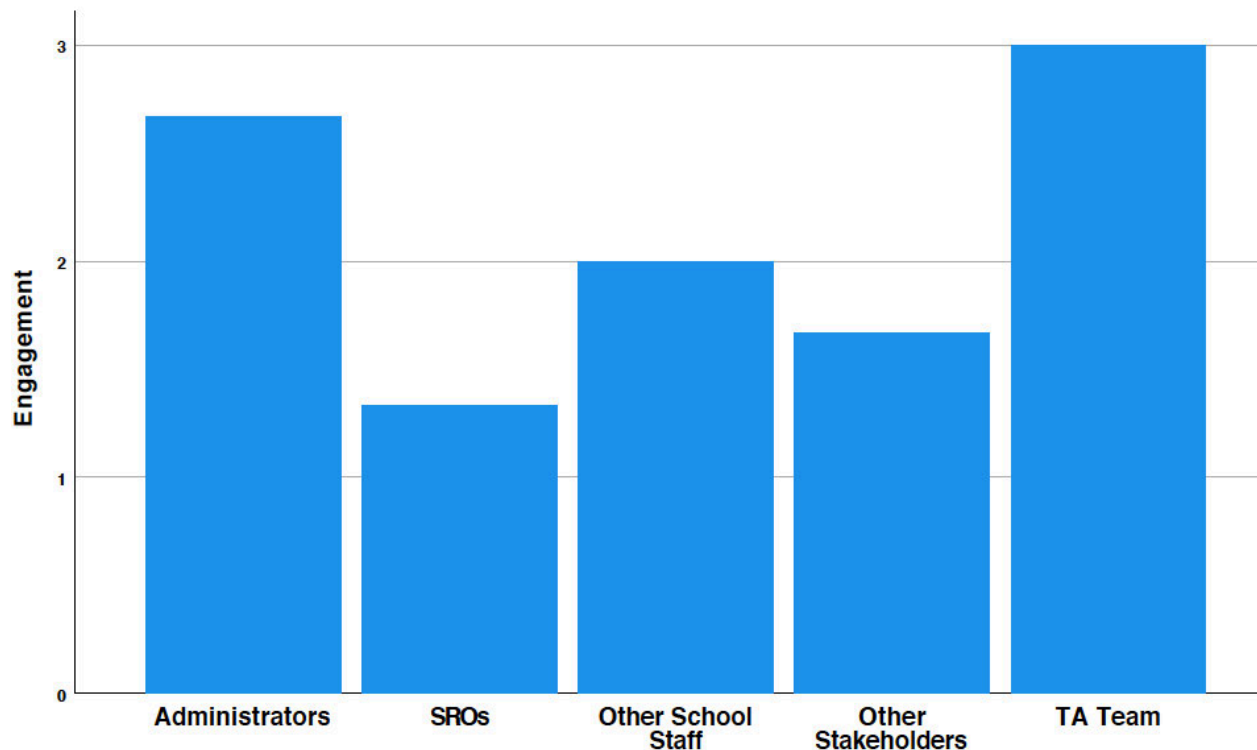
**Collaboration**

The participating school team members reported frequent collaboration within their schools and, in some cases, across schools or with district departments such as SEL. During the focus groups, the school teams reported working closely together on all aspects of the C&I process, beginning with determining the issues to be addressed and continuing to collaborate through the development and implementation of the C&I plans. Most of the schools held internal meetings in addition to those facilitated by the Atlanta CSSI TA team or communicated regularly between meetings through phone calls and emails. The C&I teams also collaborated with other teams in their schools, such as school improvement teams. In terms of cross-school collaboration, two high schools reported meeting with their feeder schools to review the needs and data of the feeder school. These two sets of schools also held several joint C&I meetings.

**Shared Visions and Goals**

Many team members cited examining data as a factor in developing a shared vision and goals. During the first round of focus groups, the school teams highlighted the use of data to identify needs and come to a consensus about goals. The Atlanta CSSI TA team scaffolded this use of data through multiple meetings to help the school teams generate shared visions and goals for the C&I process. One particularly effective way that the Atlanta CSSI TA team facilitated data-driven decision-making was through the data equity walks. So many of the meetings were focused on data because the school teams were less likely to make progress on data-related agenda items than they were to make progress on other agenda items. Additionally, the school teams relied heavily on the Atlanta CSSI TA team for guidance on data-related issues. For example, after gaining new skills and knowledge from the data equity walks, some schools sometimes felt the need to find more data or utilize data differently to assess their goals. Other schools were unable to provide their data before the data equity walk and needed additional assistance after the data equity walk to work on newly shared data. The Atlanta CSSI TA team often spent these additional data meetings developing data-driven plans to support the schools in reaching their goals. The schools also noted how the process of reviewing data made it easy to reach a consensus on their goals and challenges that needed to be addressed.

The school teams emphasized the role of data-driven decision-making so much in the first round of focus groups that a specific question about the schools' use of data to inform decisions was added to the protocol for the subsequent year's focus groups. These follow-up results were more qualified. Three schools indicated that they used data more because of the C&I process, and two provided specific examples (e.g., monitoring caseloads at one school and collecting and looking more closely at survey data at the other school). One school relied on an external partner to provide and interpret data that was pertinent to their parent engagement activities. Two schools reported that they already relied heavily on data for their decision-making before the C&I process.

**C&I Plan Implementation**

By the end of the planning year, seven schools had developed C&I plans. Although each school team developed their own set of 1–3 goals and objectives, the schools experienced a great deal of similarity and overlap. Collectively, the schools' goals and objectives addressed topics such as reducing problematic behaviors and suspension rates, promoting alternative discipline strategies, improving school climates and perceptions of safety, meeting the mental health needs of students, and increasing student attendance rates and achievement. All seven plans identified activities and/or partners to help the schools meet their objectives.

As part of the C&I process, the schools identified measures to track their success in meeting their goals and objectives. Four schools' plans included process and outcome measures, and members of the fifth team in the focus groups indicated that they were still working on developing the process and outcome measures to fit the C&I activities. The outcome measures that the schools generated focused on changes in student behaviors and staff knowledge. Student measures included reductions in behavioral problems, discipline referrals, and absentee rates. Staff measures included the number of staff receiving professional development and increased staff knowledge regarding mental health issues facing students.

By the time the schools began implementing C&I activities, many of the school teams reported that they had encountered challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and the switch to virtual learning. Because of the pandemic, schools switched to helping meet the basic needs of the families they served. Communicating with students and families became more difficult (for example, one school had to stop conducting home visits). Processes like staff hiring moved more slowly, and school teams struggled with staff getting sick and, in some cases, dying of COVID-19 and other illnesses. The switch to fully virtual technical assistance for the C&I process was also a challenge for the schools and the Atlanta CSSI TA team.

Five of the schools successfully implemented grant-funded activities during the school year. The schools used these funds in a variety of creative ways, including hiring personnel and contracting with external partners for staff training sessions, obtaining wraparound services, and holding parent engagement activities. They also implemented their grant-funded activities to fit with virtual learning. A sixth school had used grant funding to order computers, but they had not yet arrived by the time the focus groups were conducted. The pandemic also affected access to data that schools had planned to use to assess the progress of their activities. However, at least three of the schools managed to use data to gauge the success of their grant-funded activities.

Although the five schools were successful in expending Atlanta CSSI funds in creative ways, it is not clear from the findings how much of a role the C&I process actually played in facilitating successful funding requests and implementation activities. One school noted that the C&I process provided a "roadmap" for generating goals and developing activities to address those goals. However, other school teams did not articulate a connection between their funded activities and their initial C&I planning process. Some school team members conflated the C&I process with other planning processes (e.g., school improvement plans or improvement science for SEL; see chapter 6). When asked about C&I activities, they sometimes described activities that, although related to C&I goals, were funded as part of other initiatives. For example, one school had multiple SEL and mental health staff positions funded by various sources, but the focus group sessions did not clarify which position was funded by the Atlanta CSSI grant. Additionally, many school team members did not appear to understand what was meant by the "coordination and integration process." This tenuous link between the C&I process and implementation activities was also highlighted by the Atlanta CSSI TA team; indeed, several members of the TA team indicated that the C&I process may have actually hindered progress towards the implementation of activities rather than facilitating it because of the burden that was on the schools.

**Impact on Schools**

We did not find evidence that the C&I process impacted the schools. Most of the Atlanta CSSI TA team felt that the process did not have an impact on schools and suggested that several schools that were successful in implementing C&I activities probably would have engaged in those activities irrespective of the C&I process. According to the schools, however, some of the C&I implementation activities were having an impact. For example, one school team reported that parent engagement activities seem to be improving parent relationships. Another school team that used grant funds for teacher training saw the beginnings of cultural change among teachers. However, neither school had completed data collection connected to their funded activities, so they could not provide a quantitative assessment of the impact of the C&I process. Other schools noted that it was too soon to see the impact of implementation activities, given the delays in funding and school closures due to the pandemic.

## Research Question 4: How did school teams address sustainability?

Sustainability was brought up in just under half of the C&I meetings, although discussions about it tended to be brief and were typically led by the Atlanta CSSI TA team, who asked school teams about sustainability plans and reminded them that the grant funding for activities was short-term. The focus groups further revealed that the school teams and the TA teams had different perspectives on the sustainability of the products of the C&I process. When discussing sustainability, the school teams focused on the activities that were funded by the CSSI grant. Most of the school teams hoped that their activities would be sustainable. For example, one team mentioned that materials that were purchased as part of the process, such as software, could be used over time. Other teams hoped that professional development activities would have a lasting impact on the school's culture. School teams who worked with external partners for training and wraparound services hoped that these partnerships would continue. School teams who used grant funds to hire personnel hoped that the school or district would find a way to permanently fund these positions. Despite the school teams' overall

optimism regarding the sustainability of their activities, external funding was not mentioned as an activity or outcome of any of their C&I plans.

The Atlanta CSSI TA team had a less optimistic perspective of the sustainability of the C&I process. The initial discussion of sustainability after the planning year focused more on the sustainability of the C&I process. A member of the Atlanta CSSI TA team mentioned the metaphor of sowing seeds in hopes of changing school officials' approaches to safety and security challenges and asked questions about how fertile the ground was and how the "seeds" would grow after the end of the grant. Some examples of these "seeds" included identifying gaps, engaging community partners, and considering the capacities of school personnel. During the Spring 2020 focus group, the Atlanta CSSI TA team specifically mentioned the funding request exercise as a process that forces schools to think about how efforts can be scalable over time. In these ways, the Atlanta CSSI TA team initially focused on how the C&I process could change how schools identify needs and address them. By the end of the implementation year, the Atlanta CSSI TA team was more pessimistic about the sustainability of the C&I process and the activities funded by the grant. For example, they expressed concern about the future of the staff positions that had been funded by the grant. However, at least one member of the Atlanta CSSI TA team still hoped that the C&I process would have a lasting impact on how the schools made decisions by thinking more strategically about what programs they already have and what they should keep.

**Lessons Learned**

The findings presented here raise questions about the utility of the C&I process as implemented by the CSSI grant in the Atlanta Public Schools. Several lessons learned for future implementation were also generated from the focus groups, and the highlights are described below:

- Members of the Atlanta CSSI TA team suggested that the C&I process would have been more effective if it had occurred mainly at the district level or between the district and the schools. As it played out, the C&I process occurred mainly at the school level. According to some members of the Atlanta CSSI TA team, the C&I process was too complicated and time-intensive for the schools and may have inadvertently led to communication issues between the schools and the district.

- Members of the Atlanta CSSI TA team also discussed the challenges of introducing the C&I process midway through the CSSI project and recommended that approaches like the C&I process be incorporated earlier in future projects, ideally during the grant-writing stage.

- The strengths of the members of the Atlanta CSSI TA team were mentioned frequently by the schools, and most of the schools expressed gratitude for the Atlanta CSSI TA team's empathy and assistance. Several school teams and the Atlanta CSSI TA team talked about the benefits of incorporating researchers as part of the TA teams.

- Several school teams and the Atlanta CSSI TA team talked about how increased transparency and collective decision-making would have improved the funding request process.

# Chapter 5: The Office of Safety and Security's Grant Activities

## Visitor Management System

Between the date of installation and March 31st, 2020, 82 schools utilized the visitor management system to record visitor entries and exits. The number of visitors who were recorded by the visitor management system varied widely. The mean number of entries from the date of installation until March 31st, 2020, is 339; the median is 259, and the statistics range from a charter elementary school with 1,632 entries to two schools that have only recorded 1 entry each.[10] Fifty-seven percent of the visitor management entries were made for parents; 16 percent were volunteers. Seven percent were contractors, and 4 percent were vendors. 4 percent of entries did not have a recorded label, and 2 percent were labeled "Scholar Chip".

Atlanta Public Schools closed its school and district buildings on March 12, 2020. The district remained in virtual learning for the 2020–2021 school year. Although the students and teachers returned to the school buildings for the 2021–2022 school year, visitors are still restricted, and the VMS is not currently being used at the schools. Thus, the research team was not able to conduct any other formal research on the implementation of the VMS.

## School Safety Reviews

The school safety reviews consisted of an examination of the physical building structures and any potential safety issues, along with assessments of staff's readiness to respond to crises through computer-based scenarios. The school safety reviews also included the development of

---

[10] The time period for this data is the date of installation at each school to March 31, 2020.

other plans such as a continuity of operations plan (COOP), an emergency management and response preparedness plan, and a prevention and mitigation plan.

The hypothesized process for the school safety assessments included the following steps:

1. An external third-party conducts a physical safety review of each school and district building.
2. The third-party develops school site reports and district reports that outline potential security and safety concerns.
3. The third-party develops emergency preparedness and response plans.
4. Schools and districts implement recommendations based on the reports.
5. Students, staff, and parents have safer school buildings.

### Need

The SRO and administrator surveys implemented during the needs assessment revealed the following challenges that led to the physical safety reviews. During the survey, 60% of administrators cited physical issues with the front office and building access. Fifty-three percent of SROs cited crisis and intruder alert training as the greatest need.

### School Safety Review Implementation

An RFP was developed to contract with an external third party to conduct physical safety reviews in fall 2018. Through this RFP, WestEd and APS hired Safe Havens International, which is a non-profit organization that is based in Macon, Georgia to conduct the assessments and develop plans in September 2018. Safe Havens proposed physical safety assessments for all the designated APS schools. According to the RFP, the safety assessments would include the safety and security of the schools' grounds and buildings, as well as an evaluation of student supervision practices. The physical safety assessments extended beyond the physical examinations of the buildings. The assessments also included interviews with administrators

and staff to evaluate the perceptions of safety and areas where additional security and safety training may be needed. Each school underwent a four-hour assessment window. Safe Havens also conducted assessments of the district buildings and conducted interviews and extensive document reviews of district policies and procedures across the following departments: the Office of Safety and Security, transportation, student services, risk management, IT and technology, human resources, facilities, communications, and athletics event management.

Safe Havens conducted the school site safety assessments in fall 2019. The schools received their school-level assessments in summer 2020. The school-level assessments detailed information about the physical security and processes of the schools. For example, the reports outlined student supervision practices that were observed at the schools and the security of exterior and interior doors. Safe Havens also delivered a district strategic report that summarized district-level physical security and processes, including the presence of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), security vestibules in district buildings, and clear bag policies at athletic events. Finally, Safe Havens also conducted several meetings to develop 1) a prevention and mitigation plan, 2) a continuity of operations plan, and 3) an emergency management plan. All three plans were completed in early winter 2021. Table D.2 describes the reports in more detail.

**Table 2: School Safety Review Reports**

| Report Type | Description | Completion Date |
|---|---|---|
| School Safety and Security Audit and Strategic Report | A district report summarizing the assessment of district buildings, interviews with various district departments, and observations of district events such as athletic events. | October 2020 |
| Site-Specific Reports for Individual Schools | Site-level reports for each of the 69 APS schools, 24 charter schools, and 24 support facilities. | November 2020 |
| Emergency Management and Preparedness Plan | A plan to address management and communication of emergencies across the district. | August 2020 |
| After-Hours Emergency Plan | Similar to the above but focused on emergencies that occur after school hours. | October 2020 |
| Prevention and Mitigation Plan | A report summarizing the efforts for prevention and mitigation for everyone in the district, including parents and other stakeholders. | October 2020 |
| Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan | A plan for the continuity of business in the event of an emergency or disaster. | March 2021 |

**Site Selection**

Safe Havens International provided every school and district building with a physical site assessment (N = 102). Additionally, Safe Havens provided the Office of Safety and Security with four plans for improving emergency management across the district.

## Research Methodology

The research methods for the school safety assessments were designed to incorporate mixed methods to understand the extent to which the schools and district utilized the reports by creating action plans and directing resources to remediate and address safety and security issues that were identified in the reports. Planned data sources included interviews with district leadership and our annual SRO survey to identify whether and how schools and the district implemented the recommendations from the reports. The statewide climate survey was supposed to be to used understand whether this activity impacted student and staff perceptions of safety in their buildings in combination with the other districtwide interventions. The COVID-19 pandemic led to cancellations of data collection from the surveys of APS SROs and school climate surveys that were conducted by the Georgia Department of Education. The following findings were taken from qualitative data that was collected from the focus groups that were conducted with the Office of Safety and Security and informational meetings that were held with Safe Havens International (see Appendix C for the Office of Safety and Security focus group protocol).

## Findings

WestEd conducted focus groups with district leadership in fall 2020 and again in fall 2021 to understand the extent to which the implementation of the different interventions was accomplished, challenges that arose, and the department's plans for sustainability. The findings

that are presented in the following sections are from our interviews with district leadership from the Office of Safety and Security and meetings with Safe Havens International.

### To what extent did the district develop district-level plans based on the district-level report recommendations? To what extent were priority items implemented at the district level? What was the quality of the reports?

APSPD did not develop formal district plans to carry out the recommendations that were outlined in each of the plans that were developed by Safe Havens. However, APSPD has implemented several of the recommendations that were provided in the District Strategic Report as of fall 2021. Additionally, Safe Havens developed a "suggested action plan" during the development of the District Strategic Report. Safe Havens led discussions with APSPD to help them prioritize the recommendations in the report.

During the 2021–2022 school year, the department hired an emergency manager based on the plans. The department also implemented a clear bag policy for its athletic events and started the process of marking security vestibules within facilities. Finally, APSPD received additional personnel based on the report. This was funded out of the department's general budget. The chief of police noted that the biggest challenge involved prioritizing funds and personnel to carry out everything in the plan. The chief noted that next year, SPLOST funds would be used to purchase emergency management software to house, maintain, and update the plans developed by Safe Havens. The emergency manager will be responsible for these tasks.

The chief of police also mentioned how helpful the prevention and mitigation plan and COOP plans were for the department. For example, the chief said that during a recent bomb threat, the department followed the coherent plan outlined by the prevention and mitigation plan to respond and communicate with staff and parents about the event.

*"Safe Havens really put us in a position to respond in a lot more organized way. Responding to crises is a whole lot better than where we were before the reviews."-APSPD Leadership*

The chief also noted that the challenges that were presented by the pandemic hindered some of the plans' urgency; however, he said that if the plans were in place before the pandemic, they would have helped with the response. Additionally, the development of the plans required several meetings with senior-level staff across the district department, which was also challenging.

## To what extent do schools develop comprehensive school-level action plans based on school-level report recommendations? To what extent are priority items implemented at the school level?

Similar to the district, the schools did not develop school-level action plans. However, we learned from the interviews with APSPD that the schools were utilizing the plans. The chief noted that many of the recommendations were process-related and that APSPD provided communication to the schools to help them implement what was reasonable under their current budgets and with their current personnel.

# Chapter 6: The Social and Emotional Learning Department's Grant Activities

## Overview

APS utilizes the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) SEL Framework and is part of CASEL's Collaborating Districts Initiative. APS has also developed learning standards that map onto CASEL's SEL competencies. Additionally, the district has developed core leaders' and teachers' skills around SEL, culture, and climate. The Social and Emotional Learning Office at APS is staffed by the director of SEL and by three SEL coordinators and is housed in the Teaching and Learning Department at APS. This district team oversees the implementation of SEL throughout the district by providing ongoing coaching and training to school SEL teams. School SEL teams include an SEL liaison, an administrator, and a teacher. The SEL liaison for the school works with the district team to provide SEL programming at the school and to identify areas that require additional support. SEL was rolled out in the district in phases, starting in two of the district's clusters and all the middle schools in the 2015–2016 school year. Additional clusters were added in the 2016–2017 and 2017–2018 school years. The district uses the Second Step curriculum in its K–8 classrooms, and all high schools use SchoolConnect for their SEL-explicit instructional curriculum. Each school is required to conduct at least 60 minutes of explicit SEL instruction a day.

## Need

WestEd met with APS's SEL Department in spring 2019 to discuss the department's current processes, programs, and services and to review the data for its C&I plans. In 2018, Hanover Research conducted a districtwide survey of SEL at APS, as well as an analysis of

SEL's effects on middle school behavioral and academic outcomes. Key findings from the survey demonstrated the following:

- Fewer than half of all school personnel who responded to the survey felt that their school implemented SEL "very" or "extremely" well, with high schools reporting less favorably than middle or elementary schools.

- Less than half of all the respondents felt that SEL activities or lessons had a "very" or "extremely" positive impact on a variety of outcomes.

- There was significant variance between the schools that accessed professional learning for SEL.

Given this level of implementation fidelity, it is unsurprising that the outcomes analysis revealed that the SEL curriculum had no impact on behavioral or academic outcomes. The SEL Department requested CSSI support for developing indicators of implementation fidelity, identifying or developing measures of outcomes, and engaging in a continuous improvement process for SEL.

## CSSI SEL Grant Activities

### The Improvement Science Approach to Measurement

WestEd proposed using an improvement science approach to help schools develop a process for identifying needs and goals within SEL and apply a structured approach to using data to track and measure progress.[11] The goal of this process was to build capacity at the school level to track SEL activities and use data to make informed decisions about any adaptations or improvements to existing implementation efforts. Although the schools use a set curriculum and receive district support, SEL implementation may still look different at each

---

[11] A need is a problem statement that is clearly articulated based on data related to why the program is not meeting its aim, and a goal is an aim statement that guides the improvement process.

school.[12] APS values school autonomy and allows flexibility in the implementation of district-supported SEL efforts. This makes it difficult to develop or implement a standard measurement tool. Furthermore, there are no current or universally accepted SEL measurement tools, and members of the field are concerned that the existing climate assessments may lead to a focus on fostering compliance rather than improving implementation. Given these limitations and concerns, the improvement science approach can serve two purposes to support the SEL Department.

First, utilizing this approach would help build the schools' capacities to track and measure implementation and outcomes. The schools would focus on a priority area under SEL, identify appropriate data to provide rapid feedback, and decide whether their approach is working. The schools would understand what activities are currently implemented under SEL at their schools and how to track those activities at a deeper level. The process would also allow the schools to identify *if* and *why* what they are implementing is making a difference in outcomes without fearing that the findings would be used for accountability purposes.

Second, the district would gain a deeper understanding of implementation efforts at the schools and the measures that are being used to track progress and outcomes. Additionally, this process would allow the district to understand what works, when it works, and for whom it works. For example, the district would have access to data to uncover where certain SEL practices are implemented particularly well and whether certain practices work better for different groups of students. This would support the district's capacity to understand how to appropriately measure implementation activities and provide effective and targeted SEL implementation support to specific schools.

---

[12] This is based on the Hanover implementation report and discussions with the SEL District Leadership Team. For example, some schools may have dedicated SEL staff, utilize coaches and district resources more often, or integrate SEL into their curriculum differently.

**Site Selection**

Four of the cohort middle schools that participated in the C&I process participated in the improvement science training sessions from February 2020 to May 2020 (see Appendix D for the learning goals, syllabus, and materials from these sessions). We proposed middle schools based on the findings from the Hanover report on implementation; these schools were less likely to report that they were comfortable with implementing SEL. We also suggested using middle schools with strong SEL teams and leadership to ensure buy-in and support for this work. During summer 2020, we provided the three district coordinators with more in-depth improvement science training. Then, from the beginning of fall 2020 through February 2021, a team of improvement science experts based at WestEd began working with a group of three elementary schools and continued working with three of the four middle schools, although many of the staff were new due to.[13] In each of the two groups, the schools determined their problems with their practices and their goals and ideas for making changes. Meeting biweekly, the teams identified problems, investigated how their systems created these problems, and began testing change ideas through a disciplined testing approach that prioritizes learning. By December 2020, each team had tested at least one change idea, and the APS SEL coordinators were prepared to continue their work with these schools. The SEL coordinators shared that the frequent working sessions, flexibility in support for the schools, and increased comfort with virtual collaborative work supported the improved work.

**Implementation of Improvement Science**

Improvement science is an approach to improving organizations that prioritizes the abilities to develop, adapt, and implement reliable processes to produce a specific outcome (Bryk et al., 2015; Langley et al., 2009). It is an ongoing, disciplined effort to improve that takes a systemic perspective, is problem-oriented, uses a disciplined methodology, and engages the

---

[13] Note that a "wall of separation" was created between this team and the WestEd-based research team to minimize the potential of bias in the results presented here.

front line of implementation. Because organizations are complex, it can be difficult to predict which work processes will lead to the desired outcomes. Consequently, organizations need to establish practices that enable them to learn to improve. In practice, this often involves investigating current organizational processes, structures, and norms; the disciplined testing of changes; and the scaling and management of standard work processes. Improvement science guides and structures organizational learning by connecting disciplined inquiries to focused improvement goals (Dolle et al., 2018).

## Research Methodology

In fall 2020, WestEd researchers conducted a focus group with the SEL district team at APS (see Appendix D for the improvement science district team protocol). The focus group was led by a WestEd research team member and the three district coordinators; the SEL director also attended the focus group. In spring 2021, WestEd researchers led four focus groups with six improvement science schools (see Appendix D for the improvement science schools protocol). Three of the schools that participated in the focus group were elementary schools, and three were middle schools. Two of the middle schools were also schools that participated in the C&I process under the grant. Two WestEd researchers participated in coding the focus groups using Atlas.ti. The researchers used the coding scheme that was developed for the C&I school data analysis and added new codes as new themes emerged from the data—particularly as the themes related to the research questions that were outlined in the research plan. The following section outlines the findings from the qualitative data analysis.

## Findings

### How has the district team built its capacity to lead and implement improvement science within the district? How did the school teams build their capacities to implement improvement science within the district and individual schools?

The participants in the improvement science process were the district SEL director and the

three district SEL coordinators (one from each elementary school, middle school, and high

school), SEL liaisons from four middle schools, and one administrator from each of those middle schools (either a principal or a vice-principal). The middle school SEL coordinator took on the role of team lead and, under the guidance of the SEL director, facilitated the APS work. The elementary and high school SEL coordinators participated in the in-person sessions to learn about the improvement science process in preparation for using it during the 2020–2021 school year. Predominately, meetings between the WestEd improvement science team and the APS central office SEL team focused on developing the APS staff's capacity to lead improvement science work in the future.

WestEd aimed to develop the capacity of the central office SEL team (comprised of a director and three coordinators) to lead team-based, cross-school problem-solving efforts using an improvement science approach. The strategy that WestEd followed during the 2019–2020 school year focused exclusively on a handful of middle schools to test how an improvement science approach would help address specific practice problems that school-based SEL liaisons faced. In this case, the practice problem related to how adults were internalizing SEL principles and modeling SEL practices to students. Even though the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted efforts to improve, WestEd continued to develop the capacities of school-based SEL liaisons and central office coordinators. In the summer of 2020, WestEd explicitly focused on developing exposure to and experience with improvement science tools and principles through an improvement project that focused on personal developmental goals. In the fall of 2020, WestEd began to work with SEL liaisons at elementary, middle, and high school levels to co-develop an improvement-science-based problem-solving approach with the coordinators. This co-development included the gradual release of development and facilitation to the three SEL coordinators. By developing their capacities, the central office SEL coordinators were better equipped to support their SEL liaisons at school and enhance the SEL experiences of staff and students throughout APS schools.

The SEL coordinators were involved in planning and facilitating sessions from the start of the engagement. However, a significant amount of time was needed to develop capacity. As one coordinator shared, "That first year is just the learning of the information... just one year is just not enough." But as that coordinator was supported during a second academic year of using an improvement science process with other team members, they felt more prepared to lead the work in the future.

*"Now that I'm going through this process again, I really feel I have the capacity to lead the work… Now I feel I can replicate this." -SEL District Coordinator*

The school teams' capacities were built with assistance from their SEL coordinators, who, at that time, had participated in two rounds of professional development that incorporated improvement science. The WestEd improvement science facilitator hosted early discussions, but by fall and winter 2020, the SEL coordinators from the district were equipped to lead their schools through the improvement science inquiry approach. The school teams noted that the meetings were structured so that they could understand and quickly proceed through the improvement science process. In particular, the school teams appreciated the WestEd facilitator, their district coordinator, and the inclusion of teams from different schools:

*"I think the group dynamic was very good for me, so… I didn't feel like I was on an island trying to figure it out for myself. Even when I had challenges, it's good to know that you're not the only person who's having challenges in this struggle. That was beneficial. I think the flexibility and structure [of the WestEd facilitator] and [the district coordinator were] supportive." – School team member*

### What parts of the improvement science process were challenging?

The school teams and the district department overwhelmingly agreed that the biggest challenge that they encountered during the improvement science training sessions was the COVID-19 pandemic. The training sessions began in February 2020 as in-person training sessions that included SEL liaisons, district coordinators, and the training facilitators. After the pandemic began, all improvement science activities shifted to Zoom, along with the rest of the K–12 instruction. The school teams noted that staff were being pulled in many different directions and that the training could not be completed during spring 2020.

Once the training sessions resumed in fall 2020 with a subset of elementary and middle schools, the school teams noted that time presented the biggest challenge. The school teams were not able to stay consistent with their meeting times because of the virtual learning setting.

Another challenge that was cited by the schools was data collection. Although the schools made significant progress towards accomplishing their goals and completing their inquiry cycles, the school teams could not physically observe the classrooms to track progress towards their goals because of the virtual learning environment.

### What factors were successful?

The school teams and district coordinators cited the aid of the WestEd improvement science facilitators as the biggest factor that supported the success of this grant activity. The participants praised the team's flexibility and adaptation of the process to meet the challenges that the schools and districts were experiencing while also ensuring that they were able to complete the training sessions. Some school team members said that the format and delivery of the training sessions felt overwhelming at first but also noted that "getting into action was helpful" and that the support from the school's district coordinators was critical. Finally, the schools noted that the improvement science process made completing the training a success. One school team member specifically stated that the process allowed the schools to be more thorough and make more meaningful connections to improve SEL.

## To what extent do stakeholders believe that they have progressed towards achieving their goals?

The school teams and the district department said that the participating schools made progress in identifying their goals and implementing change ideas, although many fell short of collecting and analyzing the outcome data because of COVID restrictions or time constraints. The middle schools set goals created that focused on improving adult SEL practices and improving school connectedness among Black male students. The elementary schools focused on the fidelity of the implementation of explicit instructions through coaching and the integration of SEL and other classroom subject areas. The school teams and the district department said that the activities that related to the goals would continue through the 2020–2021 school year.

The school teams said that it was challenging to support their SEL liaisons and teachers because they could not support them in a physical classroom. However, the school teams noted that they still observed impactful changes that were recorded anecdotally. One SEL school team member mentioned,

*One success we did notice was in those teacher team reflection conversations which happened over Zoom. We noticed that the teachers started to include [SEL] in their reflection conversation[s] without being prompted. We started to see that they were independently owning that part of the conversation that we added about SEL with less and less support from us over time, which was encouraging.*

The school teams said that they would continue with their changes that had promising outcomes during the next school year.

**To what extent can the improvement science approach improve SEL implementation (i.e., root causes and factors for addressing the root causes of their problem statements)?**

The respondents from the schools all noted that the improvement science process was a valuable way to improve SEL implementation at their schools. The respondents noted that the process was a bit overwhelming at first but appreciated the frequency and delivery of the content. The school respondents noted that the process forced them to thoroughly examine the root causes of the problem statements rather than lead with a solution, which they noted often happens in educational settings.

*"So many times, we look at data, and we think that we've disaggregated it to the point where we need it to be or what we're looking for. We discovered some things we didn't realize were there in the data. [The WestEd facilitator] did ask some probing questions that assisted us in the process, but just the overall process helped us to be able to dig deeper and make more revelations. We saw some of the things that we implemented or some of our change ideas that we tested; they were very beneficial. They made a difference, a drastic difference in the outcome." – School team member*

The district coordinators credited the improvement science process with being an applicable and relevant way for the schools to understand their SEL implementation and to remedy some of the challenges in the classrooms and schools.

*I've seen the schools that I'm working with have a lot of insights into what needs to be done to move forward and improve from working in the cycle and understanding that you can just do small pieces of things. Instead of having to just bite off huge chunks of work, you can just do something small and analyze that shift, and so I think that's been really helpful.*

Both the district coordinators and the school teams noted that the appeal of the improvement science process for school staff is that the "plan, do, study, act" cycle does not have to involve a large-scale intervention but rather small changes that have large impacts. As

one district coordinator noted, "instead of having to bite off huge chunks of work, you can just do something small and analyze that shift, and so I think that's been really helpful."

The district coordinators and the district director also agreed that the improvement science work gave them and the schools a more concrete method for maintaining continuous improvement, which the district has been moving to implement in a variety of ways over the last few years. The district director noted,

> *We are moving towards, and we have leadership that is moving towards that same outlook in terms of looking at initiatives and really focusing on initiatives with a cycle of continuous improvement, which is what improvement science is, and having some direct outcomes. Are we there yet? No. Are we moving in that direction? I truly believe that that's what the future holds for us.*

The school teams and district department all said that they believed the improvement science approach to improving SEL fidelity and outcomes was sustainable and valuable and that it would continue after the grant ended. One school team member said, "I think the improvement science process can be used to improve processes in general at schools, but yes, we saw an impactful change. From my perspective, right now, [it] seems to have some staying power, and… we will continue to implement some of those changes that we made moving into next year."

# Discussion

Although the CSSI grant was designed as a comprehensive approach, the data collected provided little evidence of sustained improvement in coordination between district offices and the district and schools. Disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic likely hindered coordination. The turnover in district leadership throughout the course of the project also affected coordination efforts. Some of the activities – such as improvement science for SEL – demonstrated potential for improving coordination between the district and schools in relation to promoting safe and supportive environments for children. These small successes can help highlight conditions that may facilitate improved coordination. The following section reviews lessons that the Atlanta CSSI activities imparted through an implementation science framework.

## NIRN Framework

The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) has laid out frameworks for the stages and drivers of effective implementation. Effective implementation unfolds over four stages that are non-linear and dynamic (Fixen, Blasé, Metz, and Van Dyke, 2015):

- The **exploration** stage in which the assets and needs of a population or organization are assessed, as well as how those assets and needs fit with current programs.

- The **installation** stage in which the organizational infrastructure and the capacity to support implementation are built.

- The **initial implementation** stage in which continuous data monitoring is used to guide the first steps of implementation.

- The **full implementation** stage, which, if successful, leads to population-level impacts on outcomes.

NIRN's frameworks also describe two types of implementation drivers: "the heart of change processes to support the full, effective, and sustained use of innovation in complex

human systems" (Fixen et al., 2015 p.698). According to Bertram et al. (2015) implementation drivers establish the organizational and human capacity needed to create sustainable system-level changes and are required "to support high fidelity, effective, and sustainable programs" (p. 481). The drivers include competency drivers and organizational drivers, which are undergirded by the leadership driver.

**Competency Drivers**

The competency driver focuses on the implementation team's capacity to implement a program or practice to achieve high fidelity and desired outcomes (Bertram et al, 2015; Woitaszewski, Savage, & Zaslofsky, 2020). The competency driver focuses on staff selection, training, coaching, and the fidelity of implementation. As Bertram et al. (2015) noted, staff selection and training are often overlooked in program implementation and evaluation literature; however, the importance of selecting appropriate staff members who have backgrounds and experience that relate to implementing complex programs, practices, or systems-level changes cannot be emphasized enough. Additionally, staff should receive regular training and coaching to continue to refine and implement the model. Sustained training and coaching lead to improved skill development since implementation progresses and makes staff buy-in more likely (Bertram et al., 2015). Furthermore, staff should have the capacity to perform periodic assessments of the fidelity of implementation. These assessments require access to and use of data systems to track program implementation and outcomes, as well as the ability to interpret that data.

**Organizational Drivers**

Organizational drivers refer to the overall environment where implementation occurs and is managed, including ensuring that an organization has the resources, culture, and climate that are conducive to systems-level change (Bertram et al., 2015). NIRN has identified facilitative administration as a key organizational driver that should be examined in each implementation

stage (Fixen et al., 2015). Facilitative administrative supports include an organization's leaders, implementation teams, and the staff's ability to develop and use feedback loops and information strategies to drive necessary policy changes to sustain implementation. In an organization, this may look like the development or refinement of internal policies, the reorganization of roles and functions, and open communication about how to solve implementation challenges.

Similarly, systems intervention refers to an organization's ability to work with external partners, diverse teams, funders, and community leaders to ensure that the organization has the resources to sustain implementation. This refers to working with these groups to ensure that policies or practices that may hinder long-term implementation are addressed. In practice, this may involve distributing leadership across teams and with external partners to design solutions together, developing a shared understanding of the goals and outcomes, and maintaining regular communication with partners about implementation and outcome progress.

Finally, NIRN has identified a decision-support data system as a key organization driver. This includes the development and use of data infrastructure to support implementation by monitoring implementation activities and outcomes.

**Leadership Drivers**

The leadership driver provides the foundation for the first two drivers and refers to the leadership strategies that are required to carry out implementation decisions. Bertram et. al (2015) differentiates leadership drivers as either technical or adaptive depending on the nature of the program and the setting and context in which it is situated. For example, technical leadership strategies fall under a more traditional leadership approach with a single point of communication and authority to make decisions. These strategies operate better when there is agreement and certainty about the decision. However, when there is less agreement, Fixsen et al. (2015) called for a more adaptive leadership approach that involves working groups or diverse teams convening to gain consensus on the root cause of the challenge and determine

how to address it. These strategies change throughout the implementation process and require a certain set of skills and conditions (flowing from the competency and organizational drivers) to ensure that leaders can choose the leadership strategy to solve challenges.

## Implementation Drivers and CSSI Activities

We used the NIRN implementation drivers to provide a framework to understand broader learnings from the Atlanta CSSI activities to share with other school districts as they embarked on comprehensive school safety solutions. These learning are described in the following sections according to each driver. Within the NIRN framework, drivers do not operate in isolation and can be integrated and compensatory. We also highlight examples of promising activities that illustrate the integration of different drivers for successful implementation.

### Competency Drivers

When implementing a comprehensive school safety approach, districts should carefully consider staff who are selected for implementation to ensure they have the necessary knowledge and skill sets, as well as the time, to carry out activities. Furthermore, the implementation team should undergo tailored training to ensure that the district representatives understand implementation when selecting staff at both the district and school levels. For our project, district leaders were selected for participation based on the functions their departments provided, while schools were identified based on data about their students' needs (behavioral and/or emotional). The staff's readiness at the district and schools was not systematically assessed before selection and implementation and training was not ongoing throughout the project.

Throughout the needs assessment phase and the implementation of the Atlanta CSSI activities, we attempted to leverage competency drivers for implementation success. Needs and readiness played a role in school selection for the school-level interventions. We used state school climates and behavioral incident data to create profiles of schools with different needs,

which we then used as part of the process to select schools to participate in the coordination and integration efforts. Additionally, we developed a survey to assess schools' readiness for intervention. However, the district did not approve the administration of the survey. As a result, the Atlanta CSSI technical assistance team highlighted the readiness of school administrators to engage in the coordination and integration process as an obstacle that could block success.

The successful focus of school-level interventions required technical assistance to build competency in data-driven decision-making. The participants in the school coordination and integration process consistently commented on the usefulness of the Data Equity Walks to help school personnel engage with data that is relevant to safety and security. Additionally, school personnel found the Atlanta CSSI technical assistance team to be particularly helpful in guiding them through the process of generating goals and objectives based on their schools' data. This focus on connecting goals and data was also a success for the Improvement Science for SEL workshops that were conducted with schools, during which the Atlanta CSSI technical assistance team helped schools generate short-term goals with observable outcomes.

**Organizational Drivers**

Any comprehensive approach to school and safety should focus on systems-level change and ensure that policies, practices, and the overall organizational environment is conducive to such change. The CSSI grant outlined an ambitious that focused on systems-level change across APS. The findings of the project kickoff and needs assessment phases highlighted (a) the interconnectedness of the district departments that were involved in safety and security issues, as well as (b) the lack of connectedness between different data systems. The coordination and integration process was designed to be multi-level to encourage district department leaders and school leaders to develop shared goals for the project's funds. During the project kickoff and needs assessment phases, the project successfully convened district and school leaders, as well as community members, to determine project goals and the direction of

project activities. However, during implementation, many of the grant activities continued to be conducted in the district and school siloes. Future comprehensive approaches should identify staff who are champions of the project and stay continuously engaged to ensure that the overall organizational environment is conducive to systems-level change and data sharing. Project champions should possess relevant knowledge and hold an organizational position to reach across siloes to accomplish systemic change. A functional implementation team that operates according to a linked teaming infrastructure across the different levels of systemic change can help ensure more transparent communication, shared power, decision-making, and problem-solving (Blase et al., 2015).

An example of a bright spot in the CSSI project regarding the organizational driver was the development and implementation of the VMS. At least on paper, the Office of Safety and Security developed policies and procedures in anticipation of the rollout. The vendor also conducted training sessions across the district and shared data with the Office of Safety and Security about the visitor management and tracking software. Due to the pandemic, we were unable to make conclusions about the policy-to-practice communication.

Another example is the development of the Safety and Security reviews and the development of emergency management plans and the continuity of operations plan, which were conducted by Safe Havens International. During this process, Safe Havens engaged district staff from every department who are involved in safety and security, as well as from every school. The school safety reviews were used to identify promising practices that related to physical security and school climate, as well as challenges. Policies and procedures were developed as part of the emergency management and continuity of operations plans, and the Office of Safety and Security hired an emergency manager to ensure sustainability and the implementation of the plans.

**Leadership Drivers**

      The styles and skills of the district- and school-level administrative leaders greatly affected which aspects of the CSSI were successful in implementing activities with perceived impacts on safety and security. Even though the district leaders convened to generate shared goals, different departments focused their implementation on different goals. For example, in Improvement Science for SEL, district SEL leaders worked closely with schools and with the WestEd team to facilitate this process in schools. Some C&I schools had school leaders who were highly engaged during the whole process. In contrast, district leadership was minimally engaged in the schools' coordination and integration process. As a result, the success of those efforts varied widely between schools, and these efforts were most successful where school administrators shared the project's goals and assembled teams that worked together effectively at specifying measurable goals and objectives and identifying fundable activities to achieve them.

# Conclusion

Systems-level reform in large, urban school districts is a Herculean task. Accomplishing such reforms consists of multiple departments being created at different times, being reorganized frequently, and being characterized by staff reassignment, resignation, and replacement. Furthermore, school districts exist in politically charged environments. Often, they feel vulnerable to the local media looking for the next scandal. The students and families they serve are diverse economically, racially, and politically. Students arrive at schools with differing needs, having experienced varying levels and types of traumas that relate to learning experiences in their homes, food security or insecurity, and other factors that impact their educational experiences. School boards themselves are political entities, having been elected by local voters.

Against this backdrop, WestEd, APS, and GSU set forth an ambitious plan to create systemic reform so that students could experience safe and supportive learning environments. Two main lessons were learned, even though the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures stopped or greatly slowed down the implementation of CSSI-funded activities and prevented an examination of post-implementation outcomes.

The first lesson learned was that information presented at the right size to an audience who is empowered to act on that information can lead to change. The needs assessment led to several districtwide initiatives, including the VMS and school safety reviews. Subsequently, the school safety reviews led to important efforts around emergency planning and preparedness. During the C&I process, the data equity walks informed school efforts to identify and address immediate needs.

The second lesson is that targeted efforts to address a single problem are more likely to be successful than overly ambitious reform efforts that target multiple problems and require substantial investments of time. Take a comparison between the improvement science

approach to social and emotional learning to school-based coordination and the integration approach, for example. The former is a direct approach to addressing one need through smaller steps while the latter is a broader, time-intensive approach to identifying all such needs in a school and aligning them with available resources to identify gaps. The improvement science approach was regarded more positively by APS staff and leaders and may be more likely to be sustained.

As we noted above, scholars argue that school safety is not possible without comprehensive strategies, and that programs that operate independently from each other are not as effective as a comprehensive approach. However, the Atlanta CSSI project was unable to achieve the level of systemic, district-wide reform that was originally proposed. The NIRN implementation drivers described above provide an essential framework to understand successes and challenges. For example, efforts appeared to be more successful where supports were provided to district partners to improve staff competency, organizational challenges, and leadership.

The challenge of comprehensive reform is that the term "comprehensive" can focus on the whole child, that is, on the social, emotional, and intellectual needs of a child; the term "comprehensive" can also focus on large, organizational shifts. A whole-child focus may benefit from cooperation across district departments that have typically been siloed and have not cooperated much in the past. In this project, district departments' activities lacked coordination and interconnectedness, despite efforts to promote interdepartmental cooperation. Schools, however, may have the potential to undertake whole-child focused efforts, especially in a school district such as APS where, as part of a charter district, schools have more decision-making autonomy than they would otherwise have. Thus, focus on "comprehensive" reform as one of large organizational shifts may separate the locus of interventions from the locus of the challenges they were meant to address and take on a scale that is impractical. In those instances where the loci were collocated, and where implementation supports were provided to

This resource was prepared by the author(s) using Federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of Justice. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

address challenges with staff competency, leadership, and cooperation between school and district staffs, we observed meaningful actions that could be hypothesized to lead to sustained change. Matching the granularity of interventions with their practicality was likely to improve the possibility of success. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented meaningful implementation and the measurement of outcomes of grant efforts based on the Safe and Supportive Schools model developed for this project. There were, however, small successes that may lay the foundations for great success in later years.

# References

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2003). *Out-of-school suspension and expulsion*. Pediatrics.

    https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.112.5.1206

Arcia, E. (2006). Achievement and enrollment status of suspended students outcomes in a

    large, multicultural school district. *Education and Urban Society, 38*(3), 359–369.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124506286947

Berg, J., Osher, D., Same, M. R., Nolan, E., Benson, D., & Jacobs, N. (2017, December).

    *Identifying, defining, and measuring social and emotional competencies*. American

    Institutes for Research.

    https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Identifying-Defining-and-

    Measuring-Social-and-Emotional-Competencies-December-2017-rev.pdf

Bertram, R. M., Blase, K. A., & Fixsen, D. L. (2015). Improving programs and outcomes:

    Implementation frameworks and organization change. *Research on Social Work*

    *Practice*, *25*(4), 477–487. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731514537687

Blase, K., Fixsen, D. L., Sims, B., & Ward, C. (2015). *Implementation Science: Changing*

    *Hearts, Minds, Behavior, and Systems to Improve Educational Outcomes*. Chapel Hill,

    NC.

Blyth, D. A. (2018, September). *SEL Frameworks – Practical Challenges and Opportunities*

    Measuring SEL. https://measuringsel.casel.org/wp-

    content/uploads/2019/01/Frameworks-A.2-revised.pdf

Bradshaw, C., Waasdorp, T., Debnam, K., & Johnson, S. (2014). Measuring School Climate in

    High Schools: A Focus on Safety, Engagement, and the Environment. *Journal of School*

    *Health, 84*(9). https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12186

Bryk, A., Grunow, A., LeMahieu, P., & Gomez, L. (2015). *Learning to improve: How America's*

    *schools can get better at getting better*. Harvard Education Press.

Christle, C. A., Jolivette, K., & Nelson, C. M. (2005). Breaking the School to Prison Pipeline: Identifying School Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Delinquency. *Exceptionality, 13*(2), 69–88. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327035ex1302_2

Cornell, D., & Mayer, M. (2010). Why do school order and safety matter? *Education Researcher*, *39*(1), 7–15.

Cornish, F., Gillespie, A., & Zittoun, T. (2014). Collaborative analysis of qualitative data. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 79 – 93). Sage.

Cowen, K., Vaillancourt, K., Rossen, E., & Pollit, K. (2013). *A framework for safe and successful schools.* National Association of School Psychologists. https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications.

Dolle, J., White, M. E., Evans-Santiago, B., Flushman, T., Guise, M., Hegg, S., Myhre, O., Ramirez, E., & Won, N. (2018). *Improvement science in teacher preparation at California State University: How teacher preparation partnerships are building capacity to learn to improve.* San Francisco, CA: SRI International and WestEd.

Education Trust West. (2018). *Data Equity Walk Toolkit*. https://west.edtrust.org/data-equity-walk-toolkit/

Eisenhart, M., & Howe, R. (1992). Validity in educational research. In M., LeCompte, W. Millroy, and J. Preissle (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research in education* (pp. 643-680). Academic Press.

Fixsen, D., Blase, K., Metz, A., & Van Dyke, M. (2015). Implementation science. In J. D. Wright (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of the social and behavioral sciences* (pp. 695-702). Elsevier.

Fox, J.A., & Fridel, E. (2018). The Menace of School Shootings in America: Panic and Overresponse. In H. Shapiro (Ed.), *The Wiley Handbook on Violence in Education: Forms, Factors, and Preventions*, (pp. 15–45). https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118966709.ch1.

Gaffney, H., Ttofi, M., & Farrington, D. (2019). Evaluating the effectiveness of school-bullying

    prevention programs: An updated meta-analytical review. *Aggression and Violent*

    *Behavior, 45,* 111–113. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2018.07.001

Hemphill, S., Heerde, J., Herrenkohl, T., Toumbourou, J, & Catalano, R. (2012). The impacts of

    school suspension on student tobacco use: a longitudinal study in Victoria, Australia and

    Washington State, United States. *Health Education & Behavior, 39*(1), 45–56.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198111406724

Hemphill, S. A., Tollit, M., & Herrenkohl, T. I. (2014). Protective Factors Against the Impact of

    School Bullying Perpetration and Victimization on Young Adult Externalizing and

    Internalizing Problems. *Journal of School Violence*, *13*(1), 125–145.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2013.844072

Honig, M. I. (2004). The new middle management: Intermediary organizations in education

    policy implementation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *26*(1), 65-87.

Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content

    analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, *15*(9), 1277-1288.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687

Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and

    emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of*

    *Educational Research*, *79*(1), 491–525. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325693

John Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. (2016). *A comprehensive report on school*

    *safety technology*. https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/250274.pdf

Lacey, K. (2014). The business of visitor management systems: Computerized kiosks are

    becoming the norm. *District Administration*, *November*, 67–69.

Langley, G., Moen, R., Nolan, K., Norman, C., & Provost, L. (2009). *The improvement guide: A*

    *practical approach to enhancing organizational performance* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

McCrary, J., Grogan, K., Henrich, C., Terrell, J., Estacion, A., Persson, H., Cleary, K. (2016). *Introduction to Safe and Supportive Schools*. WestEd: Atlanta, GA.

Mertens, D. M. (2014). Ethical use of qualitative data and findings. In U. Flick (Ed.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 510 – 523). Sage.

Morrow, S. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2)*,* 250-260. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.250

Musu, L., Zhang, A., Wang, K., Zhang, J., & Oudekerk, B.A. (2019). *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2018* (NCES 2019-047/NCJ 252571). National Center for Education Statistics. https://www.nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019047.pdf

National Association of School Resource Officers. (2012). *To Protect & Educate: The School Resource Officer and the Prevention of Violence in Schools*. Hoover, AL.

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities. (2008). *Improving school access control*. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED539460.pdf

National Implementation Research Network. (2020). *Implementation stages planning tool*. https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/sites/nirn.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/Implementation%20Stages%20Planning%20Tool%20v8%20NIRN%20only%20Fillable.pdf

Nekvasil, E. K., Cornell, D. G., & Huang, F. L. (2015). Prevalence and offense characteristics of multiple casualty homicides: Are schools at higher risk than other locations? *Psychology of Violence*, *5*(3), 236–245. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038967

Newman, D. S., & Clare, M. M. (2016). School psychology as a relational enterprise: The role and process of qualitative methodology. *Contemporary School Psychology, 20*(4), 327-335. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-016-0090-1

Patchin, J., & Hinduja, S. (2016). Lifetime Cyberbullying Victimization Rates: Eleven Different Studies 2007-2019. https://cyberbullying.org/summary-of-our-cyberbullying-research

Perumean-Chaney, S. E., & Sutton, L. M. (2013). Students and perceived school safety: The

impact of school security measures. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *38*(4), 571–

588. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-012-9182-2

Sabatier, P. A. (1986). Top-down and bottom-up approaches to implementation research: A

critical analysis and suggested synthesis. *Journal of Public Policy*, *6*(1), 21-48.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X00003846

Schneider, M. (2002). *Do school facilities affect academic outcomes?*

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED470979.pdf

Schreier, M. (2014). Qualitative content analysis. In U. Flick (Ed.) *The Sage handbook of

qualitative data analysis* (pp. 170-183). Sage.

Taylor, K. R. (2018). Eye on access: Districts automate visitor management systems to enhance

security and efficiency. *District Administration*, *April*, 47–49.

Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A Review of School

Climate Research. *Review of Educational Research, 83*(3), 357–385.

https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654313483907

Terrell, J. H., Henrich, C. C., Nabors, A., Grogan, K., & McCrary, J. (2020). Conceptualizing and

measuring safe and supportive schools. *Contemporary School Psychology*, *24*(3), 327-

336.

United States. Bureau of Justice Statistics. National Crime Victimization Survey: School Crime

Supplement, [United States], 2017. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social

Research [distributor], 2020-02-27. https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR36982.v1

Vaughn, M. G., Maynard, B. R., Salas-Wright, C. P., Perron, B. E., & Abdon, A. (2013).

Prevalence and correlates of truancy in the US: Results from a national sample. *Journal

of Adolescence, 36*(4), 767–776. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2013.03.015

Woitaszewski, S. A., Savage, T. A., & Zaslofsky, A. F. (2020). From Neutral to High Gear:

Critical Implementation Drivers for PREPaRE School Safety and Crisis Response in

Practice. *Contemporary School Psychology*, *24*(3), 337–348.

https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-020-00315-8

Zins, J. E., & Elias, M. J. (2007). Social and emotional learning: Promoting the development of

all students. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *17*(2–3),

233–255.        https://doi.org/10.1080/10474410701413152

Zych, I., Ortega-Ruiz, R., & Del Rey, R. (2015). Systematic Review of theoretical studies on

bullying and cyberbullying: Facts, knowledge, prevention, and intervention. *Aggression*

*and Violent Behavior, 23,* 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2015.10.001

# Appendix A: Needs Assessment Artifacts

Default Question Block


WestEd.org

Dear APS Administrators,

You are being asked to participate in an online survey about your perceptions of school safety, school climate, and student supports. Your responses will be anonymous. Your participation is both voluntary and confidential.

Research/Survey Context and Details

In late 2015, the National Institute of Justice awarded a significant research grant to WestEd to develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive school safety framework for Atlanta Public Schools (APS) in partnership with Georgia State University. This initiative is expected to continue through 2020.

As part of the research initiative, WestEd and Georgia State University are conducting surveys with Atlanta Public Schools school resource officers, as well as school administrators, to help us better understand current school safety and student supports in Atlanta Public Schools. During the survey, you will be asked a number of questions regarding your role, policies and procedures in your school(s), and the climate at your school.

Confidentiality

WestEd and Georgia State University will keep your responses confidential – we will not share individual responses with APS, school police, your principal or anyone else. We will also not share the identities of those who choose to participate and those who do not with APS, school police, etc.

Your perspective will be combined with the opinions and perspectives of others in the district and summarized in a written report to the National Institute of Justice. Your feedback will be used to help the research team design interventions in Atlanta Public Schools to improve school safety and school climate across the district for employees and APS students. This study is funded by the National Institute of Justice and de-

identified (i.e., anonymous) data may be archived at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data.

<u>Voluntary Participation</u>
Your participation in this survey is voluntary. The survey should take around 20 minutes to complete. You are free to skip questions and do not have to answer any question that you do not want to. You can stop the survey at any time you wish.  There is no penalty or negative consequence for refusing to participate or answer any questions.

If you have any questions about this survey call Katie Grogan at WestEd at (470) 225-4954.  If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the WestEd Institutional Review Board at 844-IRB-KIDS (844-472-5437) or subjects@wested.org.

Statement of Consent  : I have read the above information, and I consent to participate. By clicking below to continue to the survey, I acknowledge my consent to participate.

Click below to continue to survey     .

What is your current school assignment?

| ▼ |
|---|

What is your current position?

| ▼ |
|---|

How long have you been assigned to this school?

| ▼ |
|---|

Safety and Security

How would you rate your safety in your building during the following times of day:

| | Very Unsafe | Unsafe | Neutral- neither safe nor unsafe | Safe | Very Safe |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Before school opens | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| During school arrivals | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| During class sessions | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| During lunch period | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| During class change periods | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| During school dismissal | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| During athletic events | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| During after-school hours | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## Atlanta Public Schools Office of Safety and Security

How satisfied are you with the following:

| | Very Unsatisfied | Unsatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Not Applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The manner in which the Atlanta Public Schools Police Department (APSPD) has met the safety and security needs in your school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The communication you receive from the APSPD about school safety in your school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The communication you receive from the APSPD about emergency preparedness in your school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | Very Unsatisfied | Unsatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Not Applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The communication you receive from APSPD about the role of school resource officers (SROs) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The communication you receive from APSPD about how SROs can assist you in keeping your school safe | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Is there a school resource officer assigned to your school? We are interested in your overall satisfaction with the SRO(s) assigned to your school. The next section asks about your experience with your assigned officer(s).

○ Yes
○ No

What are your expectations for the SRO in terms of their role at your school? (Please explain below)

[ ]

Overall, how satisfied are you with the SRO(s) at your school?

| Very unsatisfied | Unsatisfied | Satisfied | Very satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Are there any specific functions that you are particularly satisfied with? If so, please list below

[                                                                    ]

Are there any specific functions that you are particularly unsatisfied with? If so, please list below

[                                                                    ]

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school.

| | Don't Know/NA | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SROs have a good working relationship with the principal | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| SROs have a good working relationship with teachers | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| SROs have a good working relationship with school administrative staff | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| SROs are respected and liked by the students they serve | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| SROs treat students with respect | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| SROs treat parents with respect | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Students treat SROs with respect | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Parents treat SROs with respect | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

|  | Don't Know/NA | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students feel comfortable talking with the SRO | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Parents feel comfortable talking with the SRO | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Visitors are always required to sign-in and out | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Outside groups (non-APS) who access the school building are a safety concern at my school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| People who do not belong in the school come in and cause trouble | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Who is responsible for ensuring that the crisis protocol in your school is followed? Check all that apply:

☐ Principal
☐ Assistant Principal
☐ Teachers
☐ Parents

☐ SROs
☐ Counselors
☐ Non-instructional staff

What additional training would you like for your staff to receive related to safety and security? (Please describe below)

Please describe the top three (3) Safety and Security related strengths at your school.

[text box]

Please describe the top three (3) Safety and Security related challenges  at your school.

[text box]

## Information Sources

How often do students  report safety-related issues at the school?

- ○ Multiple times per day
- ○ Daily
- ○ Weekly
- ○ Monthly
- ○ Annually
- ○ Never

What kinds of issues do they report?

[text box]

How often do parents  report safety-related issues at the school?

- ○ Multiple times per day
- ○ Daily

○ Weekly
○ Monthly
○ Annually
○ Never

## What kinds of issues do they report?

## What sources of information do you rely on for making decisions about school safety?

## Student socio-emotional support services

## How have students' SEL needs been met in the school?

## What gaps remain between students' needs and SEL supports?

## Family and Community Engagement

Please describe any current family or community partnerships that are designed to address or improve school safety, student behavior, and/or student mental health:

| | Partner | Description | Funding- Is funding involved? If yes, please include below | Personnel: Does the partnership include staffing or volunteers? If yes, please describe below |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Partnership 1 | | | | |
| Partnership 2 | | | | |
| Partnership 3 | | | | |
| Partnership 4 | | | | |
| Partnership 5 | | | | |

Powered by Qualtrics

Default Question Block



Dear APS School Resource Officers,

You are being asked to participate in an online survey about your perceptions of school safety, school climate, and student supports. Your responses will be anonymous. Your participation is both voluntary and confidential.

Research/Survey Context and Details

In late 2015, the National Institute of Justice awarded a significant research grant to WestEd to develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive school safety framework for Atlanta Public Schools (APS) in partnership with Georgia State University. This initiative is expected to continue through 2020.

As part of the research initiative, WestEd and Georgia State University are conducting surveys with Atlanta Public Schools school resource officers, as well as school administrators, to help us better understand current school safety and student supports in Atlanta Public Schools. During the survey, you will be asked a number of questions regarding your role, policies and procedures in your school(s), and the climate at your school.

Confidentiality

WestEd and Georgia State University will keep your responses confidential – we will not share individual responses with APS, school police, your principal or anyone else. We will also not share the identities of those who choose to participate and those who do not with APS, school police, etc.

Your perspective will be combined with the opinions and perspectives of others in the district and summarized in a written report to the National Institute of Justice. Your feedback will be used to help the research team design interventions in Atlanta Public Schools to improve school safety and school climate across the district for employees and APS students. This study is funded by the National Institute of Justice and de-

identified (i.e., anonymous) data may be archived at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. The survey should take around 20 minutes to complete. You are free to skip questions and do not have to answer any question that you do not want to. You can stop the survey at any time you wish.  There is no penalty or negative consequence for refusing to participate or answer any questions.

If you have any questions about this survey call Katie Grogan at WestEd at (470) 225-4954.  If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the WestEd Institutional Review Board at 844-IRB-KIDS (844-472-5437) or subjects@wested.org.

Statement of Consent  : I have read the above information, and I consent to participate. By clicking below to continue to the survey, I acknowledge my consent to participate.

Click below to continue to the survey     .


Background


What is your current assignment?

| ▼ |
| --- |


What is your current school assignment?

| APS-Forrest Hills Academy | ▲ |
| --- | --- |
| Atlanta Classical Academy | |
| Atlanta Neighborhood Charter - Elementary | |
| Atlanta Neighborhood Charter - Middle | |
| B.E.S.T Academy | |
| Barack and Michelle Obama Academy | |
| Bazoline E. Usher/Collier Heights Elementary School | |
| Beecher Hills Elementary School | |
| Benteen Elementary School | |
| Bolton Academy | ▼ |

How long have you been in your current assignment?

○ Last school year and current school year (2016-17 and 2017-18)
○ Current school year only (2017-18)
○ [                    ] Other: (Please specify)

Please describe your law enforcement background prior to joining APS.
Did you have prior experience as an SRO?

○ Yes
○ No

How many years of law enforcement experience did you have prior to joining APSPD?
(Please enter the number of years in the space provided below):

[          ]

Please list your current Law Enforcement Certifications in the space provided below:

[                                                                          ]

Professional Development

What was the most valuable professional development session you attended during the current school year (2017-2018)?  Please list below and describe what made it valuable.

[ ]

What was the least valuable professional development session you attended during the current school year (2017-2018)?  Please list below and describe what made it the least valuable.

[ ]

Are there any other professional development topics you would like to participate in over the next year? If yes, please list in the space below.

[ ]

SEL and Restorative Practices

Directions : If you are assigned to one school, please focus your responses on that school. If you are assigned to an area or region, please focus your responses about the schools in which you spend the most time.

Since the beginning of this school year, how often have you used Social Emotional Learning (SEL)  or  Restorative Practices with students?

| Never | A few times | About once or twice per month | About once or twice per week | More often than once or twice per week | Daily | Not applicable |
|-------|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------|----------------|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please tell us about your experience with Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Restorative Practices by indicating how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students respond well to SEL and Restorative Practices | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Students' behavior improved with exposure to SEL and Restorative Practices | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| SEL and Restorative Practices implementation is consistent with the training I have received | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| There are frequent opportunities to implement SEL and Restorative Practices with students | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| My training has prepared me well to implement SEL and Restorative Practices | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

School-Based Staff, Students, and Parents

Please tell us about your experiences with school leadership and teachers     in APS by indicating how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School leaders understand my role in their school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| School leaders assume I am responsible for student discipline | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| School leaders treat me with respect | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have open lines of communication with school leadership | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Teachers understand my role in their school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Teachers assume I am responsible for student discipline | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Teachers treat me with respect | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I have been involved with how schools implement their school safety plans | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I have been charged with overseeing school safety plans | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I meet at least once per week with school leadership to discuss safety topics | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please tell us about your experiences with students and parents    by indicating how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students understand my role in their school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Students treat me with respect | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Students come to me with their problems | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Students report safety issues and challenges, such as bullying, to me | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Students report major safety issues and challenges, such as gangs, drugs, and weapons, to me | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Parents understand my role in their children's school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Parents treat me with respect | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I feel like I am integrated in the school culture and actively participate in school activities | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Building Access

Please tell us about school building access by indicating how much you agree or disagree with the following statement.

Access to the school building is managed well:

|  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| During the school day | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| After-school | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Night-shift | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Weekends | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Holidays | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

School Safety Plans

Please tell us about your experiences with school safety plans in the schools in which you frequently interact with students.

|  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am knowledgeable about school safety plans | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| I have reviewed the school safety plans | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| I have made recommended changes for improvement to school safety plans | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Principals and other adults in the school assume that I am responsible for the school safety plan | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| School leadership are knowledgeable about their school safety plans | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers are knowledgeable about the school safety plans in their schools | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| We actively practice responses and conduct drills as outlined in our school safety plan | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

If you were starting your own SRO program in a school district, what would you replicate from your experience here at APS?

What would you do differently or additionally?

Powered by Qualtrics

| Domain | Subdomain | Measure | Source | No. of Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Connectedness | *Positive Relationships* | The percentage of students and personnel who reported that students get along well with one another. | Elementary, Secondary, and Personnel Survey | 3 |
| | | The percentage of students who reported that students treat each other well. | Elementary Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of students who reported they know an adult whom they can talk to. | Elementary and Secondary Climate Survey | 2 |
| | | The percentage of students who reported they have another student at school whom they can talk to. | Secondary Climate Survey | 2 |
| | | The percentage of personnel who reported that students get along with other teachers and adults. | Personnel Survey | 1 |
| | *Sense of Belonging* | The percentage of students who reported that they fit in at school. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of students who reported that they feel connected to others at school. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | *Personnel Connectedness* | The percentage of personnel who reported that they get along with other personnel members. | Personnel Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of personnel who reported that they enjoy working with others at their school. | Personnel Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of personnel who reported that they feel connected to other teachers at their school. | Personnel Survey | 1 |
| Family Engagement | *Academic Involvement* | The percentage of parents and personnel who reported that parents are involved in activities at their students' school. | Parent and Personnel Survey | 2 |
| | | The percentage of personnel who reported that parents attend PTA meetings. | Personnel Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of personnel who reported that parents volunteer at their students' school. | Personnel Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of parents who reported that they volunteer at their students' school. | Parent Survey | 2 |
| | | The percentage of parents who reported that they feel welcome at their students' school. | Parent Survey | 2 |
| | *Welcoming Environment* | The percentage of parents who felt comfortable talking to teachers at their students' school. | Parent Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of parents who reported volunteering to help with special projects at their students' school. | Parent Survey | 1 |
| Feelings of Safety | *Physical Safety Attitudes* | The percentage of students, parents, and personnel who reported feeling safe at school. | Elementary, Secondary, Parent, and Personnel Survey | 4 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | The percentage of students, parents, and personnel who reported never feeling unsafe on their way to or from school. | Secondary, Parent, and Personnel Survey | 3 |
| | | The percentage of students and personnel who reported not feeling concerned about physical safety at school. | Secondary and Personnel Survey | 2 |
| | | The percentage of students who reported that students rarely fight at their school. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of students who reported that they rarely observe fights at their school. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | *Physical Safety Behaviors* | The percentage of students who have never been in a physical fight at school. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of students who have never been offered or sold illegal drugs on school property. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of students who have never brought a weapon to school. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of students who have not participated in illegal gang activities. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | *Emotional Well-Being* | The percentage of students who reported 0 days of experiencing difficulty concentrating. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of students who reported 0 days of experiencing intense worries and fears. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of students who reported 0 days of experiencing severe mood swings. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of students who reported 0 days of experiencing drastic changes in behavior and/or personality. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of students who reported 0 days feeling sad or withdrawn. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of students who reported 0 days of feeling overwhelmed with fear for no reason. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| Norms and Policies | *Expectations for Behavior* | The percentage of students and personnel who reported that students are recognized for good behavior. | Elementary, Secondary, and Personnel Survey | 3 |
| | | The percentage of students and parents who reported that the school sets clear rules for behavior. | Elementary, Secondary, and Parent Survey | 3 |
| | *Perceptions about Peer Fairness* | The percentage of students, parents, and personnel who reported that students are treated fairly regardless of race, ethnicity, or culture. | Secondary, Parent, and Personnel Survey | 4 |
| | | The percentage of students and parents who reported that students are treated fairly at school. | Secondary and Parent Survey | 2 |
| | | The percentage of personnel who reported that students respect each other regardless of academic ability. | Personnel Survey | 1 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Perceptions about Teacher Fairness* | The percentage of students, parents, and personnel who reported that teachers and adults treat students with respect. | Elementary, Secondary, Parent, and Personnel Survey | 6 |
| | | The percentage of students who reported that teachers treat them with respect. | Elementary and Secondary Climate Survey | 2 |
| Physical Environment | *School Building Conditions* | The percentage of students, parents, and personnel who reported that the school building is well-maintained. | Secondary, Parent, and Personnel survey | 3 |
| | | The percentage of students, parents, and personnel who reported that instructional materials are up-to-date and in good condition. | Secondary, Parent, and Personnel Survey | 3 |
| | | The percentage of students, parents, and personnel who reported that teachers have clean and organized classrooms. | Secondary, Parent, and Personnel Survey | 3 |
| | | The percentage of students who reported that all students take pride in keeping the school building in good condition. | Secondary Climate Survey | 1 |
| | | The percentage of personnel who reported that teachers make an effort to keep the school building clean. | Personnel Survey | 1 |

# Appendix B: Coordination and Integration Artifacts

# C&I Planning Meeting Observation Protocol

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">**Date:**<br>**Researcher:**</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">**Topic/Session Title:**<br>**Scheduled Time:**<br>**Location:**<br><br>**WestEd Attendees:**<br><br>**School Attendees:**<br><br>**APS Attendees:**<br><br></td></tr>
<tr><td>Time (min. mark)</td><td>Description</td><td>Notes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Actual Start Time:<br>Actual End Time:</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

**Observation Categories and Questions**

1. Leaders/Participants **(Welcome and Agenda)**
   a. Who is driving the content of the activity/discussion? What is their role?

   b. Who is participating and how are they participating? What is their role?

   c. Who is interacting and with whom? What is the nature of those interactions?

2. Leaders/Participants **(Project Overview)**
   a. Who is driving the content of the activity/discussion? What is their role?

b. Who is participating and how are they participating? What is their role?

<br><br><br><br>

c. Who is interacting and with whom? What is the nature of those interactions?

<br><br><br><br>

3. Leaders/Participants **(Research Plan and Expectations - Technical Aspects)**
   a. Who is driving the content of the activity/discussion? What is their role?

<br><br><br><br>

   b. Who is participating and how are they participating? What is their role?

<br><br><br><br>

   c. Who is interacting and with whom? What is the nature of those interactions?

<br><br><br><br>

4. Leaders/Participants **(C&I Plan Overview)**
   a. Who is driving the content of the activity/discussion? What is their role?

<br><br><br><br>

   b. Who is participating and how are they participating? What is their role?

<br><br><br><br>

   c. Who is interacting and with whom? What is the nature of those interactions?

<br><br><br><br>

5. Leaders/Participants **(TA Process and Supports)**
   a. Who is driving the content of the activity/discussion? What is their role?

<br><br><br><br>

b. Who is participating and how are they participating? What is their role?

[ ]

c. Who is interacting and with whom? What is the nature of those interactions?

[ ]

6. Organization
   a. How is the activity/discussion organized? What is the format?

   [ ]

   b. How is the topic/activity being visually displayed?

   [ ]

   c. How is the time managed, i.e. who or what is given priority?

   [ ]

7. Environment
   a. How is the room arranged?

   [ ]

   b. Where are drivers and participants in the room?

   [ ]

8. Content
   a. What information is being shared about safety and supports? How is it being shared?

   [ ]

   b. What questions are being raised?

   [ ]

9.  Progress
    a.  What progress has there been on goals from the last meeting?

    |  |
    |--|
    |  |

    b.  What questions and/or issues are being raised about the goals?

    |  |
    |--|
    |  |

**Date:**
**Researcher:**
**Topic/Session Title:**
**Scheduled Time:**
**Location:**

| | | Yes | No | Not Sure | N/A | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Is this meeting occurring in person? | | | | | |
| 2 | Are any of the participants accessing the meeting remotely? | | | | | |
| 3 | Checkin on assigned tasks from previous meeting | | | | | |
| 4 | Facilitator(s) provide time for participants to introduce by name/role | | | | | |
| 5 | Facilitator(s) establish norms for day | | | | | |
| 6 | Facilitator(s) establish objectives for day | | | | | |
| 7 | Facilitator(s) establish anticipated outcomes for day | | | | | |
| 8 | All participants received agenda and printed materials | | | | | |
| 9 | Transitions in the agenda were acknowledged by the facilitator(s) | | | | | |
| 10 | Reflections were captured at the end of the meeting | | | | | |
| 11 | Feedback was captured at the end of the meeting | | | | | |
| 12 | The timeline for the school's C&I Plan was explained/reviewed with stakeholders | | | | | |
| 13 | The timeline for the district's C&I Plan was explained/reviewed with stakeholders | | | | | |
| 14 | Next steps and action items were explicitly reference at the end of the meeting | | | | | |
| 15 | Was sustainability discussed? | | | | | |

| | | Low | Medium | High | N/A | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | What was the overall level of engagement by participants? | | | | | |
| 17 | What was the overall level of engagement by school administrators? | | | | | |
| 18 | What was the overall level of engagement by school resource officers? | | | | | |
| 19 | What was the overall level of engagement by other school personnel? | | | | | |
| 20 | What was the overall level of engagement by other stakeholders? | | | | | |
| 21 | What was the overall level of engagement by Implementation Team? | | | | | |

| | | Not at all | Very little | Somewhat | A lot | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | To what extent did presenter(s) respond to participants engagement? | | | | | |
| 23 | | | | | | |
| 24 | To what extent was the Implementation Team integrated into next steps at the end of the meeting? | | | | | |
| 25 | | | | | | |
| 26 | To what extent were commitments from administrators to the C&I plan made explicit during the meeting process? | | | | | |

| Notes |
|---|

**Implementation Team Focus Group**

1) Please describe your role on the C&I Implementation team
   a. Probe: Which schools/district department did you work with?
   b. Probe: What APS staff were involved? What other WestEd were involved?
   c. Probe: How were the APS staff selected on the C&I team for your district and/or school?
2) Describe how you initially engaged the district and/or schools in the CSSI grant activities.
   a. Probe: What meetings took place? Who was there?
   b. Probe: How did that engagement change once you started your TA?
3) Describe the C&I model (i.e. how it's laid out in the blue manual).
   a. Probe: How did this process take place with your district and/or schools (make sure to go through each step)?
   b. Probe: What steps of the process were more challenging for the C&I team?
   c. Probe: Where did the C&I team find its biggest successes?
   d. Probe: How did your team change the C&I process to fit the context of the district/school you worked with?
4) Describe the most challenging aspects of the C&I process at APS for the implementation team. What were the most successful aspects?
   a. Probe: What would you change?
   b. Probe: What would you make sure to replicate?
5) To what extent do you think the C&I planning process built the capacity of the schools/districts?
   a. Probe: How did the activities in the C&I plans build their capacities?
6) How is/did the implementation work with the district/schools on sustainability?
   a. Probe: Sustainability of the C&I planning process?
   b. Probe: Sustainability of activities?
7) Based on your experience with the C&I process at APS, what are the top three "ingredients" for successful implementation?
   a. Probe: Describe how this was or was not present in your C&I work at APS.
   b. Probe: What would you look for in other districts or schools if you were to do this again?
8) What else should we know about how the implementation worked with the districts/schools on the C&I process?

**Introduction & C&I Participation**
- Please provide your title, background, and how long you've worked with in APS and X school
- How long have you participated on the C&I team at your school?
    - Probe: How were you invited to participate on the C&I team?

**C&I Team Shared Vision, Goals, ad Common Indicators of Progress**
- Describe the C&I planning process
    - Probe: What is "problem" that your school is trying to solve?
- How did your team identify the safety and security challenges at your school?
    - Probe: How did the team review data? What data did you use?
- Did the members of the C&I team share the same safety and security concerns at your school?
    - Probe: Describe how the team came to a consensus about what to include in your plan.
    - Probe: What other challenges were identified?
    - Probe: How often did you discuss the "Northstar" goals when identifying your safety and security challenges?
- What activities were identified by the team?
    - Probe: How did the team make decisions about which activities would be included in the plan?
- Has your school started implementing the activities in the plan?
    - Probe: What challenges have you found with implementation? Successes?
    - Probe: Does your team have sufficient resources to carry out the activities?
    - Probe: What other supports does your team need to carry out the C&I plan?
- In your opinion, is the C&I team making adequate progress toward accomplishing its goals as laid out in the plan?
    - Probe: How are you measuring success? What data is used?
    - Probe: Does the team have timely and accurate data to measure progress toward its goal?
- How often does the C&I team review timelines or discuss progress towards the plan's goals?
    - Probe: Together with C&I facilitators? Separate from the facilitators?
    - Probe: How does your team communicate about the plan and its progress over email? Phone? In person?
- Does your C&I team collaborate with other schools or the district as part of the plan?
    - Probe: Describe that collaboration.
- Has your school discussed sustainability of the activities in the plan?
    - Probe: What challenges have you identified as a team to sustain the activities?

**C&I Planning Impact**
- What impact has the C&I planning process had on the school?

- o Probe: On the student population? On school climate and culture?
- Have you noticed any changes in personnel and staff from the C&I planning process?
    - o Probe: Is this change isolated to the team or beyond?
- Has your school made changes in policies, personnel, practices, or funding as a result of the C&I planning process?
    - o Probe: Describe how your school made those changes. Did the district support the changes in any way?


**C&I Team TA**
- Describe how the implementation and research members helped you develop the C&I plan.
    - o Probe:  How well did the facilitators describe the grant? The C&I process?
    - o Probe: How did they help you use data to identify your school's challenges?
    - o Probe: How well did they help you identify activities to implement?
    - o Probe: How did they help you find funding for new activities? Sustainability?
- How useful was the C&I planning process?
- What, if anything, can the facilitation team provide you or your school to help support your C&I plan?
- Do you have any suggestions for improving the process?

| Categories | Description of codes |
|---|---|
| **Theme: C&I Plan** | |
| Technical assistance | Descriptions and reactions about help, guidance and assistance provided by the WestEd team, their protocols, and their C&I planning process, including execution of the planning process before its completion |
| Confusion | Descriptions and reactions about confusion/needing more help/guidance, absence of help with the process; Includes confusion on the part of the WestEd TA team |
| Use of Data | Data-driven decision-making; Includes all mentions of the word "data" when referenced. |
| Changes to process | How the process was supposed to go vs. how it actually went; changes the TA team wanted to make; prioritize change over what the change might be (e.g., changes to increase engagement) |
| Plan content | Information surrounding the content of school's goals in their C&I plan |
| Implementation | Implementation of plan, goals, activities, descriptions of activities that are ongoing (not of planned steps); i.e., what the school has started doing to accomplish their goals in the plan |
| Sustainability | Sustainability of activities; sustainability for plan in terms of people, resources, funding |
| Pandemic | Descriptions of ways the pandemic has directly and indirectly affecting plan activities; coded whenever pandemic or virtual learning is mentioned |
| **Theme: Collaboration & Communication** | |
| Communication | Frequency of meetings, talking together, communicating |
| Collaboration | Collaboration, working together, and outreach b/w team members, among school staff & w/in cluster; include existing relationships and patterns of collaboration; Includes descriptions of team composition |
| Engagement | Descriptions of team member's participation, engagement and motivation |
| **Theme: School Conditions** | |
| Pre-existing school plans | Descriptions of implementations of other plans, programs, and interventions in the schools that are independent of the C&I process |
| Readiness & capacity | Descriptions of administrator, personnel capacity and readiness for change; Includes descriptions of readiness of WestEd team |
| Climate | School climate (safety, relationships, norms, environment) / school culture |
| Barriers | Administrative decisions, staffing, time constraints and staff cultures as barriers |

# 2019-2020 CSSI School Cohorts Safety & Supports Funding Request

The School Safety & Supports (S3) Funding Request is designed to support CSSI school cohorts in improving school safety and support through the use of data-driven decision making.

**Guidelines and Requirements**

The funding request must:

1. connect to one or more CSSI cohort schools;
2. focus on improving school safety and/or supports;
3. identify and address school needs supported by data (data-driven decision making);
4. specify measures that indicate success;
5. include a sustainability plan;

The funding request can be used to try something new, assess and evaluate existing initiatives, explore innovative ideas, support needs of certain members in the school (e.g., 8th graders, new teachers, etc), connect to other cohort schools, and/or extend an existing initiative in new ways to:

· Enhance education and awareness of mental health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional health, behavioral health, and school safety;

· Build and strengthen internal and external relationships within the APS school community; and/or

· Develop and improve environments conducive for learning and teaching.

Funds can be allocated to offset the cost for trainer/consultant fees, school programming, materials/supplies, and/or substitute teachers. Proposal teams will be required to share progress and report outcomes of funds received, if granted. Funding requests must be based on the needs of the school supported by data, not exceeding $40,000, and proposed activities achievable in one-year (October 2019-May 2020). Funds CAN NOT be used for the following:

· Capital Improvements (e.g., building security vestibule; construction)
· Equipment (e.g., playground equipment)
· Food
· Fundraising
· Land Acquisition
· Lobbying
· Costs Incurred Outside the CSSI Project Period

**<u>Funding Request Proposal (limit to 2 pages):</u>**

## I. School Information

| School Information Needed | Response |
|---|---|
| Name | Booker T. Washington High School |
| Address | 45 Whitehouse Drive Atlanta, GA  30314 |
| Phone Number | (404) 802-4603 |
| Cluster | Washington |
| CSSI Cohort (1or 2) | 1 |

## IV. Submitter Information

| Submitter Information Needed | Response |
|---|---|
| Name | ███████████ |
| Title | ███████████████████ |
| Phone Number | ██████████ |
| Email | █████████████████████████ |

## V. Proposal Summary

| Provide 1-2 paragraphs summarizing your proposal |
|---|
| Booker T. Washington High School was founded in 1929 as the first, African-American public high school in the Southeast.  The school has been the birthplace of many firsts as well as the academic home to many influential African-Americans including Dr. Martin Luther King. Over the years the Washington High School community has been through many changes that have impacted the socioeconomic foundation of this very historical community and school. Washington High School is a Title I school in which all students receive free lunch.  Students in the school community have increasingly been exposed to poverty and violence at rates that supersede surrounding districts/communities in the metropolitan Atlanta area, state and many |

This resource was prepared by the author(s) using Federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of Justice. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

parts of the nation. In many ways students have adopted negative behaviors that have compromised their overall well-being and performance in and out of the school environment. As a result of these challenges students, particularly 9th and 10th graders, retention rates are higher than the district average. Academic and behavior challenges have put students at a disadvantage to fulfill the mission of the Atlanta Public Schools: "With a caring culture of trust and collaboration, every student will graduate ready for college and career." Data has shown that students and families are in need of community supports for basic resources (housing, food, healthcare, etc.) as well as family and community mental supports. Recently the state of Georgia released the College-Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) results and Washington's scores have dropped 2.8% to 54.1%, which is 20 points below the state average. This tells us that our students have many emotional and academic challenges that prevent them from being prepared for post-secondary life.

As a committee comprised of administrators, teachers and student support personnel we see the challenges on a daily basis and have identified that our students are not entering high school with the emotional and interpersonal skills necessary to be successful in and out of the classroom. A great many of these challenges are due to traumatic events that have occurred and we as a staff have become trained on providing trauma informed care in and out of the classroom. In order to successfully help our students navigate these traumatic personal events we are asking for the resources to develop positive behavioral support programs for our ninth grade students who show the most need and our students with disabilities (Special Education and Section 504) and those receiving interventions through the Multi-tiered Student Support/Student Support Team (MTSS/SST) process in an effort to decrease discipline referrals among these populations of students. We have identified the need for positive behavioral supports, research-based behavioral and academic interventions and the resources to train staff to implement and facilitate these supports.

VI.     **Proposal Description**

3

## A. Need / Rationale

**What need/rationale from the C&I Plan are addressed in this request?**
*(Can copy from the needs/gaps from your CIP)*

There is a need to support underclassman in understanding school norms and "resensitizing" them to appropriate school behaviors. The need to quickly assimilate to the school culture and climate will help to insure that disciplinary issues to not prevent them from remaining on track academically and behaviorally. These measures will help to alleviate the declining retention from 9th to 12th grade thus positively impacting the graduation rate.

Needs:

We realize, based on data, that the behavior and discipline concerns that permeate our school are environmental and are an indication of the need for intense and holistic supports for the students and in many instances families. We therefore realize that wraparound and school-based resources are critical components to student success and academic achievement.

1) There is a need to increase student and family usage of services such as Chris180 Therapy and other wrap around services to better support students and families. As a school community we would like to fund and oversee the expansion of our Parent Center to include health, mental health, financial and legal resources.

2) Intervention focused on repetitive behavioral incidents, particularly for students with other needs such as students with disabilities and those identified through the MTSS/SST process. There is a need for a continued focus on alternatives to out-of-school suspension. Train staff on how to respond to challenging behaviors.

3) Increased number of faculty and staff trained and certified Check and Connect Mentors.

**What goals from the C&I Plan are addressed in this request?**

4

| *(Can copy from the sub-goals and objectives from your CIP)* |
|---|
| Goal 1: School Climate<br>Goal 2: Student Behaviors and Discipline |

| **How does funding request address those needs and goals?** |
|---|
| This funding request will support the expansion of the parent center and purchase, implementation and training for a research-based school-wide intervention program that will focus on ninth graders and students with disabilities as these are the two groups that data shows require the most support. The intervention program will also allow for resources that will enhance differentiation of instructional product and process for teachers with the goal of aiding academic development and reducing negative behaviors. |

| **What will be accomplished with funding request?** |
|---|
| Data shows that based on the behavioral and discipline issues within these groups of students they also have academic deficits, **which is defined as two or more years below grade level.** As a team, we are seeking sufficient funding that will allow for a sustainable positive behavioral program, to include the Check & Connect Mentoring program, in an effort to decrease negative behaviors and allow for necessary academic interventions that will positively impact the school climate, student discipline and overall academic performance within these targeted groups of students.<br><br>The intervention program, Classworks, is a nationally recognized Response to Intervention (RtI) progress monitoring program.<br>The cost of licenses for 75 students<br>    ● $65/student @ 70 students - $4,875<br>Classworks Staff training - Full day on-site professional development<br>    ● $1,800<br>Check and Connect Mentor Training - No Cost<br><br>Check and Connect Mentoring Resources (incentives, meeting supplies, field trips, etc.) - $1,000<br>    ● ABC (Attendance, Behavior and Course completion) - Mentees and chaperones will attend Honda Battle of the Bands College Fair and Performance January 2021 - $700<br>    ● . School supplies will be provided for mentees throughout the year - $300<br><br><br>Technology - $5,812 |

- 15 Lenovo Chromebooks -$4,815
- Chromebook Cart - $997.00

Personnel - $20,000
- Need job description. Call Budget and HR and let them know you want to hire hourly via CSSI grant. Look at payscale.

Parent Center - $6,250
- Workshops: Financial Literacy, SEL, ADHD- need to find and fill in specific trainers
  - ADHD - Telah Brown, LCSW
  - Free tax preparation and Financial Literacy???
- Materials:  workbooks/sheet/training materials, signage (how many, cost estimate)
- Transportation costs

---

**How do the planned activities support school safety or provide support for students and/or teachers?**

Positive behavioral supports will improve school safety by rewarding positive behavior and putting into place a progressive system of rewards for students.  It will also allow for students with disabilities to have alternatives to traditional disciplinary actions thus decreasing the number of suspensions and, particularly the number of students with disabilities that are suspended.

Within our school community almost roughly thirty percent of the student population requires Tier 2 and Tier 3 academic and behavioral interventions.  Through the purchase and implementation of research-based intervention and progress monitoring tool, students will be able to develop and/or improve reading and math skills necessary to successfully access the curriculum thereby improving school performance on state assessments and decreasing negative behaviors.

---

**C.    Implementation Plan**

**What activities are included in this request?**
*(Can copy from the activities from your CIP)*

Expansion of Parent/Family Resource Center to include partnerships with external agencies and community resources.
Alternate disciplinary plan for targeted populations (SWD's, MTSS/SST) with progressive rewards system

| Faculty-Wide Check and Connect Training |
| Staff Training and Implementation of Intervention Program |
| RtI Lab Facilitator |

| **What is the timeline for each of the steps within your activities?** |
| Alternate disciplinary plan - September 2020<br>Faculty-wide Check and Connect Training - September 2020<br>Staff Training and Implementation of Intervention Program - September 2020 |

| **Who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is carried out?**<br>*(Can copy from Partners in CIP)* |
| Washington High School Administrators<br>Office of Student Services, Check & Connect<br>CHRIS180<br>School Social Worker<br>Guidance Counselors<br>Other identified personnel<br>Community Partners |

**D.     Documentation of Activities (Process Measures)**

| **How do you plan to document activities**<br>*(e.g., photographs, tag APS (@APSPolice) and WestEd (@WestEd) on social media and include #SafeSecureStrong, webpages, student work samples, sign-in sheets, news articles, videos, multimedia presentations or other visual evidence of your project)?*<br>*(Can copy process measures from your CIP)* |

7

All activities will be photographed, videoed and posted on social media utilizing the appropriate tags.  Information and updates will be provided at Washington Cluster meetings, Parent Nights, via the school website, news articles submitted to the local media and school district's Public Relations office.  All programs and trainings will have a participant sign-in sheet for students and staff.  After programs data will be entered into a spreadsheet and surveys will be sent out to program participants.

## E.     Budget

**How much money is being requested for each activity(ies)?**

███████

## F.     Sustainability

**What measures are in place to support goals beyond the funding request?**

The CSSI Grant Committee will work to develop partnerships with community sponsors, submit 1-3 funding requests per year and work with the Atlanta Publics Schools Office of Partnerships and Development to obtain funding for sustainability of these projects.

**What other areas of support or collaborations will assist to accomplish proposed goals?**

By training and educating faculty and staff about this initiative we can garner the support necessary to decrease discipline concerns, increase wraparound services for students/families and develop alternatives to traditional discipline practices for targeted populations of students. We will also collaborate with the Office of Resource Development to identify funding sources both financial and in-kind.  During this process we have also realized that we can be more strategic in our existing partnerships by specifically asking for resources that will directly improve discipline and behavior.

**Submission:**

Your CSSI Technical Assistance team will coordinate the timeline for submission. Proposals will be reviewed by a Funding Review Committee separate from your TA team using the criteria listed in the Funding Request Rubric.

Proposals should be completed in the CSSI School Funding Request Form found in your CSSI Google Folder. **Once the request form has been finalized email ███████████ ████████████████████████████████████████████████████ to notify that the form is complete.**

### APS Funding:

Please note that even though these are grant funds, we will still follow procurement funding process found in BOE Policy DJEA - Purchasing Authority.

*Please remember that any purchases between $10,000 and $49,999 will require three (3) quotes to be submitted unless it qualifies for single/sole source.*

## 2020 School Safety & Supports Funding Request Notification

Dear ███████████████████████████████████████████████████, and the Long CSSI Team:

Congratulations! Your School Safety & Supports request has been reviewed and approved for ██████████████. Funding is designed to support CSSI school cohorts improve school safety and support through the use of data-driven decision making in new ways to:

- Enhance education and awareness of mental health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional health, behavioral health, and school safety;
- Build and strengthen internal and external relationships within the APS school community; and/or
- Develop and improve environments conducive for learning and teaching.

Support for your school is approved for the following:

| Item | Description | Purpose | Amount |
|------|-------------|---------|--------|
| 1 | Basic Restorative Practices Training | • To promote school- wide inclusiveness, relationship building, and problem solving | $7,700.00 |
| 2 | Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools Training | • To understand early childhood trauma, and how it affects a child's ability to learn | $20,000.00 |
| 3 | Substitute Services | • To provide instructional coverage for staff attending trainings | $7,200.00 |

### PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES CAREFULLY

#### Funding Guidelines

Procurement, purchasing, and reimbursements will be coordinated by ██████████. Funds utilized or reimbursed must follow the procurement funding process found in BOE Policy DJEA - Purchasing Authority. Any purchases between $10,000 and $49,999 will require three (3) quotes to be submitted unless it qualifies for single/sole source. Any questions regarding procurement or processing reimbursements of approved expenses should be directed to ████████████████████████████████████████.

#### Allowable Expenses

Only expenses outlined in your approved funding request are allowable. All expenses must be incurred during the fiscal period 1/1/20 - 12/31/20. Funds CAN NOT be used for the following:

- Capital Improvements
- Equipment
- Food
- Fundraising
- Land Acquisition
- Lobbying
- Costs Incurred Outside the CSSI Project Period

The Comprehensive School Safety Initiative Grant is supported by Award Number 2015-CK-BX-K001, granted by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

## Documentation and Reporting

CSSI school teams will be required to share progress and report outcomes of funds received. Provide documentation in the form of those identified in your request, photographs, social media (tag APS @APSPolice and WestEd @WestEd and include #SafeSecureStrong), webpages, student work samples, news articles, videos, multi-media presentations or other visual evidence of your project. Guidelines will be outlined in future correspondence on how the outcomes and impact of your request will be reported.

Again congratulations, we look forward to hearing about your school's outcomes!

Respectfully,

Dr. Joseph McCrary
Principal Investigator, Comprehensive School Safety Initiative
Associate Director for Research and Evaluation, WestEd

## *2020 School Safety & Supports Funding Request Notification*

Dear ██████████████, and the Brown CSSI School Team,

Congratulations! Your School Safety & Supports request has been reviewed and approved for ██████.
Funding is designed to support CSSI school cohorts improve school safety and support through the use of data-driven decision making in new ways to:

- Enhance education and awareness of mental health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional health, behavioral health, and school safety;
- Build and strengthen internal and external relationships within the APS school community; and/or
- Develop and improve environments conducive for learning and teaching.

Support for your school is approved for the following:

| Item | Description | Purpose | Amount |
|------|-------------|---------|--------|
| 1 | School Attendance Officer | • Investigate students' attendance issues<br>• Increase chronically absent students' Average Daily Attendance rate | $40, 000.00 USD |

### PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES CAREFULLY

### Funding Guidelines
Procurement, purchasing, and reimbursements will be coordinated by ██████████. Funds utilized or reimbursed must follow the procurement funding process found in BOE Policy DJEA - Purchasing Authority. Any purchases between $10,000 and $49,999 will require three (3) quotes to be submitted unless it qualifies for single/sole source. Any questions regarding procurement or processing reimbursements of approved expenses should be directed to ███████ █████████████████████████ ███████████.

### Allowable Expenses
Only expenses outlined in your approved funding request are allowable. All expenses must be incurred during the fiscal period **1/1/20 - 12/31/20**. Funds CAN NOT be used for the following:

- Capital Improvements
- Equipment
- Food
- Fundraising

- Land Acquisition
- Lobbying
- Costs Incurred Outside the CSSI Project Period

The Comprehensive School Safety Initiative Grant is supported by Award Number 2015-CK-BX-K001, granted by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

## Documentation and Reporting

CSSI school teams will be required to share progress and report outcomes of funds received. Provide documentation in the form of those identified in your request, photographs, social media (tag APS @APSPolice and WestEd @WestEd and include #SafeSecureStrong), webpages, student work samples, news articles, videos, multi-media presentations or other visual evidence of your project. Guidelines will be outlined in future correspondence on how the outcomes and impact of your request will be reported.

Again congratulations, we look forward to hearing about your school's outcomes!

Respectfully,

Dr. Joseph McCrary – WestEd
Principal Investigator, Comprehensive School Safety Initiative
Associate Director for Research and Evaluation, WestEd

# *2019-2020 CSSI School Cohorts Safety & Supports Funding Request*

The School Safety & Supports (S3) Funding Request is designed to support CSSI school cohorts in improving school safety and support through the use of data-driven decision making.

**Guidelines and Requirements**

The funding request must:

1. connect to one or more CSSI cohort schools;
2. focus on improving school safety and/or supports;
3. identify and address school needs supported by data (data-driven decision making);
4. specify measures that indicate success;
5. include a sustainability plan;

The funding request can be used to try something new, assess and evaluate existing initiatives, explore innovative ideas, support needs of certain members in the school (e.g., 8th graders, new teachers, etc), connect to other cohort schools, and/or extend an existing initiative in new ways to:

· Enhance education and awareness of mental health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional health, behavioral health, and school safety;

· Build and strengthen internal and external relationships within the APS school community; and/or

· Develop and improve environments conducive for learning and teaching.

Funds can be allocated to offset the cost for trainer/consultant fees, school programming, materials/supplies, and/or substitute teachers. Proposal teams will be required to share progress and report outcomes of funds received, if granted. Funding requests must be based on the needs of the school supported by data, not exceeding $40,000, and proposed activities achievable in one-year (October 2019-May 2020). Funds CAN NOT be used for the following:

· Capital Improvements (e.g., building security vestibule; construction)
· Compensation of employees (e.g, hiring personnel)
· Equipment (e.g., playground equipment)
· Food
· Fundraising
· Land Acquisition
· Lobbying
· Costs Incurred Outside the CSSI Project Period

**Funding Request Proposal (limit to 2 pages):**
    I.  **School Information**

| School Information Needed | Response |
|---|---|
| **Name** | Crawford W. Long MIddle School |
| **Address** | 3200 Latona Dr. |
| **Phone Number** | 404-802-4821 |
| **Cluster** | South Atlanta |
| **CSSI Cohort (1or 2)** | Cohort 2 |

## IV. Submitter Information

| Submitter Information Needed | Response |
|---|---|
| **Name** | ███████████████ |
| **Title** | ██████████ |
| **Phone Number** | ███████ |
| **Email** | ████████████ |

## V. Proposal Summary

| Provide 1 2 paragraphs summarizing your proposal |
|---|
| The aim of Crawford Long's Comprehensive School Safety Initiative is to provide adequate professional development and effectively implement restorative practices and trauma informed practices throughout the school, and to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared and trained to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and building relationships with all students. By participating in these learning opportunities, teachers will be able to identify both proactive (building relationships and developing community) and reactive (repairing harm and restoring relationships) approaches to effectively implement restorative practices. |

## VI.     Proposal Description
### A.     Need / Rationale

**What need/rationale from the C&I Plan are addressed in this request?**
*(Can copy from the needs/gaps from your CIP)*

Data from APSgraphs suggest that there is a need for professional development that focuses on restorative practices at Long Middle School. At Long Middle School there were 453 indents reported for the 2019- 2020 school year. Of those incidents, resolutions included the following: 10 resulted in disciplinary hearings, 161 Out of school suspensions, 122 In- School suspensions, and 41 alternatives to suspension. To decrease the number of school- wide incidents (especially in the classroom) and effectively implement restorative practices to decrease the number of punitive consequences, staff members need effective training on resolving conflicts by students learning from their mistakes. Based on school climate data and Infinite Campus incident reports, it is evident that there is a need for consistent professional learning that focuses on restorative practices centered on the appropriate and most effective methods to utilize. In addition, there is a need for safe and secure learning environments that utilize restorative practices instead of detention, in- school suspension, and out of school suspension.

Located in one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in metro Atlanta, many of the students at Crawford W. Long Middle School have been exposed to violence in their community, at home and/or school. Unfortunately, many of these students display the social, emotional, psychological, and developmental effects while at school and many teachers are not equipped with the appropriate strategies to intervene. In addition, out of the 453 behavior incidents reported in APSgraphs, 242 of the incidents occurred in the classroom. This suggests that teachers need to engage in professional developments that change methods of interacting and responding to children impacted by trauma and also strategies to implement within the classroom to promote a positive learning environment.

**What goals from the C&I Plan are addressed in this request?**
*(Can copy from the sub goals and objectives from your CIP)*

1.1. Increase the number of faculty members at Crawford W. Long Middle School that receive adequate professional development and effectively implement restorative practices from zero (0) staff members to 15 staff members (6th grade team and leadership team) to see a decrease in Level one infractions submitted by teachers by May 2020.

1.2. Increase the number of faculty members at Crawford W. Long Middle School that receive adequate professional development and effectively implement trauma- informed practices from zero (0) staff members to 15 staff members (6th grade team and leadership team) to see a decrease in Level one infractions submitted by teachers by May 2020.

**How does funding request address those needs and goals?**

Restorative practices promote school- wide inclusiveness, relationship building, and problem solving where victims and offenders are allowed to address the wrongdoing instead of focusing primarily on the punishment.  After actively participating in restorative and trauma informed practice professional learning opportunities, the faculty and staff will be able to reflect on and take responsibility for their actions and come up with plans to repair harm.  Teachers will also have the opportunity to gain an understanding on early childhood trauma, and how it affects a child's ability to learn and potentially their ability to make decisions based on emotions that are not properly regulated. When these practices are effectively implemented, a decrease in Level One incidents and punitive resolutions should be evident.

**What will be accomplished with funding request?**

Funding of this request will assist the faculty and staff at Crawford W. Long Middle School

4

with learning methods and approaches of interacting with students that have been victims of trauma.   Also, the funding of this grant will allow for the faculty and staff members to gain knowledge on developing and implementing policies when interacting with traumatized students.

Based on the data collected from APSgraphs, the funding of this grant will also give teachers classroom management techniques to implement that assist in decreasing the number of punitive consequences given as resolutions to students for level one incidents. Funding of this request also has the  potential for building relationships within the school community, promoting healthy communication, addressing attendance issues, preventing and resolving conflicts, developing social emotional learning and youth competencies, creating safe spaces to address difficult issues, trauma and healing while at the same time preparing scholars to be College and Career Ready.

## How do the planned activities support school safety or provide support for students and/or teachers?

Due to the increasing number of students at Crawford W. Long Middle School witnessing violence in their community, home and/ or school, it is important that teachers are prepared with the correct approaches when interacting with students that have such trauma stress.  It is also important for the schools leadership to create a culture where restorative practices are used to support a change in behaviors displayed by these students.  By actively participating in restorative practices and trauma informed practices professional development, the faculty and staff will be able to implement the necessary interventions school- wide that will promote a culture where the holistic and social- emotional well- being of the students is essential for achieving academic growth and success.

C.      **Implementation Plan**

**What activities are included in this request?**
*(Can copy from the activities from your CIP)*

**Restorative Practices**
All Staff--PD Training Day--March 16, 2020
- ███████████ *(Atlanta Public Schools)*
  - Additional Coaching: May, August, and September 2020
- Additional support if necessary, *MetroRESA* ███████████ ███████████
- *Basic Restorative Practices* (PD)- $700.00 x 10 staff members = $7000.00
  March 24, 2020-- 8:00 AM- 4:30PM
  DoubleTree by Hilton Atlanta-- Marietta

**Trauma- Informed Practices**

*Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools: Professional Development Training:* Three day training and monthly coaching sessions: June- September, 2020 - $20,000.00
https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.227/289.fd7.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/PD-Training-Brochure.pdf

---

**What is the timeline for each of the steps within your activities?**

**Restorative Practices**
All Staff--PD Training Day--**March 16, 2020**
- *Restorative Practices-* ███████████████████████
  - * Additional Coaching: May, August, and September 2020

*Basic Restorative Practices* (PD)- $700.00 x 10 staff members = $7000.00
  **March 24, 2020**-- 8:00 AM- 4:30PM
  * Redelivery and Coaching: **April, May, August, and September 2020**

**Trauma- Informed Practices**
*Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools: Professional Development Training:* Three day training and monthly coaching sessions: August - December , 2020 - $20,000.00
https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.227/289.fd7.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/PD-Training-Brochure.pdf
  * Redelivery and Coaching: **August, September, October, November, and December 2020**

| |
|---|
| *Exact dates TDB* |

## Who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is carried out?
*(Can copy from Partners in CIP)*

**Restorative Practices**
**All Staff--PD Training** Day--**March 16, 2020**
- *Restorative Practices-* ███████████████████████ *Planning and Facilitating*

*Basic Restorative Practices* (PD) **March 24, 2020**-- 8:00 AM- 4:30PM
$700.00 x 11 staff members  = $7700.00
**Attending training:** Principal (1) , Assistant Principals (3), Counselors/ Behavior Specialist (3), Lead Teachers (4)
*Basic Restorative Practices-* Redelivery and Coaching: **April, May, August, and September 2020**
**Redelivery and Coaching**
Principal and Assistant Principals redeliver to the school Instructional Leadership Team.
Counselors and Behavior Specialist redeliver to school support staff.
Lead teachers redeliver to grade level teachers.
**Data Analysis ( Measurement of Impact)**
Data collected from teachers ( incident referrals)  and submitted to the Assistant Principals will be input in Infinite Campus.  This data will be retrieved from APSgraphs and the impact will be measured by the schools leadership team, SEL coordinator ( school and district) , counselors, behavior specialist, social worker, and SRO.

**Trauma- Informed Practices**
*Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools: Professional Development Training:*  Three day training and monthly coaching sessions: August - December , 2020 - $20,000.00
https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.227/289.fd7.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/PD-Training-Brochure.pdf
**Attending training:** Principal (1) , Assistant Principals (3), Counselors/ Behavior Specialist (4), Lead Teachers (4) and SEL Coordinator (1)

**Redelivery and Coaching**
Principal and Assistant Principals redeliver to the school Instructional Leadership Team.
Counselors and Behavior Specialist redeliver to school support staff.
Lead teachers and SEL Coordinator redeliver to grade level teachers.

**Data Analysis ( Measurement of Impact)**
Referrals from the school counselor, behavior specialist, school SEL/ MTSS coordinator, and school social worker will be analyzed to determine the impact of teachers effectively implementing approaches learned in professional developments on student referrals.

## D. Documentation of Activities (Process Measures)

| How do you plan to document activities |
| --- |
| *(e.g., photographs, tag APS (@APSPolice) and WestEd (@WestEd) on social media and include #SafeSecureStrong, webpages, student work samples, sign in sheets, news articles, videos, multimedia presentations or other visual evidence of your project)?*<br>*(Can copy process measures from your CIP)* |
| Professional development sign- in sheets<br>Photographs<br>Video Observations<br>Social media post<br>Discipline referrals<br>Counselor, behavior specialist, and social worker referrals<br>APDgraphs behavior summary |

## E. Budget

| How much money is being requested for each activity(ies)? |
| --- |
| **Restorative Practices**<br><br>*Basic Restorative Practices* (PD) **March 24- 27, 2020**-- 8:00 AM- 4:30PM<br>**$700.00 x 11 staff members = $7700.00**<br><br>**Attending training:** Principal (1) , Assistant Principals (3), Counselors/ Behavior Specialist (3), Lead Teachers (4)<br><br>**Trauma- Informed Practices**<br><br>*Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools: Professional Development Training:* Three day training |

and monthly coaching sessions: August - December , 2020 - **$20,000.00**
https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.227/289.fd7.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/PD-Training-Brochure.pdf

**Attending training:** Principal (1) , Assistant Principals (3), Counselors/ Behavior Specialist (4), Lead Teachers (4) and SEL Coordinator (1)

**Substitute Services**

$150 x 4 teachers x 4 days at training (restorative practices) = **$2400.00**
$150 x 4 teachers x 4 days of redelivery= **$2400.00**
$150 x 4 teachers x 4 days of redelivery ( trauma- informed practices) = **$2400.00**

**Substitute Total: $7200.00**

Restorative Practice training: $7700.00
Trauma- informed practices: $20,000.00
Substitute Services : $7200.00
 **Total: $34,900.00**

F.      **Sustainability**

| **What measures are in place to support goals beyond the funding request?** |
| --- |
| ***Align to objectives--PD. How will you all continue this work? What else will you do, in addition to training, to make sure restorative and trauma-informed practices are happening? *How will the school SYSTEM support these practices?*<br><br>**The following instruments will be used to measure the goals:**<br><br>● YouScience Aptitude Assessment<br>● PAI Assessments<br>● Georgia Career Information System<br>● Restorative Justice Referrals<br>● Attendance Data<br>● Pre and Post Surveys<br>● Workshop Sign in Sheets |

---

- Infinite Campus Parent Communication Data

---

**What other areas of support or collaborations will assist to accomplish proposed goals?**

---

### Submission:

Your CSSI Technical Assistance team will coordinate the timeline for submission. Proposals will be reviewed by a Funding Review Committee separate from your TA team using the criteria listed in the Funding Request Rubric.

Proposals should be completed in the CSSI School Funding Request Form found in your CSSI Google Folder. **Once the request form has been finalized email** ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ **to notify that the form is complete.**

### APS Funding:

Please note that even though these are grant funds, we will still follow procurement funding process found in BOE Policy DJEA - Purchasing Authority.

*Please remember that any purchases between $10,000 and $49,999 will require three (3) quotes to be submitted unless it qualifies for single/sole source.*

10

# *2019-2020 CSSI School Cohorts Safety & Supports Funding Request*

The School Safety & Supports (S3) Funding Request is designed to support CSSI school cohorts in improving school safety and support through the use of data-driven decision making.

**Guidelines and Requirements**
The funding request must:
1. connect to one or more CSSI cohort schools;
2. focus on improving school safety and/or supports;
3. identify and address school needs supported by data (data-driven decision making);
4. specify measures that indicate success;
5. include a sustainability plan;

The funding request can be used to try something new, assess and evaluate existing initiatives, explore innovative ideas, support needs of certain members in the school (e.g., 8th graders, new teachers, etc), connect to other cohort schools, and/or extend an existing initiative in new ways to:

· Enhance education and awareness of mental health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional health, behavioral health, and school safety;
· Build and strengthen internal and external relationships within the APS school community; and/or
· Develop and improve environments conducive for learning and teaching.

Funds can be allocated to offset the cost for trainer/consultant fees, school programming, materials/supplies, and/or substitute teachers. Proposal teams will be required to share progress and report outcomes of funds received, if granted. Funding requests must be based on the needs of the school supported by data, not exceeding $40,000, and proposed activities achievable in one-year (October 2019-May 2020). Funds CAN NOT be used for the following:

· Capital Improvements (e.g., building security vestibule; construction)
· Compensation of employees (e.g., hiring personnel)
· Equipment (e.g., playground equipment)
· Food
· Fundraising
· Land Acquisition
· Lobbying
· Costs Incurred Outside the CSSI Project Period

**<u>Funding Request Proposal (limit to 2 pages):</u>**
   **I. School Information**

| School Information Needed | Response |
|---|---|
| **Name** | John Lewis Invictus Academy |
| **Address** | 1890 Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30318 |
| **Phone Number** | 404-802-6100 |
| **Cluster** | Douglas |

| CSSI Cohort (1or 2) | 1 |
|---|---|

## IV.    Submitter Information

| Submitter Information Needed | Response |
|---|---|
| **Name** | ██████████████ |
| **Title** | ██████████████ |
| **Phone Number** | ██████████ |
| **Email** | ██████████████████ |

## V.    Proposal Summary

| **Provide 1-2 paragraphs summarizing your proposal** |
|---|
| This proposal requests funding to build capacity with staff and parents for addressing the following goals: <br> 1. Improve the schoolwide system for supporting students and staff to address student behavior and related concerns in the classroom to prevent exclusionary and punitive discipline practices <br> 2. Increase teachers' knowledge of development, mental health and trauma and how it manifests in students' behaviors in the classroom. <br><br> In order to enhance education and awareness of mental health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional health, behavioral health, and school safety, JLIA will train all staff on trauma-informed practices, brain-based behaviors, and how to manage kids in trauma in the classroom. Additionally, JLIA will build in ongoing coaching for staff to sustain this initiative. |

## VI.    Proposal Description
### A.    Need / Rationale

| **What need/rationale from the C&I Plan are addressed in this request?** <br> *(Can copy from the needs/gaps from your CIP)* |
|---|
| Need: JLIA Teacher readiness to address/handle student behavior <br> Gaps: Currently have PL on classroom management; no mental health or trauma training for staff currently (schoolwide effort). <br><br> Need: There is little understanding of the mental health concerns and trauma students are facing. |

Gap: There has been inconsistent trauma training. This is offered to some staff, but all staff need to be trained. There is also a gap in ongoing coaching on trauma and how to manage trauma in the classroom.

**What goals from the C&I Plan are addressed in this request?**
*(Can copy from the sub-goals and objectives from your CIP)*

**1.0: Proposed Sub-goal #1**
**To improve the schoolwide system for supporting students and staff to address student behavior and related concerns in the classroom to prevent exclusionary and punitive discipline practices**

**1.1: Proposed objective:**
**To decrease the percentage of staff that reported students' behaviors in school interferes with their abilities to teach and students to learn by 10% over the 2019-2020 school year (from 52% to 42%)**
**1.2 Proposed objective: To increase teachers' knowledge of development, mental health and trauma and how it manifests in students' behaviors in the classroom. Currently, there is no baseline measure. Thus, this will need to be collected pre/post measure**

Proposed objective: Decrease the percentage of behavioral incidents reported in the classroom by 10% in the classroom and reported in the hallway by 5% by the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

**How does funding request address those needs and goals?**

The funding request will address the needs and goals that have been identified, by providing JLIA staff and parents with the proper training to address the trauma our students are experiencing, which has caused mental health concerns such as PTSD, ADHD, depression, anxiety, mood dysregulation and conduct disorders. The funding request will enrich parents and staff of the trauma experiences, what trauma is and how to reduce those experiences so the students are able to reduce their exclusions, teachers are prepared and able to manage their classrooms appropriately, and parents are provided with support to reduce the traumatic experiences that cause the high volume of student exclusions and reduce stress the children are experiences so they are able to function on a higher level in school, in the community and at home.

**What will be accomplished with funding request?**

Training for teachers by Chris180 and WestEd staff. In a one-day training, teachers and parents will understand what trauma is, what it looks and feels like, how trauma affects the brain, and functioning of a child. Techniques and solutions will be provided to those attending the training to provide alternative methods to manage behavior in the classroom and at home to reduce the student exclusion rate. Funds will be used to pay stipends to staff to attend the training during the summer, before school begins.

Funds may also be used to support the RTI team to conduct ongoing training to staff. The RTI team will have coaching from WestEd staff from August to December.

**How do the planned activities support school safety or provide support for students and/or teachers?**

The training will support school safety, by providing knowledge to staff so they are able to accurately identify problems that can occur inside the school or at home, before it happens. Also, to be able to effectively problem solve or put protective measures in place.

**C.    Implementation Plan**

**What activities are included in this request?**
*(Can copy from the activities from your CIP)*

There will be a 1-day intensive required 8hr training for all staff to participate, activities will include:

1. 3-hour Trauma STARS training by Chris 180
2.  30 minute break/lunch
3. 3-hour training with WestEd implementation team

There will also be ongoing training by WestEd staff to the RTI team occurring bi-weekly.

**What is the timeline for each of the steps within your activities?**

1. 1-day intensive will occur in late July/early August (before school begins).
2. Ongoing training will occur from August to December.

**Who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is carried out?**
*(Can copy from Partners in CIP)*

AP: ██████████

## D. Documentation of Activities (Process Measures)

**How do you plan to document activities**
*(e.g., photographs, tag APS (@APSPolice) and WestEd (@WestEd) on social media and include #SafeSecureStrong, webpages, student work samples, sign-in sheets, news articles, videos, multimedia presentations or other visual evidence of your project)?*
*(Can copy process measures from your CIP)*

Sign-in sheets for trainings, Photos, social media, video surveys.

## E. Budget

**How much money is being requested for each activity(ies)?**

$28,800 ($30/hour for 120 staff for 8 hours) for 1-day training

$1800 ($30/hour for 6 staff for 10 hours total) for ongoing coaching

## F. Sustainability

**What measures are in place to support goals beyond the funding request?**

The training will partner with Chris180, who is currently supporting the school. Chris180 can continue to provide training for new staff each year and can provide ongoing training through ARC. The RTI team will also continue training throughout the first part of the 2020/2021 school year to sustain these efforts once the grant has ended.

**What other areas of support or collaborations will assist to accomplish proposed goals?**

> Calling in volunteers, social workers, hygienist, community advocates, community influencers.

**Submission:**
Your CSSI Technical Assistance team will coordinate the timeline for submission. Proposals will be reviewed by a Funding Review Committee separate from your TA team using the criteria listed in the Funding Request Rubric.

Proposals should be completed in the CSSI School Funding Request Form found in your CSSI Google Folder. **Once the request form has been finalized email** ███████████████ ██████████████████████████████████████ **to notify** **that the form is complete.**

**APS Funding:**
Please note that even though these are grant funds, we will still follow procurement funding process found in BOE Policy DJEA - Purchasing Authority.

*Please remember that any purchases between $10,000 and $49,999 will require three (3) quotes to be submitted unless it qualifies for single/sole source.*

## 2020 School Safety & Supports Funding Request Notification

Dear ████████████████████████████████, and the Washington CSSI School Team,

Congratulations! Your School Safety & Supports request has been reviewed and approved for **$12, 787.00 USD.** Funding is designed to support CSSI school cohorts improve school safety and support through the use of data-driven decision making in new ways to:

- Enhance education and awareness of mental health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional health, behavioral health, and school safety;
- Build and strengthen internal and external relationships within the APS school community; and/or
- Develop and improve environments conducive for learning and teaching.

Support for your school is approved for the following:

| Item | Description | Purpose | Amount |
|------|-------------|---------|--------|
| 1 | Classworks staff training | • To increase positive student behaviors and provide staff with strategies when responding to challenging student behaviors | $1,800.00 |
| 2 | Classworks student licenses | • To provide wraparound supports for targeted student groups | $4,875.00 |
| 3 | Check and Connect mentoring supplies | • To provide wraparound supports for targeted student groups | $300.00 |
| 4 | Chromebooks and Cart | • To provide academic support tools for targeted student groups | $5,812.00 |

### PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES CAREFULLY

**Funding Guidelines**

Procurement, purchasing, and reimbursements will be coordinated by ████████. Funds utilized or reimbursed must follow the procurement funding process found in BOE Policy DJEA - Purchasing Authority. Any purchases between $10,000 and $49,999 will require three (3) quotes to be submitted unless it qualifies for single/sole source. Any questions regarding procurement or processing reimbursements of approved expenses should be directed to ████████ █ ████████████████████ ████████████.

1 of 2

## Allowable Expenses

Only expenses outlined in your approved funding request are allowable. All expenses must be incurred during the fiscal period 1/1/20 - 12/31/20. Funds CAN NOT be used for the following:

- Capital Improvements
- Equipment
- Food
- Fundraising

- Land Acquisition
- Lobbying
- Costs Incurred Outside the CSSI Project Period

## Documentation and Reporting

CSSI school teams will be required to share progress and report outcomes of funds received. Provide documentation in the form of those identified in your request, photographs, social media (tag APS @APSPolice and WestEd @WestEd and include #SafeSecureStrong), webpages, student work samples, news articles, videos, multi-media presentations or other visual evidence of your project. Guidelines will be outlined in future correspondence on how the outcomes and impact of your request will be reported.

Again congratulations, we look forward to hearing about your school's outcomes!

Respectfully,

Dr. Joseph McCrary
Principal Investigator, Comprehensive School Safety Initiative
Associate Director for Research and Evaluation, WestEd

**CSSI**

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SAFETY INITIATIVE

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS    WestEd    GeorgiaState University

## *2020 School Safety & Supports Funding Request Notification*

Dear John Lewis Invictus Academy CSSI School Team,

Congratulations! Your School Safety & Supports request has been reviewed and approved for **$30, 600.00 USD.** Funding is designed to support CSSI school cohorts improve school safety and support through the use of data-driven decision making in new ways to:

- Enhance education and awareness of mental health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional health, behavioral health, and school safety;
- Build and strengthen internal and external relationships within the APS school community; and/or
- Develop and improve environments conducive for learning and teaching.

Support for your school is approved for the following:

| Item | Description | Purpose | Amount |
|------|-------------|---------|--------|
| 1 | Stipends for staff training | • To improve the schoolwide system for supporting students and staff to address student behavior and related concerns in the classroom to prevent exclusionary and punitive discipline practices. | $28,800.00 |
| 2 | Ongoing coaching | • To increase teachers' knowledge of development, mental health and trauma and how it manifests in students' behaviors in the classroom. | $1,800.00 |

### PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES CAREFULLY

**Funding Guidelines**
Procurement, purchasing, and reimbursements will be coordinated by ▮▮▮▮▮▮ Funds utilized or reimbursed must follow the procurement funding process found in BOE Policy DJEA - Purchasing Authority. Any purchases between $10,000 and $49,999 will require three (3) quotes to be submitted unless it qualifies for single/sole source. Any questions regarding procurement or processing reimbursements of approved expenses should be directed to ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

## Allowable Expenses

Only expenses outlined in your approved funding request are allowable. All expenses must be incurred during the fiscal period 1/1/20 - 12/31/20. Funds CAN NOT be used for the following:

- Capital Improvements
- Equipment
- Food
- Fundraising
- Land Acquisition
- Lobbying
- Costs Incurred Outside the CSSI Project Period

## Documentation and Reporting

CSSI school teams will be required to share progress and report outcomes of funds received. Provide documentation in the form of those identified in your request, photographs, social media (tag APS @APSPolice and WestEd @WestEd and include #SafeSecureStrong), webpages, student work samples, news articles, videos, multi-media presentations or other visual evidence of your project. Guidelines will be outlined in future correspondence on how the outcomes and impact of your request will be reported.

Again congratulations, we look forward to hearing about your school's outcomes!

Respectfully,

Dr. Joseph McCrary
Principal Investigator, Comprehensive School Safety Initiative
Associate Director for Research and Evaluation, WestEd

# *2019-2020 CSSI School Cohorts Safety & Supports Funding Request*

The School Safety & Supports (S3) Funding Request is designed to support CSSI school cohorts in improving school safety and support through the use of data-driven decision making.

**Guidelines and Requirements**

The funding request must:

1. connect to one or more CSSI cohort schools;
2. focus on improving school safety and/or supports;
3. identify and address school needs supported by data (data-driven decision making);
4. specify measures that indicate success;
5. include a sustainability plan;

The funding request can be used to try something new, assess and evaluate existing initiatives, explore innovative ideas, support needs of certain members in the school (e.g., 8th graders, new teachers, etc), connect to other cohort schools, and/or extend an existing initiative in new ways to:

· Enhance education and awareness of mental health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional health, behavioral health, and school safety;

· Build and strengthen internal and external relationships within the APS school community; and/or

· Develop and improve environments conducive for learning and teaching.

Funds can be allocated to offset the cost for trainer/consultant fees, school programming, materials/supplies, and/or substitute teachers. Proposal teams will be required to share progress and report outcomes of funds received, if granted. Funding requests must be based on the needs of the school supported by data, not exceeding $40,000, and proposed activities achievable in one-year (October 2019-May 2020). Funds CAN NOT be used for the following:

· Capital Improvements (e.g., building security vestibule; construction)
· Compensation of employees
· Equipment (e.g., playground equipment)
· Food
· Fundraising
· Land Acquisition
· Lobbying
· Costs Incurred Outside the CSSI Project Period

## Funding Request Proposal (limit to 2 pages):
### I. School Information

| School Information Needed | Response |
|---|---|
| Name | **Brown Middle School** |
| Address | **765 Peeples Street** |
| Phone Number | **404 802 6800** |
| Cluster | **Washington** |
| CSSI Cohort (1or 2) | **1** |

### IV. Submitter Information

| Submitter Information Needed | Response |
|---|---|
| Name | ███████ |
| ██ | ████████████ |
| Phone Number | ██████ |
| Email | █████████████████ |

## V. Proposal Summary

| Provide 1-2 paragraphs summarizing your proposal |
|---|
| Brown Middle school proposes assigning teachers professional development courses, collecting current data on teachers' classroom management strategies, sending students on field trips (incentive for improved behavior and attendance) and understanding students BIP's.<br><br>CSSI funds will be utilized to help fund BMS school store with merchandise (i.e. School supplies, BMS apparel, bicycles, skateboards, bookbags, comic books, earbuds) that will be used for students' behavior and attendance incentives. Teachers will have an opportunity to attend Griffin RESA and/or Metro RESA courses to enhance their classroom management and/or SEL skill sets to support additional district initiatives. |

## VI. Proposal Description
### A. Need / Rationale

| What need/rationale from the C&I Plan are addressed in this request?<br>*(Can copy from the needs/gaps from your CIP)* |
|---|
| Brown Middle School has two rationales for this request. The 1st rationale searches for ways to reduce offenses for previous 6th and 7th graders who are currently 7th and 8th graders. The 2nd rationale investigate reasons why some students Average Daily Attendance (ADA) is less than 90%, simultaneously ways to improve students' ADA are pursued.<br><br>**Rationale 1**<br><br>In FY 20, there is a need to lower reported offenses for upcoming 7th and 8th grade students and students with disabilities. Students with disabilities have a higher suspension rate than students without disabilities. Additional support is needed to onboard students to the school's culture and behavioral expectations. To build a positive school culture for all students and to decrease the number of classroom referrals, it is vial for classroom management procedures to be consistent throughout the school.<br><br>While many services are provided to reduce offenses by students, there are gaps to fill so improvements can be made. For starters, teachers and staff members need additional training in code-switching and restorative justice. New students need additional support getting acclimated to the school's culture and behavior expectations. Additional time to implement Social Emotional Learning (SEL), to be trauma-informed, and to implement a PBIS-based strategies are key factors to fill the gaps; along with special education teachers receiving |

additional supports for classroom management so discipline referrals of students with disabilities can decrease.

**Rationale 2**

In some cases, we look for ways to improve students' ADA, particularly for students who attend school less than 90% of the time. Students' ADA that falls below 90% need to make improvements; additional support is needed to help these students bring their ADA to 90% or higher.

There are various reasons why students are consistently absent from school; however, when there are holes in the data, it is difficult to identify students' underlying causes. To help clarify students' reasons, a protocol for generating data and implementing an action plan should be revisited. For example, recording the specifics of students' absenteeism should be revisited, so a course of action can be implemented, and the systemic school-based plan for chronically absent students should be updated with modern technology.

**What goals from the C&I Plan are addressed in this request?**
*(Can copy from the sub-goals and objectives from your CIP)*

To support the rationales of this request, the goals are classified into 4 classifications, Classroom Management - Teacher Capacity, Special Education Students - Subgroup, Highly Mobile Students - Subgroup, and Chronically Absent Students - Subgroup.

1. **Classroom Management - Teacher Capacity:** Increase classroom management supports for staff of 6th-8th graders.

    a. 1.1 By May 22, 2020, 95% of the teachers will be trained on classroom management strategies for positive learning environment and behavior goals via the School Leadership Team & MetroResa, and/or GriffinResa.

    b. 1.2 By May 22, 2020, 100% of teachers would have received intensive training on the implementation of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) via the Second Step Platform.

    c. 1.3 By May 22, 2020, Instructional Coaches will have "check-in" meetings with 100% of teachers to address additional support for classroom management.

2. **Special Education Students - Subgroup**: Provide additional classroom supports for Students With Disabilities (SWD) teachers.

a. 2.1 By May 22, 2020, the Lead Special Education Teacher will unpack each student's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) with regular education teachers and resource teachers with 100% participation.

b. 2.2 By May 22, 2020, the Special Education Lead Teacher will observe 100% of resource teachers to ensure students' BIP are enforced via BIP's data collection sheet (data application).

c. 2.3 By May 22, 2020, all paraprofessional staff will assist in quarterly BIP data collection via data sheets for all five special education courses.

3. **Highly Mobile Students - Subgroup:** Ensure highly mobile students make adequate transition into Brown school's culture.

a. 3.1 By May 2020, 100% of newly enrolled students will meet with Student Support Team (SST) to review school rules and resources within the 2 weeks of enrolling.

b. 3.2 By May 2020, 100% of the parents of newly enrolled students will meet with Student Support Team to review school rules and resources at the time of enrollment.

c. 3.3 By May 2020, 100% of newly enrolled students will be assigned an adult mentor to meet with monthly in order to assess their transition into the school.

1. **Chronically Absent Students - Subgroup:** Increase chronically absent students' Average Daily Attendance rate

a. 4.1 By May 22, 2020, the attendance committee (Brown Middle School) will identify 100% of students that have been absent 5 or more times monthly and review students' reasons for being absent via Infinite Campus.

b. 4.2 By May 22, 2020, wrap around services will contact 100% of chronically absent students' parents to address possible reason why students were absent.

---

**How does funding request address those needs and goals?**

---

5

The funding request will address the rationales and goals by:

    a. Training 95% of the teachers on classroom management strategies for positive learning environment and behavior goals via the School Leadership Team & MetroResa, and/or GriffinResa.

    b. Safeguarding 100% of teachers receiving intensive training on the implementation of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) via the Second Step Platform.

    c. Allowing Instructional Coaches to have "check-in" meetings with 100% of teachers to address additional support for classroom management.

    d. Unpacking the Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) with regular education teachers and resource teachers with 100% participation.

    e. Observing 100% of resource teachers to ensure students' BIP are enforced via BIP's data collection sheet (data application).

    f. Ensuring all paraprofessional staff will assist in quarterly BIP data collection via data sheets for all five special education courses.

    g. Warranting newly enrolled students will meet with Student Support Team (SST) to review school rules and resources within the 2 weeks of enrolling.

    h. Sanctioning parents of newly enrolled students to meet with Student Support Team to review school rules and resources at the time of enrollment.

    i. Assigning newly enrolled students to an adult mentor to meet with monthly in order to assess their transition into the school.

    j. Requiring the attendance committee to identify 100% of students that have been absent 5 or more times monthly and reviewing students' reasons for being absent via Infinite Campus.

    k. Requiring wrap-around services to contact 100% of chronically absent students' parents to address possible reason why students were absent.

6

**What will be accomplished with funding request?**

Brown Middle School plans to reduce offenses made by students with disabilities and current 7th and 8th graders. Data shows students with disabilities have a higher suspension rate than students without disabilities. In addition, Brown Middle School plans to improve chronically absent students' ADA to 90% or better. There are various reasons why students are consistently absent from school; however, we plan to identify students' underlying causes for being absent.

Teachers and staff members will achieve training in code-switching and restorative justice along with them engaging in addition training for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and implementing a PBIS-based strategies. New students will become acclimated to the school's culture and behavior expectations.

Overall, additional training for staff members and modifying strategies will allow us to accomplish positive school culture for all students, decrease the number of classroom referrals, and improve students' ADA for FY 20.

**How do the planned activities support school safety or provide support for students and/or teachers?**

The planned activities will provide support as follows:

1. Provide a conducive learning environment for students and teachers

2. Support students and teachers in effectively handling individual SEL skills

3. Teachers will become familiar with their individual students areas of growth (BIP)

4. Provide out of school learning experiences (STEM field trips, College tours) for students with improved attendance and behavior

5. Support BMS school store with supplies for students' based incentives

7

## C.     Implementation Plan

| **What activities are included in this request?** |
| --- |
| *(Can copy from the activities from your CIP)* |

Brown Middle School has included several activities (not respectively):

A.  1.1.1 Attend Professional Development on classroom management
B.  1.2.1 Receive training on accessing the Second Step Portal for teaching SEL lessons
C.  1.3.1 Schedule check-in meetings with students
D.  2.1.1 Read and become familiar with each student's BIPs.
E.  2.1.2 Schedule and attend meetings to discuss different components of BIP
F.  2.2.1 Schedule observations of resource teachers
G.  2.2.2 Create BIP data collection sheet (application)
H.  2.2.3 Check in on how many data collection sheets have been collected
I.   2.3.1 Assign paraprofessionals to collect BIP data
J.  2.3.2 Train paraprofessional on data collection
K.  2.3.3 Check how many data sheets have been filled out by December
L.  3.1.1 Identify newly enrolled students
M.  3.1.2 Schedule Student Support Team meeting
N.  3.2.1 Contact parents of newly enrolled students
O.  3.2.2 Schedule meeting newly enrolled students and parents
P.  3.3.1 Identify staff to serve as mentors
Q.  3.3.3 Schedule monthly check-in meetings with mentors and students
R.  4.1.1 Identify students with 5 or more absent via Infinite Campus
S.  4.2.1 Attendance team will contact parents of chronically absent students monthly
T.  4.2.1 Catalog students' reasons for absences
U.  4.2.2 Mail home district generated attendance letter via US Mail for students with 5 or more absence
V.  4.2.3 Student Support Team and/or partners will make 1 home visit for students with 5 or more absences monthly
W.  4.2.4 Automated calls will be made to students with 5 or more absences

| **What is the timeline for each of the steps within your activities?** |
| --- |

The timeline is as follows:

A.  May 22, 2020 - Attend Professional Development on classroom management

B. May 22, 2020 - Receive training on accessing the Second Step Portal for teaching SEL lessons
C. January 3, 2020 - Schedule check-in meetings with students
D. December 1, 2019 - Read and become familiar with each student's BIPs.
E. December 1, 2019 - Schedule and attend meetings to discuss different components of BIP
F. January 3, 2020 - Schedule observations of resource teachers
G. January 3, 2020 - Create BIP data collection sheet (application)
H. December 1, 2019 - Check in on how many data collection sheets have been collected
I. December 1, 2019 - Assign paraprofessional to collect BIP data
J. December 1, 2019 - Train paraprofessional on data collection
K. December 1, 2019 - Check how many data sheets have been filled out by December
L. December 1, 2019 - Identify newly enrolled students
M. January 3, 2020 - Schedule Student Support Team meeting
N. January 3, 2020 - Contact parents of newly enrolled students
O. January 3, 2020 - Schedule meeting newly enrolled students and parents
P. January 3, 2020 - Identify staff to serve as mentors
Q. January 3, 2020 - Schedule monthly check-in meetings with mentors and students
R. January 3, 2020 - Identify students with 5 or more absent via Infinite Campus
S. January 10, 2020 - Attendance team will contact parents of chronically absent students monthly
T. January 10, 2020 - Catalog students' reasons for absences
U. December 1, 2019 - Mail home district generated attendance letter via US Mail for students with 5 or more absence
V. January 10, 2020 - Student Support Team and/or partners will make 1 home visit for students with 5 or more absences monthly
W. December 1, 2019 - Automated calls will be made to students with 5 or more absences

---

**Who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is carried out?**
*(Can copy from Partners in CIP)*

The following will be responsible for ensuring the plan is carried out:

1. Communities In Schools of Atlanta
2. Chris 180
3. ███████
5. ███████

8.  BMS Attendance team
9.  SST Team

D.      Documentation of Activities (Process Measures)

**How do you plan to document activities**
*(e.g., photographs, tag APS (@APSPolice) and WestEd (@WestEd) on social media and include #SafeSecureStrong, webpages, student work samples, sign-in sheets, news articles, videos, multimedia presentations or other visual evidence of your project)?*
*(Can copy process measures from your CIP)*

The activities will be documented by counting the:

A.  Number of teacher incidents reported in IC
B.  Number of teachers utilizing Second Step Portal
C.  Number of teachers participated in PD on classroom management
D.  Number of students checking in with mentor
E.  Number of BIPs unpacked
F.  Number of scheduled meetings attended  to discuss components  of BIPs
G.  Number of students identified as newly enrolled
H.  Number of parents contacted
I.  Number of meetings scheduled and held with parents compared to number of students identified
J.  Number of assigned peer mentors compared to number of students identified.
K.  Number of scheduled check-ins held compared to the number of students identified
L.  Number of students identified with more than 5 missing days via Infinite Campus
M.  Number of parents contacted of chronically absent students
N.  Number of letters district generated attendance letter mailed via US Mail for students with 5 or more absence
O.  Number of  home visits of students with 5 or more absences monthly
P.  Number of automated calls made to students with 5 or more absences.

## E. Budget

| How much money is being requested for each activity(ies)? |
| --- |
| Professional development<br>    1. Innovative School Summit - Orlando, Florida (March 26, 2020 - March 29, 2020)<br>        a. $475 per person (4 individuals)<br>        b. Accomodations, $200 (4 individuals)<br>        c. 4 days & 3 nights Delta $250 round trip (4 individuals)<br>        d. Food ($40 per day) (4 days) (4 individuals)<br>        e. Approximate total: $4,340<br><br>Personnel-Attendance Officer ($30,000):<br>    1. Identify students that have been absent 5 or more times monthly<br>    2. Contact 100% of chronically absent students' parents to address possible reason why students are absent<br>    3. Each time a chronically absent student is not present for school, the Attendance Officer will conduct a residential investigation<br>    4. Address attendance barriers and create an attendance plan with parent |
| Grand Total = $4,340 + $30,000 = 34,340 |

## F. Sustainability

| What measures are in place to support goals beyond the funding request? |
| --- |
| Measures in place are:<br><br>    1. Ongoing professional development<br>    2. Progress monitoring |

| What other areas of support or collaborations will assist to accomplish proposed goals? |
| --- |
| Other areas of support or collaboration are:<br><br>    1. Collaboration among staff members |

| 2. District office personnel |
|---|

## Submission:

Your CSSI Technical Assistance team will coordinate the timeline for submission. Proposals will be reviewed by a Funding Review Committee separate from your TA team using the criteria listed on the first page.

Proposals should be completed in the CSSI School Funding Request Form found in your CSSI Google Folder. **Once the request form has been finalized email** ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ **to notify that the form is complete.**

## APS Funding:

Please note that even though these are grant funds, we will still follow procurement funding process found in BOE Policy DJEA - Purchasing Authority.

*Please remember that any purchases between $10,000 and $49,999 will require three (3) quotes to be submitted unless it qualifies for single/sole source.*

# Atlanta CSSI Coordination and Integration (C&I) Plan Development Guide for School Teams

## How to Use This Guide

Your school has selected to participate in the next phase of the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI) project, school-level implementation. Over the next several months, you and your school-based team will start developing a road map to align the high-level CSSI project goals with your local context and needs.

All CSSI schools, and the District-at-large, will use a similar planning tool, Coordination and Integration (C&I) Plans, ensuring consistency and coordination across the district. This Guide aims to provide the information and structure needed to effectively use the C&I tool as you assess your existing needs and efforts and make strategic, data-driven plans to improve student safety and supports.

As part of the CSSI project, each school will be assigned a team of project staff to provide technical assistance (TA) and implementation support throughout the process.

The following pages outline the purpose of the CSSI project, the benefits and commitments for participating schools, and step-by-step guidance as you complete your C&I Plan and begin implementing your priority activities.

# Contents

# Laying the Foundation

In 2016, Atlanta Public Schools (APS) in partnership with WestEd and Georgia State University (GSU) was awarded with a five-year Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI) grant funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ).

The overall purpose of the Atlanta CSSI project is to:
- Develop a comprehensive, district-wide process leading to safe and supportive schools
- Implement and test what we have learned about the process
- Disseminate nationally

To date, much of the CSSI project work has occurred at the district level in preparation for district-wide implementation in local schools, including forming a steering committee and workgroups, convening district leadership teams, collecting data, and implementing some initial safety and security programs. District teams including Students Services, Safety & Security, and Academic & SEL came together in October and November 2018 to finalize an approach to the work. The outcomes of these meetings were:

- ***The WHY:*** Developed 3 "NorthStar" goals to guide the district and Cohorts 1 & 2 CSSI Implementation Schools

- ***The WHAT***: Drafted a multitiered system of support (MTSS) framework to guide the district and Cohorts 1 & 2 CSSI Implementation Schools

- ***The HOW***: Gained an understanding of how the District and Cohorts 1 & 2 CSSI Implementation Schools will carry out the work via a Coordination & Integration (C&I) Plan.

# The WHY: NorthStar Goals

Three NorthStar goals have been developed to guide the district and the implementation schools in their efforts to improve student safety and supports. These goals are influenced by the overall purpose of the CSSI project (as noted above) and designed to align with the data-driven needs of APS and integrate priorities across district teams and schools.

- *Goal 1*: Enhance education and awareness of mental health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional health, behavioral health, and school safety

- *Goal 2:* Build and strengthen internal and external relationships within the APS school community

- *Goal 3:* Develop and improve environments conducive for learning and teaching

## The WHAT: Multitiered System of Support (MTSS)

A multitiered system of support (MTSS) model provides a framework for organizing the work and supporting staff in data-driven decision making based on student needs via assessment and responses to intervention. Building off a 4-tiered system of support drafted by Student Services, all district teams ("faces") agreed to integrate their services and supports into this model. This is currently in draft form and will be finalized and presented by the district in the coming months. The general outline is as follows:

### *4 Tiers:*



Tier 4: Specialized-Intensive, Intervention (very few students, very few staff)

Tier 3: Intensive, Intervention (few students, few staff)

Tier 2: Targeted, Early Intervention (some students, some staff)

Tier 1: Universal, Prevention (all students, all staff)

### *4 Faces:*



Academics

SEL

Safety & Security
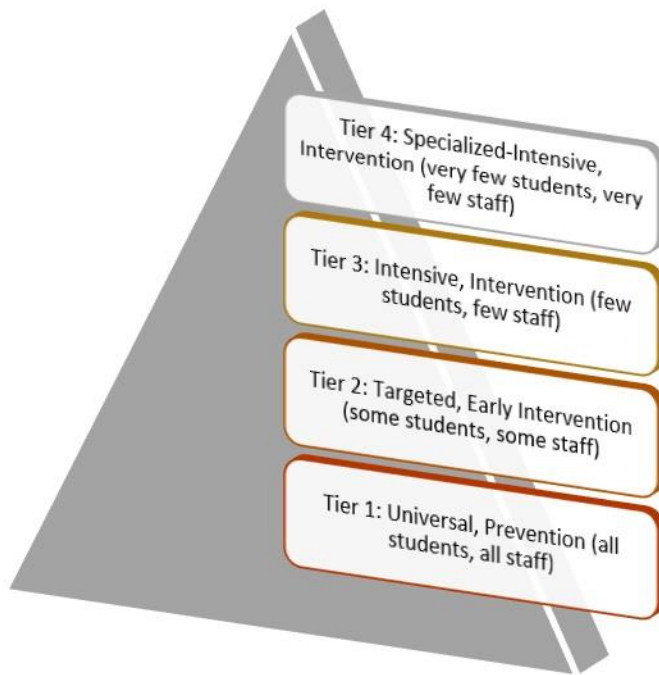
Student Engagement, Wellbeing, & Behavioral Supports
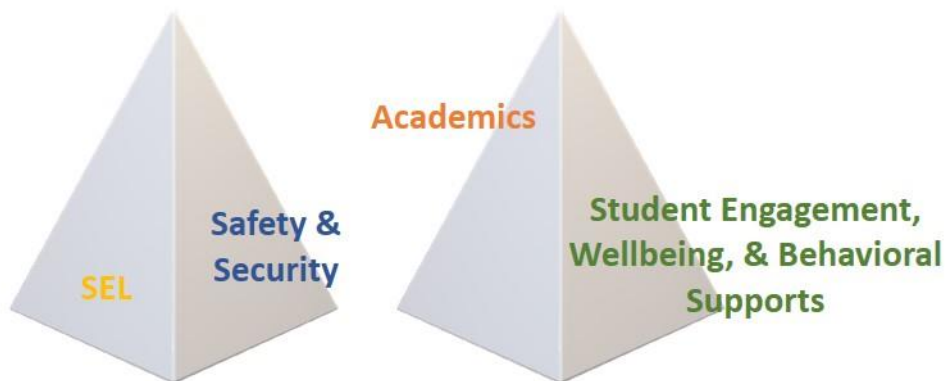
# The HOW: Coordination & Integration (C&I) Plan

The C&I Plan is essentially a map of what a school/district knows from data, outlines goals based on needs identified by data, aligns activities and partners to meet those goals, and identifies measures and outcomes to determine if the school or district met its goals. All CSSI schools, and the District-at-large, will develop individual C&I Plans to ensure consistency and coordination across the district.

Each C&I Plan is:
- Guided by NorthStar Goals ("Why")
- Organized by the MTSS ("What")
- Attuned to the Local Context

In the coming months, CSSI project staff from WestEd and GSU will work with district teams (SEL, Student Services, Safety & Security) and individual schools to develop and realize their C&I Plans.

## Benefits

Schools that participate in the CSSI project and go through the process of developing their C&I Plans can expect the following benefits:

- C&I Plans create a comprehensive, integrated approach to:
  - Identifying student and staff concerns related to school safety EARLY; thus prevents problems and address concerns before they are severe
  - Providing a clear plan on addressing concerns at each tier (all, some, few students)
  - Addressing the whole child, whole school to improve safety and wellness of students, staff, and schools

- C&I Plans enhance existing infrastructure to:
  - Support data-driven decision-making
  - Coordinate services within schools and with outside providers and partners
  - Monitor use and effectiveness of services and supports
  - Ensure alignment with current efforts

- CSSI project participation provides access to:
  - Early-stage information, resources, and supports available before they are offered district-wide
  - Funding opportunities for grant activities (e.g., stipends, substitutes, etc.)
  - Technical Assistance and implementation support from CSSI partner organizations (WestEd and GSU)
  - Professional learning opportunities for school leaders and staff

## Commitments & Roles

Participating schools will get out of the CSSI project what they put into it. Each school will have different capacities, activities, and expertise; thus, the work will vary from school to school. The project asks of you to meet regularly with your team. Participants will likely have more of a time commitment at the beginning of the project while data are being gathered and plans are being developed. Schools may have existing teams to be leveraged which will create opportunities for integration earlier. At minimum, the CSSI project asks the following of participating schools:

- Form a team to develop and implement plans (likely this can be an existing team such as a GO Team, PBIS team, or another student support or related team)
- Meet with the TA/Implementation Support Team in-person once per month with regular (bi-weekly) remote calls via phone (or more or less as needed/appropriate)
- With support from your TA/Implementation Support Team, develop the C&I Plan over the course of a few months and make revisions quarterly based on data-driven feedback
- Engage in professional learning activities quarterly or as needed in order to build capacity of staff and leaders to lead change efforts and/or implement activities
- Support with the coordination of data collection as needed to monitor progress of project
- Engage in bi-directional feedback with APS district leaders and CSSI staff (Wested, GSU) in order to support both school and district efforts in successful implementation of plans

## Support

Each participating CSSI school can expect the following support as they develop and actualize their C&I Plans:

- Technical Assistance (TA): A TA/Implementation Support Team from WestEd and GSU, consisting of two TA providers and one researcher, will be assigned to each school. TA Teams will work on-site and remotely to provide ongoing guidance and support in developing and realizing the C&I Plan (e.g., identifying partners, activities, data, measurements, etc.). Technical assistance includes, but is not limited to, coaching, consultation, resource identification, plan development, and implementation support.
- Cohorts: Initial steps to implement the CSSI project, including the C&I Plan process, will take place on staggered start dates. Cohorts consist of a small group of schools beginning the process at the same time and following a similar timeline. Throughout the CSSI project, schools will have opportunities to work with and learn from the schools in their Cohort in formal and informal ways.
- Professional Learning (PL): As school-based needs are identified through the C&I process, schools will be connected with relevant PL opportunities (trainings, workshops, modules, etc.). PL may be provided by WestEd, GSU, or from our comprehensive pool of experts both within and outside of APS.

## Initial Tips for C&I Plan Success

✓ Start small, add as you go. Teams do not need to include everything at once. Identify a few priority areas, create a few sub-goals and objectives, and align activities accordingly.

✓ Be reasonable and feasible, especially if you're starting a new activity from the beginning. Change takes time and your timelines should be reflective of that. Activities also take time, so start small and do things well from the beginning to prevent having to start over.

✓ Identify what you have first! There are lots of great things going on already. Our goal is to understand what is there so we can identify strengths and assets as well as areas of overlap or issues that need coordination and integration.

✓ Streamline when possible! If you have a process that works well for something, see how that process can be applied to other activities where appropriate.

✓ Approach this work with curiosity over analysis – come with a beginner's mind.

✓ This plan is dynamic and evolving. Things will change and not all things will be accomplished as intended…and this is normal! Thus, expect and accept change and a lack of closure.

✓ *Ask for help! You TA Team from WestEd and GSU are assigned to you for support. While they won't do your work, they will work with you as a thought partner, consultant, and coach to build your capacity to develop and sustain the work. They are happy to help!*

# C&I Plan – Steps to Success

## Overview
Below is a table that provides a high-level view of the components of the C&I Plan. The CSSI NorthStar Goals have been provided as guides.

*NorthStar Goal 1*: Enhance education and awareness of mental health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional health, behavioral health, and school safety

| Needs/Gaps | Sub Goals/ Objectives | Activities | Partners | Process Measures | Outcome Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

*NorthStar Goal 2:* Build and strengthen internal and external relationships within the APS school community

| Needs/Gaps | Sub Goals/ Objectives | Activities | Partners | Process Measures | Outcome Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

*NorthStar Goal 3:* Develop and improve environments conducive for learning and teaching

| Needs/Gaps | Sub Goals/ Objectives | Activities | Partners | Process Measures | Outcome Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Pre-Work: Needs Assessment, Environmental Scan, & Gaps Analysis
As part of the CSSI application process, grantees were required to provide some preliminary data that demonstrated a need for this funding. Additionally, the CSSI team has been collecting school and district data that continues to inform the project.

District teams and schools have also engaged in ongoing data collection as part of their regular operations and for related efforts for some time. Thus, much of the needs assessment and environmental scans needed to do this work has been done.

In preparing to develop the C&I Plans, district and school teams will want to review and refine what they have for this foundational piece. WestEd/GSU will work with the district and schools to identify what already exists in terms of needs, scans of resources, services, and supports, and help determine what gaps might still exist.

## Step 1: Stating the Needs and Gaps

| Needs/Gaps | Sub-Goals/ Objectives | Activities | Partners | Process Measures | Outcome Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

The first step in the C&I Plan is to gain a clear understanding of the underlying need, problem(s), or gap(s) that you are trying to address.

A **need or problem statement** intends to identify information on the extent to which deficits, gaps, or weaknesses in infrastructure, processes, services, supports, opportunities, and/or resources exist in a district or school.

Need or problem statements should be **data-driven** and based on information for a district, school, students, staff, families, and/or community. Data can be derived from many sources both formal and informal, quantitative and qualitative.

This column MUST include your "baseline" data. If baseline data does not exist, then measurable goals and outcomes will be tentative/draft until baseline data can be collected.

**Example Needs or Problem Statement**

*Effective Examples*

*Bullying:* "According to a 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data in Sunnyside School, 60% of middle school students agree or strongly agree that harassment and bullying by other students is a problem at their school. The needs of middle school students as they pertain to harassment and bullying is unclear. Also, there is currently no bullying prevention program in Sunnyside school."

*Discipline/Discipline Referrals*: "Training and support to teachers around students' challenging behaviors are often insufficient leading to punitive and exclusionary discipline practices. Data from the 2016-2017 school year indicate that 63% of all incidents occur in the classroom. Number 1: 36.4% of incidents were for "disruption." Number 2: 33.3% of incidents were for aggressive behavior and fighting."

*Ineffective Examples*

Bullying: "Bullying is a problem among middle school students."
Discipline/Discipline Referrals: "Discipline and referrals for discipline are a problem."

# Step 2: Creating Sub-Goals & Specifying Objectives

| Needs/Gaps | Sub-Goals/ Objectives | Activities | Partners | Process Measures | Outcome Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

The second step in the C&I Plan is to create sub-goals and objectives that are **aligned with the NorthStar goals** and **data-driven by the needs/gaps**.

**Step 2A: Sub-Goals**
Sub-goals are **broad** statements that describe longer-term impacts you are trying to reach.

 Effective Examples
- To reduce violence in schools grades 9-12
- To reduce levels of bullying in middle schools
- To reduce the number of weapons brought to school
- To improve the identification of mental health needs of students
- To increase access to mental health services for students identified with concerns
- To improve the social and emotional skills of staff
- To reduce levels of burnout of staff
- To decrease rates of office discipline referrals for non-violent infractions
- To increase attendance rates among high school students

*Ineffective Examples*
- To implement a violence prevention program
  Why? This is an **activity, not a goal**. This activity might help to meet the goal of preventing violence or reducing violence, but it is not a goal itself.

**Step 2B: Objectives**
Objectives are **specific** statements that identify the changes you want to make in terms of:
- For what
- For whom
- By how much
- By when

Objectives tend to be related to changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors. They can be short-term (up to one year) and long-term (more than one year).

You will likely have multiple objectives for each sub-goal. Thus, you will want to number them accordingly. For example:

NorthStar Goal #1
Sub-goal: 1.1
Objectives: 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and so on

**Short-Term Example:**

*Bullying Example:*
- Sub-Goal: Reduce levels of reported bullying in high schools
- Objective: By September, 2019, reduce the proportion of high school students in Sunnyside Middle school who agree and strongly agree that bullying and harassment are a problem at their school by 5 percentage points from baseline.

*Discipline/ODR example*
- Sub-goal: Reduce the proportion of office discipline referrals
- Objective: By June 2019, reduce the number of ODRs by 10% at ABC High School. Baseline data will be obtained from 2016-2017 school data.

**Long Term Example:**

*Bullying Example:*
- Sub-Goal: Reduce levels of reported bullying in high schools
- Objective: By September, 2020, reduce the proportion of high school students in Sunnyside Middle School who agree and strongly agree that bullying and harassment are a problem at their school by 15 percentage points from baseline.

*Discipline/ODR example*
- Sub-goal: Reduce the proportion of office discipline referrals
- Objective: By June 2020, reduce the number of ODRs by 25% at ABC High School. Baseline data will be obtained from 2016-2017 school data.

**Incorrect Examples:**
Decrease bullying
Fewer ODRs

# Step 3: Outlining Your Activities

| Needs/Gaps | Sub-Goals/ Objectives | Activities | Partners | Process Measures | Outcome Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

The third step in the C&I Plan is outlining the activities that you intend to do in order to accomplish your goals and objectives. This includes both short- (up to one year) and long-term (over one year).

**Caution!** *Avoid "Shiny Object Syndrome!"* Your activities (e.g., programs, services, supports, etc.) should NOT guide your goals and objectives. Rather, your data-driven goals and objectives should guide your activities.

**Example Activities**
*Example Short-Term Activities (Bullying example)*
"The following short-term activities will be adopted to support the implementation of a bullying prevention curriculum:
   1) Complete a comprehensive bully prevention assessment provided by the district
   2) Create a plan to address the needs identified"

*Example Long-term Activities (Bullying Example):*
"The following long-term strategies will be adopted:
   1) Identify and purchase an evidence-based program that aligns with school needs and context (or adapt an existing one to address identified needs)
   2) Train staff
   3) Arrange a school schedule to fit the curriculum
   4) Obtain permission for student participation as needed
   5) Implement the evidence-based bullying prevention curriculum in middle school grades with all students.
   6) Monitor progress quarterly"

*Example Short-Term Activities (ODR example)*
   1) Collect baseline ODR data of ABC High School

Example Long-term Activities (ODR Example):
   1) Create a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that define and describe the implementation of restorative and trauma-informed practices within the 4-tiered system of support to social-emotional, mental, and behavioral health needs of students
   2) Develop a progress monitoring tool to measure fidelity of implementation of restorative and trauma-informed practices within the tiered system of support to meet the needs of all students
   3) Provide ongoing training and support in the implementation of restorative and trauma-informed practices which will include the integration of mindfulness within the 4-tiered system of support to meet the needs of all students
   4) Create an RP semester course for 1 credit to be used in ABC high school
   5) Continue implementation of RP curriculum and guide in ABC High School

6) Collaborate with district staff to formalize and complete the RP Elective Course offered to high school students for credit in the district
7) Review and revise the RP curriculum and educators' guide to ensure inclusion of trauma-informed practices and 4-tiered approach to support students
8) Organize and present a day long leadership conference on the implementation of trauma-informed practices in collaboration with XYZ grant team

**Incorrect Examples:**
We will reduce bullying among middle school students
We will reduce ODRs

# Step 4:  Identifying Partners and Resources

| Needs/Gaps | Sub-Goals/ Objectives | Activities | Partners | Process Measures | Outcome Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

Step four of the C&I Plan involves identifying (and assigning) partners and resources. Partners are people and programs within the school/district as well as outside organizations and agencies. Resources may include people, but also include funding, programs, services, supports, etc. and may be found both within and outside the school/district.

This step helps map out how each partner and/or resource is contributing to the overall effort as well as a particular goal. Memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and Memoranda of agreement (MOAs) are often used to ensure participation and accountability with external partners. Your TA Team can help you identify when MOUs and MOAs are necessary or recommended and can provide resources to support.

**Example Partners and Resources**

*Bullying Example:*
1) Outside agency partner (e.g., nonprofit, education management, mental health agency, etc.) will provide staff with training
2) Middle School teachers will implement the bullying prevention program
3) Middle School support staff will provide coaching support
4) Students who are identified with high levels of risk will be referred to the mental health partner for services (with whom we have an MOU/MOA).

*ODR Example:*
1) Grant coordinators, district Research & Assessment staff, school staff will collect and analyze school ODR data
2) The SEL/RP coaches, district staff, implementation teams, schools staff and administrators will create SOPs for RP and TIPs
3) The SEL/RP train-the-trainer team will provide initial training to ABC High School staff on RP practices
4) The SEL/RP coaches, district staff, implementation teams, schools staff and administrators will create fidelity checklists for RP and TIPs
5) School implementation teams, staff, and coaches will implement effective RP and TIPs including the integration of mindfulness practices
6) District RP staff along with coaches and school staff will formalize a teacher's guide and curriculum to be used as an elective course in RP that can be offered for credit in the high schools
7) Selected school staff, with support from coaches, will use the RP teachers' guide as an elective course in RP for credit in ABC high school
8) District and school staff will continue to revise the RP curriculum guide to include TIPs and a tiered approach

16

**Incorrect Examples:**
Implement a bullying prevention program
Do restorative practices

# Step 5:  Identifying Process Measures

| Needs/Gaps | Sub-Goals/ Objectives | Activities | Partners | Process Measures | Outcome Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

Step five of the C&I Plan is to identify and describe process measures. Process measures are data used to document the implementation of activities. For example:

- Number of students served
- Number of staff attended
- Number of sessions delivered
- Number of supports provided
- Types of services rendered
- Implementation fidelity measures

Example Process Measures
*Bullying example:*
- Completed assessment
- Completed plan
- Number of teachers trained to implement the curriculum
- Number of 6-8th grade classrooms who receive the bullying prevention program
- Number of sessions delivered per classroom
- Measures of program fidelity such as classroom observation or teacher checklists

*ODR Example:*
- School ODR data is collected and analyzed
- SOPs defining implementation process for RP and TIPs
- RP and TIPs fidelity checklists shared with implementation teams and distributed to 100% of teachers in school
- Number of trainings and/or support sessions offered to school teams and staff in the implementation of RP and TIPs
- Formalized teacher's guide and curriculum aligned to the RP course is finalized for use in the high school
- The number of schools implementing the RP Course for Semester 1
- Completion of the curriculum for RP Course Semester 2 for 1 credit
- Creation of the RP Educator Guide
- Leadership conference agenda

Incorrect Examples:
Reduction in the level of bullying in the school
Fewer ODRs

*\*\*<u>Note</u>: Your TA Team/Researcher will support you identifying and accurately describing these process measures*

# Step 6: Aligning Outcome Measures (Performance Indicators)

| Needs/Gaps | Sub-Goals/ Objectives | Activities | Partners | Process Measures | Outcome Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

The sixth and final step in the C&I Plan process is aligning outcome measures and identifying performance indicators. Outcome measures and performance indicators are the evidence for determining whether or not you are reaching your specified objectives and more broadly your sub-goals or NorthStar goals.

Outcome measures and performance indicators MUST align with your objectives AND indicate how performance will be assessed.

**Example Outcome Measures & Performance Indicators**
- Percentage of students who did not go to school on 1 or more days during the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to and from school.
- Percentage of students who have been in a physical fight on school property in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- Percentage of students who report current (30-day) marijuana use.
- Percentage of students who report current (30-day) alcohol use.
- Number of students receiving school-based mental health services
- Percentage of mental health referrals for students that result in mental health services being provided in the community.

*Bullying Example:*
By September 2019, reduce the proportion of Sunnyside Middle School students who agree or strongly agree that bullying and harassment are a problem at their school by 5% points from baseline, as measured by the YRBS

By September 2020, reduce the proportion of Sunnyside Middle School students who agree or strongly agree that bullying and harassment are a problem at their school by 15% points from baseline, as measured by the YRBS

ODR Example:
By June 2019, reduce the number of ODRs by 10% in ABC High School as measured by school ODR data
By June 2020, reduce the number of ODRs by 25% in ABC High School as measured by school ODR data

***NOTE: These are exactly <u>aligned</u> with the <u>objectives</u> outlined prior***

# Putting It All Together – the C&I Plan
## Example

*NorthStar Goal 3:* Develop and improve environments conducive for learning and teaching
*Note: The second example below also aligns with NorthStar Goal #1 (thus, could be pasted directly into that table)*

| Needs/Gaps | Sub Goals/ Objectives | Activities | Partners | Process Measures | Outcome Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| According to a 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data in Sunnyside School, 60% of middle school students agree or strongly agree that harassment and bullying by other students is a problem at their school.<br><br>The needs of middle school students as they pertain to harassment and bullying is unclear. Also, there is currently no bullying prevention program in Sunnyside school. | 3.1. Reduce levels of reported bullying in high schools<br><br>3.1.1 By September, 2019, reduce the proportion of high school students in Sunnyside Middle school who agree and strongly agree that bullying and harassment are a problem at their school by 5 percentage points from baseline.<br><br>3.1.2 By September, 2020, reduce the proportion of high school students in Sunnyside Middle School who agree and strongly agree that bullying and harassment are a problem at their school by 15 | **3.1.1**<br>The following short-term activities will be adopted to support the implementation of a bullying prevention curriculum:<br>- Complete a comprehensive bully prevention assessment provided by the district<br>- Create a plan to address the needs identified<br><br>**3.1.2**<br>The following long-term strategies will be adopted:<br>- Identify and purchase an evidence-based program that aligns with school needs and context (or adapt an existing one to address identified needs)<br>- Train staff<br>- Arrange a school schedule to fit the curriculum<br>- Obtain permission for student participation as needed<br>- Implement the evidence-based bullying prevention curriculum in middle school grades with all students.<br>- Monitor progress quarterly | - Outside agency partner (e.g., nonprofit, education management, mental health agency, etc.) will provide staff with training<br>- Middle School teachers will implement the bullying prevention program<br>- Middle School support staff will provide coaching support<br>- Students who are identified with high levels of risk will be referred to the mental health partner for services (with whom we have an MOU/MOA). | - Completed assessment<br>- Completed plan<br>- Number of teachers trained to implement the curriculum<br>- Number of 6-8th grade classrooms who receive the bullying prevention program<br>- Number of sessions delivered per classroom<br>- Measures of program fidelity such as classroom observation or teacher checklists | 3.1.1 By September 2019, reduce the proportion of Sunnyside Middle School students who agree or strongly agree that bullying and harassment are a problem at their school by 5% points from baseline, as measured by the YRBS<br><br>3.1.2 By September 2020, reduce the proportion of Sunnyside Middle School students who agree or strongly agree that bullying and |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | school students for credit in the district<br>- Review and revise the RP curriculum and educators' guide to ensure inclusion of trauma-informed practices and 4-tiered approach to support students<br>- Organize and present a day long leadership conference on the implementation of trauma-informed practices in collaboration with XYZ grant team | integration of mindfulness practices<br>- District RP staff along with coaches and school staff will formalize a teacher's guide and curriculum to be used as an elective course in RP that can be offered for credit in the high schools<br>- Selected school staff, with support from coaches, will use the RP teachers' guide as an elective course in RP for credit in ABC high school<br>- District and school staff will continue to revise the RP curriculum guide to include TIPs and a tiered approach | - The number of schools implementing the RP Course for Semester 1<br>- Completion of the curriculum for RP Course Semester 2 for 1 credit<br>- Creation of the RP Educator Guide<br>- Leadership conference agenda | |

## Sources & References:

Harding, W. (n.d.). SS/HS Logic Model. Social Science Research & Evaluation, Inc.

SAMHSA (n.d). Safe Schools/Healthy Students Program Logic Model Worksheet.

# Appendix C: Office of Safety and Security Artifacts

**Introduction & C&I Participation**
- Please provide your title, background, and how long you've worked in APS and OSS
- How long have you worked with WestEd on the CSSI grant?
  - Probe: How have you been involved in the grant? How you invited to participate?

**OSS Activities and Indicators of Progress**
- Describe the priority areas you are working on under the CSSI grant
  - Probe: What is the "problem" that your district is trying to solve?
- How did your team identify the challenges and priority areas for your district department?
  - Probe: How did the team review data? What data did you use?
- Who in OSS met to determine the challenges in the Department and activities under the grant?
  - Probe: Describe how the team came to a consensus.
  - Probe: Were other challenges were identified?
- What specific activities did the district department and WestEd identify to address your challenges and priority areas?
- Has your department started implementing the activities funded under the grant?
  - Probe: What is the goal for each activity (VMS, school safety reviews, SRO dashboard, emergency management plans)?
- Describe what has been accomplished for each activity to date.
  - Probe: Are there activities that haven't been implemented yet? Why?
  - Probe: What challenges have you found with implementation? Successes?
- Have the activities been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic? If so, how?
  - Probe: What activities have been postponed? What activities are still occurring? Are there activities that aren't relevant right now due to remote learning and focus on pandemic safety?
- For each activity funded under the grant (VMS, school safety reviews, SRO dashboard, Emergency Management Plans), how is OSS measuring success?
  - Probe: What is the outcome that the department wants to see for each activity?
  - Probe: How is this monitored? What data are used?
  - Probe: Does the team have timely and accurate data to measure progress toward its goal?
  - Probe: How are you communicating those goals and timelines to others?
- Does your department collaborate with other schools or the district as part of your priority area or the other schools/departments priority areas?
  - Probe: Describe that collaboration.
- Has your team discussed how to sustain the activities under the CSSI grant?
  - Probe: What challenges do you see to continuing these activities?
- Has your department discussed sustainability of the activities in the plan?
  - Probe: What challenges have you identified as a team to sustain the activities?

**Wrap-Up**
- To what extent has your participation in the CSSI grant improved your Department's capacity to support school safety?
- What, if anything, can the WestEd team provide you in the next few months to help support and/or sustain the activities you've implemented?
- Do you have any suggestions for the WestEd team on how to improve any of the activities, their support and facilitation, etc?
- Is there anything else you'd like us to know about the CSSI grant?

# Appendix D: Social and Emotional Learning Artifacts

**Learning Session 1 (11/11/2019):**

In November 2019, WestEd held its first improvement science session with the APS SEL team and middle schools. In a full-day session, WestEd facilitated the team to accomplish the following objectives:

- Introduce participants to improvement process/set expectations for work ahead
  - Participate in "improvement simulation"
- Determine a shared problem statement
- Draft initial understanding of contributors to the problem
  - Develop a fishbone diagram
- Learn about system investigation tools
  - Data, empathy interviews, process maps
- Plan for action period investigation

The improvement simulation that participants went through was a quick 2-hour demonstration of what an improvement science-based project would look like, based on an example of a school team addressing a problem of chronic absenteeism. Through this, participants had a better sense of what to expect and received initial exposure to the tools and approach in improvement science. Following the simulation, participants identified their problem statement, which would ground their work for the rest of the year and help them begin investigations into the problem. The problem statement was: **School adults (teachers, leaders) are not internalizing the purposes and practices of SEL.** Participants felt that although teachers had received an SEL curriculum and were expected to teach it in their classrooms, they were still not integrating SEL practices and competencies into their daily instruction and their academic content.

Following this problem identification, participants created a fishbone diagram. The fishbone diagram (sometimes called a "cause and effect diagram" or "causal system analysis") is a tool used in improvement science to discover, organize, and summarize knowledge about the causes contributing to an observed effect or problem. Participants were asked to consider all the potential causes of the above problem and write them separately on post-it notes. Following this, the group conducted an affinity protocol to group similar causes and label categories. Figure 8 shows the fishbone process.

**APS SEL FISHBONE DIAGRAM (11/11/2019)**
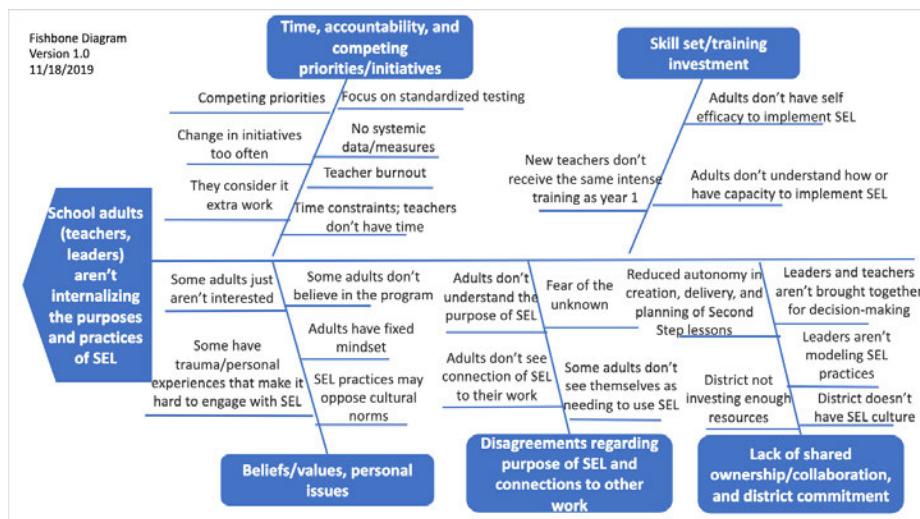
Improvement science places a high value on deeply understanding the problem and the system that produces it before developing solutions and testing them. There are three activities that are typically used in the improvement science process to investigate the problem: developing a process map, analyzing data, and conducting empathy interviews. Given the lack of existing data on this particular problem and the lack of clear existing processes, the group opted to spend their time in the action period conducting empathy interviews. Empathy interviews are

ways to elicit stories and uncover needs and desires from interviewees. They are not quite the same as traditional interviews which are narrowly focused to a list of pre-determined questions. Instead, APS SEL participants planned on conducting interviews with teachers in order to determine their experience with SEL. During the action period between Learning Session 1 and 2, each liaison conducted an empathy interview with at least one teacher, during which they asked:

- What successes have you had with SEL work in your school?
- What has been challenging about SEL work in your school?
- What additional kinds of supports could you use related to SEL?

The questions were used as general guides for the interviews, which were meant to follow the particular needs and emotional responses of teachers.

**Learning Session 2 (12/16/2019):**

In December 2019, WestEd held its second improvement science session with the APS SEL team and middle schools. In a full-day session, WestEd facilitated the team to accomplish the following objectives:

- Participants learn from each others' system investigations during the last action period and revisit their fishbone
- Participants have focused their efforts with a clear collective aim statement that is manageable by June 2020
- Participants develop a theory of improvement (driver diagram) to accomplish their target/aim
- Plan to test 1 change idea during the next action period
- Determine meeting schedule during Action Period 2

Participants first discussed what they learned from their empathy interviews, namely the kinds of successes and challenges they heard from teachers. This helped drive them to determine where they might best devote the collective efforts of all four teams in a focused aim statement. In improvement science, an aim statement is a simple sentence clearly defining success for the improvement effort by specifying what will be improved, by how much, by when, and for whom. It helps focus the change efforts strategically and motivate collective action. The resulting aim statement was: **By December 2020, increase the # of teachers/leaders who understand the what, why, and how of SEL and can incorporate the practices and purposes into their**

**work.** While many participants supported this aim statement for their work, the lack of measurability for their goal prompted the WestEd team to determine that the aim statement would be further clarified in the action period.

Participants next spent their time creating a theory of improvement (also called a "driver diagram"), which communicates visually the suite of changes needed to accomplish the aim and also acts as a knowledge management tool that can be updated as changes are tested. It is created by brainstorming change ideas, which are specific work practices or interventions that represent an *alteration* to how work is currently done. The change ideas that the APS team brainstormed were then clustered using an affinity protocol to create a driver diagram, with the aim statement at the head of the diagram. Figure 9 below shows the driver diagram created in December 2019 with the APS team.
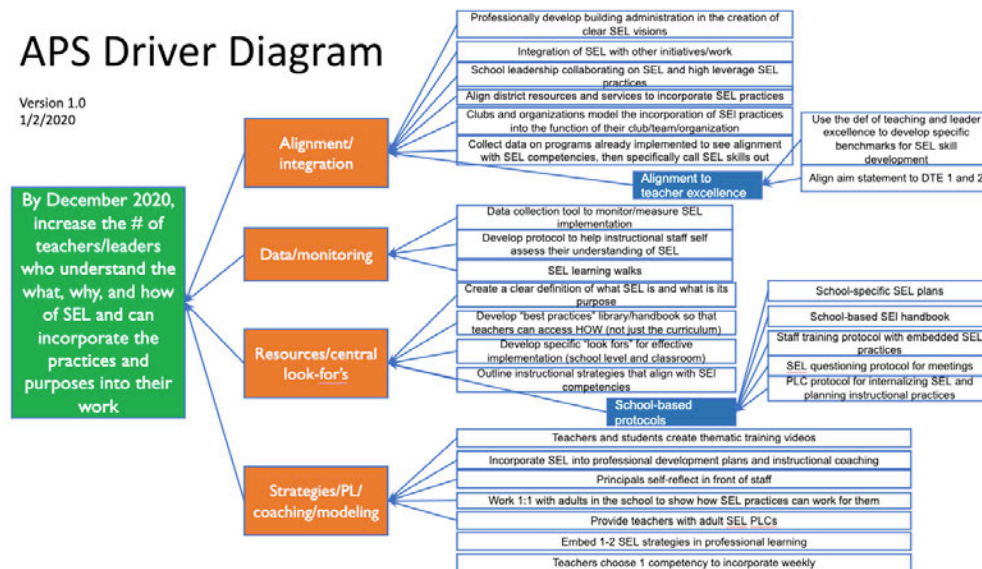


The remainder of the session was spent leading APS participants to plan a test of one of those change ideas. Improvement science uses a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle that involves making predictions, planning the details on when the idea will be tested, comparing the results to the prediction, and determining what to do next as a result. Participants were encouraged to consider specific and small-scale tests of change that they could quickly test in order to learn fast what works and what doesn't. The primary objective during the action period was for participants to test a number of change ideas. Some sample change ideas they prepared to test were:

- Liaison observes teacher and provides individualized feedback based on SEL

- Role playing using the SEL competency

- Mentoring support in PLCs to work with them once every two weeks to build 3 skills

- Use mentoring protocol and create plan with the teacher

The SEL liaisons at each of the schools began meeting on a bi-weekly basis with the middle school SEL coordinator with WestEd joining monthly calls to provide improvement coaching and support.

In addition, during the action period, WestEd and the middle school SEL coordinator determined that aim statements for each school should be based around the modeling behaviors of specific SEL standards, with each school determining the standard that felt most important to them. For example, one school set an aim that: **By December 2020, we would like to see 75% of sixth grade instructional staff understanding and demonstrating the skills to regulate productively one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in a variety of settings and situations.** This aim statement would be paired with the development of indicators for each standard and a measurement strategy, likely taking the form of a rubric for each specific SEL standard that the SEL liaison and administrator could use when observing the teacher to determine the extent to which they were modeling the SEL standard.

**Learning Session 3:**

In March 2020, WestEd held a virtual improvement science session with the APS SEL team and middle schools given that travel was beginning to be restricted across the country due to the onset of COVID-19. In a two-hour virtual session, WestEd facilitated the team to accomplish the following:

- School level teams learn from each other about the  work they've done so far

- Affirm a collective aim and determine each school's goals within that broader aim

- Develop well-formulated change ideas and plan one test of a change idea for the next action period

- Establish routines during action period (meetings, documenting changes, etc.)

Due to the virtual nature of the session, not all of the SEL liaisons and school administrators were able to fully participate.

The session started off with liaisons sharing with each other what they had been learning from their testing of change ideas. In addition, they reviewed the SEL standards in order to determine

which they wanted to focus on supporting their teachers on given their particular school's needs. Lastly, participants named a specific change idea they were planning on testing during the next action period.

## D.2 40 Day Challenge Project Syllabus

# The Personal Improvement Project Syllabus
# APS SEL Team, June - July 2020

**Instructors:**
Corey Donahue, WestEd, cdonahu@wested.org

**Course Summary:** In this mini-course, participants engage in an improvement project from start to measurable results over a 7-week period. Through tackling a problem of smaller scope but personal importance, participants are able to use several key improvement tools in a way that simulates improvement work in the field. Past participants have found the project to be meaningful and an excellent introduction to the on-the-ground work of improvement. Participants will meet weekly to cover session content and discuss progress.

**Learning Objectives:**
Participants will learn about...
- Unpacking the root causes of problems
- Articulating and building theories of improvement
- Testing cycles, including identifying and selecting change ideas
- Measuring improvement

And be able to…
- Select and understand a problem
- Scope an aim statement and build a theory of improvement
- Use specific improvement tools (e.g., fishbone diagram)
- Collect and analyze data to determine if a change was an improvement (engage in PDSA cycles)
- Create data displays to clearly communicate how data collected relates to problem statement

In order to…
- See the power of disciplined inquiry and how it can help you solve problems

**Time Commitment:**
- 60-minute meeting once a week.
- Homework activity: 30-60 minutes per week.

**Materials:**

- 40 Day Challenge Project Workbook (Google sheets file)
- Blank templates of select tools
- Seminar Slide Decks

**Format:**
- Regular small-group seminars led by a facilitator
- Individual application of learning between seminars
- Optional "office hours" for one-on-one coaching in between sessions
- Final presentation of progress made and lessons learned

**Sessions:**

| Week | Title | Assignment(s) |
|---|---|---|
| 1<br>6/15 | **Session 1: Selecting a Problem & Collecting Baseline Data** | Refine your problem statement. Identify data you can collect. Collect baseline data about your problem and record it in your tracker. |
| 2<br>6/22 | **Session 2: Understanding the Problem** | Build a fishbone and/or a process map for your problem. Continue to collect and record baseline data. |
| 3<br>6/29 | **Session 3: Scoping to an Aim & Building a Theory of Improvement** | Finalize your aim statement. Draft your driver diagram. Continue to collect and record data for your project measures. |
| 4<br>7/6 | **Session 4: Moving from Theory to Action: Testing & PDSA Cycles** | Plan & run your first PDSA. Refine driver diagram based on learning. Continue to collect and record data. |
| 5<br>7/13 | **Session 5: Measurement & PDSA Cycles Continued** | Run additional PDSAs and record your learning. Create one run chart. Continue to collect and record data. |
| 6<br>7/20 | **Session 6: Project Measures** | Run additional PDSAs. Continue to collect and record |

| | | data. Prepare a brief Powerpoint presentation to share progress and learnings |
|---|---|---|
| **7** 7/27 | **Session 7:  Improvement Reviews & Final Reflection** | Continue the personal improvement journey! |

# APS Project Plan
## July-Dec 2020
*(Updated 7/15/2020)*

## Objectives

- APS SEL coordinators to each work with up to 3-4 SEL liaisons (i.e., 3-4 different schools) to go through an improvement science project focused on SEL:
    - Each group of SEL liaisons would go through a common improvement process to focus on a given SEL problem in their schools, learn about what is contributing to that problem, develop a focused aim, and test ideas that will address that problem
        - Problems will be drawn either from each school's SEL-related [FY20 School Priority and Strategy](#) or from whatever is most important to the schools at the time of problem-selection
            - Want to keep problems within the whole-child framework/safe and supportive learning environment space
        - Ideas to address the problem should be focused specifically on what the liaisons can do differently (with support of admins and teachers)
    - MS SEL liaisons will likely continue the work from the spring regarding helping adults model SEL practices for students
    - ES and HS schools will be chosen based on similar culture goals in their FY20 Plans

## Timeline

Summary of activities:

| Activity / Deliverable | People Involved |
|---|---|
| Biweekly 60-90 min meeting for ES, MS, and HS (coordinator and 3 SEL liaisons) to go through improvement process | Tara and 3-4 MS liaisons<br>Veneschia and 3-4 HS liaisons<br>Lindsay and 3-4 ES liaisons<br><br>Corey/Erin co-lead the first session at each grade level and attending every other session |
| Monthly (to biweekly) 30-min coaching call between each coordinator and each liaison | Tara and 3-4 MS liaisons<br>Veneschia and 3-4 HS liaisons<br>Lindsay and 3-4 ES liaisons |
| Monthly 30-min coaching call between each coordinator and Corey/Erin | Tara, Veneschia, Lindsay and Corey/Erin |
| Biweekly 1-hour meeting between SEL team and WestEd to discuss successes/challenges, plan work together | WestEd (Corey and Erin), SEL team (Rose, Tara, Veneschia, Lindsay) |

A week-by-week schedule:

| Week of... | Activity |
|---|---|
| 8/24 | ES group kickoff meeting (3-4 schools)-90 mins; Corey and Erin co-lead<br>MS group kickoff meeting (3-4 schools)-90 mins; Corey and Erin participate<br>HS group kickoff meeting (3-4 schools)-90 mins; Corey and Erin co-lead |
| 8/31 | Full APS SEL/WestEd team meeting (1 hour)<br>Lindsay coaching call with Corey and Erin (30 mins)<br>Tara coaching call with Corey and Erin (30 mins)<br>Veneschia coaching call with Corey and Erin (30 mins) |
| 9/7 | ES group meeting (3-4 schools)-60-90 mins<br>MS group meeting (3-4 schools)-60-90 mins<br>HS group meeting (3-4 schools)-60-90 mins |
| 9/14 | Full APS SEL/WestEd team meeting (1 hour)<br>Lindsay coaching call with each liaison (30 mins)<br>Tara coaching call with each liaison (30 mins)<br>Veneschia coaching call with each liaison (30 mins) |
| 9/21 | ES group meeting (3-4 schools)-60-90 mins; Corey and Erin co-lead<br>MS group meeting (3-4 schools)-60-90 mins<br>HS group meeting (3-4 schools)-60-90 mins; Corey and Erin co-lead |
| 9/28 | Full APS SEL/WestEd team meeting (1 hour)<br>Lindsay coaching call with Corey and Erin (30 mins)<br>Tara coaching call with Corey and Erin (30 mins)<br>Veneschia coaching call with Corey and Erin (30 mins) |
| 10/12 | ES group meeting (3-4 schools); 60-90 mins; Corey and Erin participate<br>MS group meeting (3-4 schools); 60-90 mins<br>HS group meeting (3-4 schools); 60-90 mins; Corey and Erin participate |
| 10/19 | Full APS SEL/WestEd team meeting (1 hour)<br>Lindsay coaching call with each liaison (30 mins)<br>Tara coaching call with each liaison (30 mins)<br>Veneschia coaching call with each liaison (30 mins) |
| Continue this pattern through the rest of Fall 2020 | |

## Roles

| Role | Role in this work |
|---|---|
| School | Attend biweekly group meeting;<br>Attend monthly coaching call with coordinator<br>Lead improvement work at school (empathy interviews, data collection, testing change ideas, etc.) |

| School | Come to kickoff meeting; deputize an admin to attend following that meeting<br>Support improvement work at school |
|---|---|
| School | Attend biweekly group meeting, especially in the starting weeks<br>Support improvement work at school |
| APS SEL Director | ● Co-designs Fall 2020 plan<br>● Secures support from up to 12 school leaders (4 ES, 4 MS, 4 HS) to give SEL coordinators time for this work<br>● Participates in Fall biweekly meetings with SEL team and WestEd |
| APS SEL MS Coordinator | ● Co-designs Fall 2020 plan<br>● Leads an improvement project in Fall 2020 with MS liaisons<br>● Helps lead design of Fall 2020 experience for ES and HS groups based on experience in Spring 2020 |
| APS SEL HS Coordinator | ● Co-designs Fall 2020 plan<br>● Leads an improvement project in Fall 2020 with HS liaisons |
| APS SEL ES Coordinator | ● Co-designs Fall 2020 plan<br>● Leads an improvement project in Fall 2020 with ES liaisons |
| WestEd | SEL coordinator and project manager, co-develops the Fall 2020 plan with APS, provides ongoing coaching for SEL coordinators, and leads internal bi-weekly meetings in Fall 2020 |
| WestEd | Improvement coach, co-develops the Fall 2020 plan with APS, provides ongoing coaching for SEL coordinators |

## High Level Design-Fall 2020

| Session | Objectives | Action Period Activities (for liaisons to do at their school) |
|---|---|---|
| 1; week of 8/24 | ● Build group cohesion<br>● Introduce participants to improvement process/set expectations for work ahead<br>● Determine each school's problem statement | ● Brainstorm contributors to problem<br>● Identify teachers who they can bring into this work |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2; week of 9/7 | • Draft initial understanding of contributors to the problem (fishbone diagram)<br>• Learn about empathy interviews | • Finish fishbone<br>• Conduct empathy interviews |
| 3; week of 9/21 | • Participants learn from each others' system investigations during the last action period and revisit their fishbone<br>• Participants have focused their efforts with a clear collective aim statement that is manageable by June 2021<br>• Identify data they can start collecting | • Think of change ideas<br>• Conduct additional empathy interviews as needed<br>• Begin collecting data |
| 4; week of 10/12 | • Participants develop a theory of improvement (driver diagram) to accomplish their target/aim<br>• Plan to test 1 change idea during the next action period | • Test change idea<br>• Continue collecting data |
| 5; week of 10/26 | • School level teams share their progress with each other and what they've learned from testing changes<br>• Further clarification of PDSAs | • Test change idea(s)<br>• Continue collecting data<br>• Update driver diagram as needed |
| Each following meeting | • School level teams share their progress with each other and what they've learned from testing changes<br>• Further clarification of PDSAs | • Test change idea(s)<br>• Continue collecting data<br>• Update driver diagram as needed |

**Decisions to date (reflected above)**
- Each school chooses their own problem, but we're taking them together through a common process (using IS)
- Problem likely related to culture school goal, although alright to focus on whatever is most important to them at the time
- Choosing schools based on culture goal that relates to SEL
- MS down to 3 schools; ES and HS can do 3 as well

- Will involve both SEL liaison and admins (principal comes to initial meeting; can designate someone else afterwards)
- SEL liaison meeting in biweekly 1-hour or 90-minute meetings w/ all liaisons and admins (meetings front-loaded for admins that might have to drop off)
- SEL liaison and SEL coordinator biweekly 30-min 1:1 coaching

## Issues to talk about in upcoming meetings:
- School selection:
  - ES and HS: What kinds of schools do we want to select for this? What kind of characteristics should we be looking for?
  - MS: Are the four schools still the right ones?
  - How are we going to approach/recruit these schools?
- Meeting frequency and length
  - Review of the schedule above
- Meeting content/facilitation
  - Review high level design above; determine what we feel more or less comfortable facilitating
- Coaching
  - What do you hope to accomplish in 1:1 coaching sessions with each of the liaisons?
  - What would you want coaching between Corey/Erin and each of the coordinators to be like?
- Planning the first meeting
  - When should it be scheduled?
  - Who should attend?
  - What kinds of activities do we need to do to build connections?
- Internal meetings/WestEd role
  - Biweekly 1-hour meeting work? Who should facilitate?

**Introduction & Participation in grant**
- Please provide your title, background, and how long you've worked in APS and SEL
- How long have you worked with WestEd on the CSSI grant?
    - Probe: How have you been involved in the grant? Were you invited to participate?

**SEL Activities and Indicators of Progress**
- Describe the priority areas you are working on under the CSSI grant
    - Probe: What is the "problem" that your district is trying to solve?
- How did your team identify the challenges and priority areas for your district department?
- What activities did the SEL identify to address the challenges and priority areas?
    - Probe: How did the team make decisions about which activities would be included in the plan?
- Has your department started implementing the activities funded under the grant?
    - Probe: Are there activities that haven't been implemented yet? Why?
    - Probe: What challenges have you found with implementation? Successes?
    - Probe: Does your team have sufficient resources to carry out the activities?

**Activities**
- Describe the improvement science training and the activities accomplished under the trainings.
    - Probe: How did WestEd support the Improvement Science trainings.
    - Probe: Who was involved? How were they selected?
    - Probe: How is Improvement Science incorporated into the mission, vision, and goals of the SEL Department at APS?
- What was the aim statement chosen during the trainings with the schools? What activities were chosen by the schools to address the aim statements?
    - Probe: To what extent did the schools make progress in their change ideas? What data was used? Has progress been sustained?
- How has the IS trainings been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic?
    - Probe: What activities have been postponed? What activities are still occurring? Are there activities that aren't relevant right now due to remote learning and focus on pandemic safety
- Are there future activities planned for the improvement science trainings this year?
- How is SEL measuring "success" for the improvement science trainings?
- Does SEL Department plan to sustain the improvement science trainings after the grant ends?
    - Probe: What are the plans for sustainability?
- Describe the Safe and Supportive Learning Environments ("SSLE") trainings and the activities accomplished under the trainings.
    - Probe: How did WestEd support with the development of the Safe and Supportive Learning Environment trainings.

- o Probe: Who was involved? How were they selected?
- o How is SSLE incorporated into the mission, vision, and goals of the SEL Department at APS?
- How has SSLE been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic?
  - o Probe: What activities have been postponed? What activities are still occurring? Are there activities that aren't relevant right now due to remote learning and focus on pandemic safety?
- Are there future activities planned for the SSLE trainings this year?
  - o Probe: What is the timeline? Who is involved?
- How is SEL measuring success for the SSLE trainings?
  - o Probe: Are there specific changes you've observed at the schools because of SSLE?
- Does the SEL Department plan to sustain the SSLE trainings after the grant ends?
  - o Probe: What are the plans for sustainability?
- Describe the theory of change development with WestEd. What activities were conducted and what was accomplished?
  - o Probe: How useful was the theory of change development process?
  - o Probe: How is the SEL Department using the TOC developed under the grant? What was the outcome of the TOC development process?

**Wrap-Up**
- To what extent has your participation in the CSSI grant improved your Department's capacity to support school safety?
- What, if anything, can the WestEd team provide you in the next few months to help support and/or sustain the activities you've implemented?
- Do you have any suggestions for the WestEd team on how to improve any of the activities, their support and facilitation, etc?
- Is there anything else you'd like us to know about the CSSI grant?

**Improvement Science Schools Focus Group**

**Introduction:**
- Could you please give us your name, title at your school, and how long you've been at APS?
- How were you invited to participate in the improvement science trainings for SEL?
  - Probe: How did you hear about it? Who invited you?

**Trainings**
- How many trainings did you attend on improvement science with WestEd and APS?
  - Could you describe the activities you participated in?
- Looking back, what were the biggest challenges to participating in the improvement science trainings? How could the trainings be adjusted to address those challenges?
- What did you find most helpful about the improvement science trainings?
  - Probe: Do you think the improvement science process can be used to improve SEL practices at your school? Why or Why not?
- How did the coronavirus pandemic and school closures affect your participation in the improvement science trainings after March?
  - Probe: Were you able to participate in the virtual sessions? Did you meet with your SEL Coordinator about the trainings?
- As part of the trainings, the schools who participated identified a problem statement.
  - What was your school's problems statement?
  - How did this "problem" manifest itself in your school
  - Probe: Did you conduct empathy interviews? If so, with whom? What did you learn? How did that inform the rest of your activities with improvement science?
- Some schools developed change ideas to implement in their schools to support adult SEL (i.e. related to the problem statement). Did your school develop a change idea? If so, what was it?
  - Probe: Were you able to implement the change idea before schools closed last March?
  - Probe: If yes, how did you measure changes from the change idea?
- If you implemented the change ideas, what successes did you have?
  - Probe: Were you able to document those successes through data collection?
- If you implemented the change ideas, what challenges did you encounter? How did you overcome those challenges?
  - Probe: Were you able to capture those challenges through any data collection?
- Do you think the improvement science process was valuable? Why or why not?
- Do you have any feedback on how to improve our approach to delivering these trainings to schools and districts?