



Safe and Responsive Schools Guide

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School Sites

We are deeply grateful to the school teams and administrators of the SRS pilot and field test site schools who have worked so hard to implement new approaches to ensure the safety and well-being of their students. Their enthusiasm, ideas and support are genuinely appreciated!

SRS School Sites

Beatrice Public Schools, Beatrice, NE
Paddock Lane and Stoddard Elementary Schools
Lincoln and Cedar Elementary Schools

Forrest Hills Special Education Cooperative, Forrest Hills, IN

Gary Public Schools, Gary, IN
Lew Wallace High School
Alfred Beckman Middle School
James Whitcomb Riley Elementary School

Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln, NE
Beattie Elementary School
Robin Mickle Middle School

Malcolm Public Schools, Malcolm, NE
West Falls Elementary School and
Malcolm High School

Richland-Bean Blossom Community School Corporation, Richland, IN
Edgewood High School
Edgewood Junior High School

Spencer-Owen Community School Corporation
Owen Valley High School
Owen Valley Middle School
McCormick's Creek Elementary



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References for Section 3.....

Tools

Below are materials, forms, questionnaires and worksheets which are referred to in the chapters of this *Guide* in alphabetical order:

Evaluation Questionnaire.....
Needs Assessment Questionnaire.....
Planning Data Availability Worksheet
Practices and Programs Inventory.....
Research Worksheet
Research Results Worksheet.....
Safe Schools Survey Questionnaires-
 Parent Questionnaire
 Elementary Student Questionnaire.....
 Secondary Student Questionnaire.....
 Staff Questionnaire.....
Safety Survey Planning Worksheet
Strategic Planning Outline
Task Responsibility Worksheet.....

INTRODUCTION



There is much interest in assisting schools to better support the behavioral needs of students in school. These efforts are motivated by various problems in schools including violence, drug and alcohol use, bullying, harassment and other behaviors. They are also motivated by the desire to “leave no child behind” in our efforts to provide effective academic instruction in schools. Most educators realize that effective academic learning requires a safe, organized and civil learning environment, as well as the ability to shape and change the behavior of those having difficulty with their behavior.

Statewide Behavioral Initiatives

As a result, numerous states have embarked on statewide behavioral initiatives. While these vary tremendously in their goals, they are almost always broadly framed to provide assistance to schools to improve their ability to support positive student behavior in school. For example, Montana’s belief statements among others include:

- All students should be taught all the skills necessary for success.
- Schools are places where students can learn and practice positive interpersonal, cross-cultural, and citizenship skills.
- A caring school climate and positive relationships between students and staff are critical to student success and provide an environment where academics flourish.
- Positive, proactive and preventative efforts of schools and communities can create a school climate free of stereotyping, harassment, hatred and violence-filled with a concern for justice and fairness.

States have also included in their initiatives effort to reduce student dropout, reduce the frequency of absences and tardiness, decrease the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco, decrease involvement in youth gangs and to reduce youth violence. Montana along with Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, New Mexico, Utah, and numerous other states have these types of initiatives, many within the context of their school improvement planning process. Most often these initiatives include the formation of building based teams which guide school and district level planning, changes in policies and procedures (systems change), comprehensive staff development, infrastructure development (such as the creation of behavior consultants or coaches), and the like. In addition, the State Departments of Education, sometimes with regional networks, provide technical support and consultation, and, in some cases funding to local districts for these activities.

While these initiatives have been clear about their goals, there is not one clear process for schools to achieve these goals. There is a huge amount of literature that analyzes these issues, and even more numerous suggestions about what schools and educators should do to reduce these problems. While many times, one specific approach is touted as “the answer” to these problems, and while some schools would like a simple, solution, the problems are much too complex. As a result, many schools may be looking for a more comprehensive and sophisticated approach which is tailored to a particular building’s strengths and needs, and which provides a comprehensive, integrated and long-term view of these problems. The SRS Framework and *Guide* may meet these needs.

The Safe and Responsive Schools Framework

The Safe and Responsive Schools *Guide* may be one way for schools to undertake a comprehensive planning process to address these behavioral issues. The Safe and Responsive Schools (SRS) Framework described in the *Guide* is an approach to improving the behavior of students at school, and to preventing school violence as well as other behavior related problems. The Framework identifies and acknowledges the informal “social curriculum” which students must learn in school in order to be academically successful in school, and suggests that for some students this social

curriculum must be explicitly taught. The Framework is a structure based on three groupings of students according to their learning of the social curriculum. It permits schools to engage in actions or strategies at each of three levels related to these groupings of students. These levels of action are:

- **Actions to Create a Positive Climate For All Students**
- **Actions to Identify and Intervene Early with “At-risk” Students**
- **Actions to Create Effective Responses to Students with Chronic or Severe Behavior Problems.**

School teams can use the Framework to assess existing behavior-related programs and activities in a school, to identify promising practices and programs that might be considered to supplement existing programs. The SRS Framework and *Guide* assist schools to undertake a comprehensive planning process, gather data and prioritize needed actions to create and implement a plan. This comprehensive plan should be integrated with the school’s “School Improvement” planning process to bring about long lasting systemic change to address positive behavior that supports academic goals.

The Safe and Responsive Schools Framework and *Guide* focuses on the identical outcomes as these various state-wide initiatives, and may be one concrete example of the kind of programs which these initiatives intend to promote.

What are “Positive Behavioral Supports”?

In addition to the various state behavioral initiatives, many schools have also embraced the concept of Positive Behavioral Supports. “Positive Behavioral Supports” (PBS), sometimes also called “Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), is also an approach to reforming the way schools think about student behavior in school. It employs a three-tier model of prevention (similar to the SRS levels) to understand behavior of students in school and to suggest interventions to improve behavior. However, there seem to be two versions of PBS, one broad, and the other quite specific.

The Broad Version of PBS. Sometimes PBS is used as an umbrella term to apply to almost any broad plan employing these three levels of prevention to assist

schools to improve the ways they address and teach behavior in schools. According to Sugai and Horner (2002, p. 131) the key features of PBS are:

1. A prevention-focused continuum of support;
2. Proactive instructional approaches to teaching & improving social behaviors;
3. Conceptually sound and empirically validated practices;
4. Systems change to support effective practices, and;
5. Data-based decision making.

Many states have adopted the features of PBS as guiding principals for their state initiatives. As you will see, the SRS Framework and Guide present a process to schools that is entirely compatible with these principles. The SRS Framework provides a structure for these principles to be implemented, and provides a comprehensive, individually tailored planning process for schools which choose to implement them.. The SRS Framework and process is an example of one way to create Positive Behavioral Supports in schools.

The Narrower Version of PBS. However, at some times, a much narrower version of PBS seems to be advocated. That version is narrow and specific and focuses on a “behaviorist,” school-wide approach to teaching and guiding behavior. This more specific approach focuses on schools implementing “the seven key features of effective behavior support” to create a school-wide culture of behavioral competence (Horner, Sugai & Todd, 2001). These seven features are:

1. Administrative leadership
2. Team-based implementation
3. Define behavioral expectations
4. Teach behavioral expectations
5. Acknowledge/ reward appropriate behavior
6. Monitor and correct behavioral errors
7. Use information for decision-making

In this more specific PBS process, teams of educators create a set of school rules, teach those rules, and provide a consistent way of responding to inappropriate behavior according to those rules. A small number of school-wide positive behaviors are identified, and school staff to provide reinforcement for those behaviors, and

consequences when violations of the rules occur. While this narrow version acknowledges the need for individual functional assessment and individual behavior plans for those students who need them, as well as other elements or programs, the later are not the emphasis.

While this narrow definition of PBS fits within the broader definition of PBS, it appears to be only a one example of an action that could be taken to address needs within the larger PBS principles, and does not help to coordinate or integrate behavior related programs such as character education, mediation, alternative school programs, etc., which may be in place or needed. While this version of PBS may be useful, it is much more limited in its goals and potential outcomes for schools.

Using the more narrow definition of PBS, the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework views this narrow version of PBS as one valuable strategy among many that a school might use to improve positive behavior in school. Defining behavioral expectations, teaching behavioral expectations, rewarding appropriate behavior, and monitoring and correcting behavioral errors may be very important, but they are not all that schools need to do to meet create safe and responsive school environments!

Regardless of the definition of PBS, the SRS Framework deals more broadly with prevention oriented programs on the one hand, and more specifically with emergency planning and intervention and options for students with the most chronic behavior problems on the other hand. It permits schools to include and integrate a variety of other approaches into a comprehensive model of violence prevention and behavior improvement. Schools desiring to implement the principles of either version of PBS should feel comfortable with the comprehensive planning process in the SRS *Guide*.

Safe & Responsive Schools in Context

In an era when improving student behavior in school is being recognized as key issue in improving a school's ability to meet academic instructional goals, the SRS Framework is a comprehensive and preventative planning process to improve behavior. It addresses the goals of most states' behavioral initiatives, and may be a useful tool for schools in those states to address the goals of their initiative. It may also be a way for

schools to implement Positive Behavioral Supports. However, even if no state initiatives exist, the SRS materials are self-standing and can be used by individual schools to plan and improve!

The first chapter of the Guide will explain its purpose and intended uses, as well as answer more questions. The Framework is explained in Chapter two. The chapters in Section Two provide detailed instructions for schools who wish to use the Framework to undertake a planning/implementation process. Finally, Section Three identifies options and resources for schools to consider in response to their needs.



DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW

SECTION I

CHAPTERS 1-2

OVERVIEW OF THE *GUIDE*



The Safe and Responsive Schools Framework is an approach to improving the behavior of students at school, and to preventing school violence. It is a structure which permits schools to engage in actions or strategies at each of three levels. These are:

- **Creating a Positive Climate**
- **Early Identification and Intervention**
- **Effective Responses**

School teams can use the Framework to assess current programs and activities in a school, to identify promising practices and programs which might be considered to supplement existing programs, and assist schools to prioritize actions needed.

Purpose

The purpose of this *Guide* is to provide assistance to schools in using the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework to assess, plan and implement efforts to address school violence prevention, discipline reform and behavior improvement. The *Guide* outlines a detailed process schools can follow to assess their current activities, gather and analyze needed information, and develop a comprehensive plan. It also assists schools in taking steps to implement their plan. The *Guide* is intended to provide a stand-alone set of procedures and information for a school to engage in such a planning and implementation process.

Who should use this *Guide*?

This *Guide* is intended primarily for the facilitator (chairperson) of a school building-based Safe and Responsive Schools Team. The formation of a team and the facilitator’s roles are described in detail later in the *Guide*. The facilitator can share part or all of the *Guide* with all members of the team if that would be helpful.

Many times a building administrator may be a facilitator for the SRS Team, but if not, the *Guide* will also provide information about the SRS process and resources which may be of importance to all administrators, even those not on the team. Copies of the *Guide* should also be shared with administrators of other buildings and with district-level administrators for use in district-wide planning and coordination, and may be useful to district-wide safety and planning teams as well.

What is included in the *Guide*?

The *Guide* provides a brief overview about recent concerns related to school violence and discipline, and then describes the Safe and Responsive Schools (SRS) Framework. This framework is the basis for a school-based planning process to help schools improve behavior, reduce disciplinary problems and prevent school violence.

The *Guide* provides specific instructions for creating a school-based Safe and Responsive Schools Team. It suggests topics for discussion by the team, data which might be gathered and analyzed, information and ideas to be considered, and a process to create a Safe and Responsive School Plan. It includes sample schedules and agendas, procedures for the team and facilitator, examples of products to be created, as well as suggestions for obtaining resource materials and more information.

How is the *Guide* organized?

The *Guide* is comprised of three sections. In addition to this section, the “Overview and SRS Framework,” are “The Process Guide”; and “The Resource Guide.” Each of these is described below-

Section I: Overview and SRS Framework

This section provides an overview of the uses for, and the contents of the *Guide*. The overview tries to identify and answer some questions such as who the *Guide* is intended for, how it might be used, and how it fits with other related activities in a school. In addition this section provides a detailed description of the Safe and Responsive School “Framework”. This Framework or model is the structure on which the planning process and resources of the *Guide* are based.

Section II: The Process Guide

This section provides the information necessary to lead the team through the stages of a strategic planning process. Step by step guidance is given on carrying out and interpreting a needs assessment related to behavior, discipline and violence prevention. It includes creating vision and mission statements, gathering a variety of information, reviewing best practices, and developing, implementing and evaluating a school plan.

It also provides the necessary tools for your team to develop a SRS Plan including reproducible copies of the four SRS Safe Schools Surveys (i.e., Elementary Student, Secondary Student, Staff, and Parent) and the SRS Practices & Programs Inventory, as well as strategic planning worksheets to guide the team through the process of developing, implementing, and evaluating a school specific plan. This section also provide sample plans meeting schedules, agendas and other materials.

Section III: The Resource Guide

Although our knowledge of violence prevention is growing and changing, there are many implementation options available to schools. The *Resource Guide* provides school teams with a brief orientation on how to gather information and research about emerging topics related to violence prevention and behavior interventions. This will permit schools to find and employ the most current research available when making decisions about program implementation.

The next section of the *Resource Guide* is comprised of three sections organized by the three tiers of intervention in the SRS Framework. Each section will have a brief overview, and an outline of the many of the intervention topics that might be included at a particular level of intervention. Each topic at that level will then be described in a brief paragraph with preliminary references, or in an individual “fact sheet”. Where available, each fact sheet will provide an overview of that topic, a summary of the current status of research on the topic, and key issues in implementation of that idea. The Fact Sheets typically include contact information and web links to a variety materials or report related to the fact sheet topic. Additional resources and fact sheets will be posted to the project websites (<http://www.unl.edu/srs> or <http://www.indiana.edu/~safeschl/>) as they are created.

Why the focus on the school?

While the *Guide* might be of use at the district level, and it is also possible that some of the *Guide*'s contents could be translated to the individual classroom level, the *Guide* focuses on school-wide planning and implementation. We believe that the school is the most useful and most powerful level to address overall behavioral issues. This *Guide* is intended to be useful for individual school buildings whether at the elementary or secondary level. While individual teachers might translate some of the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework to the classroom level, without school-wide implementation, the needed structure across all three levels will not be possible. It may be even more powerful for the *Guide* to be used across an entire school district, or at least multiple schools, as this will promote efficiency and consistency in implementing the Framework. A district wide team may also be employed to coordinate activities and resources across individual buildings, and to do a parallel district wide planning process to building level planning in described in this *Guide*.

Can the *Guide* be modified or adapted?

While the *Guide* will provide a blueprint for a complete process, it is up to the team and leadership at each school to decide how to best use these materials. Some

parts of the process may have already have been completed at some locations, or may not be relevant to all situations. Therefore, we expect that the *Guide* will be adapted to local needs. Nevertheless, we hope that the integrity of doing a thorough, comprehensive, building-level assessment and planning process will be maintained. In that context we invite schools to adapt these materials as is appropriate to their varying circumstances.

How was this *Guide* developed?

The *Safe and Responsive School Guide* was an outgrowth of the ideas and workshops developed by Russell J. Skiba, Indiana University and Reece L. Peterson, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This was followed by a federally funded “Project of National Significance” at the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs on Safe and Responsive Schools (Project #H325N9900099). The project structure and content originated with the Project Co-directors, but the process described in this *Guide* was developed and adapted through a field site development process involving multiple local school sites. During the first two years, this included one small city school system in Nebraska (five schools- three teams) that worked with the project through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and two small school districts in Indiana (seven schools and teams) that worked with the project through Indiana University. These sites are listed on the acknowledgements page of this *Guide* and on the project websites. Various parts of the *Guide* were developed throughout the first two years of the project, resulting in a complete draft by the end of the second year of the project. The draft was then revised during the remaining period of the project.

Has this *Guide* been field-tested?

Before the beginning of the third school year of the project, a copy of the *Draft Guide* was delivered to all of the original schools, and also to seven additional school sites. This included six schools in two medium urban school systems, as well as one very small school system with only two schools (See list on Acknowledgements page of this *Guide* or the SRS websites identified at the end of this Chapter). The original

sites, as well as the new sites were asked during the third project year to start fresh and follow the procedures outlined in the *Draft Guide* as completely as possible. During this year, process and procedures were refined, and additional content added to the *Guide*. In addition, the participating schools all provided input on the *Guide* itself via questionnaires or focus groups, including suggestions for improvement and evaluations of the impact of the *Guide* for their school. These suggestions were used to develop this current version of the *Guide*.

Extensive data, useful ideas, and various examples developed at the project sites have been gathered as well, and are used in the *Guide* as illustrations and examples. While there was field-testing of these materials with some schools, further field-testing of this *Guide* will occur in the future and is desired.

What have experts said about the *Guide*?

In addition to the field-testing, during the third year of the project, the *Draft Guide* was sent to an expert panel of four nationally recognized experts in school behavior, discipline and school violence (See Acknowledgement page and websites). The reviewers felt very positive about the materials, and made additional suggestions for improvement in the *Guide*, which have been incorporated.

Terminology

Safety. The Safe and Responsive Schools Project includes the word “safe” and focuses on “safety” as it related to student behavior and violence. While we will use the word safety in this context, we realize that safety at school many involve many other elements such as bus and playground safety, safety in the handling of food, safety in storms or accidents, etc. While these other types of safety are also important, they are not directly a part of this program and will not be addressed in the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework.

Team. In the *Guide*, Team refers to the Safe and Responsive School team described in the *Guide*. Considerations in forming this team are discussed later

(Chapter 3), and it may be possible that an existing team or committee with a different name may be serving as the SRS team.

Facilitator. In this *Guide*, the Facilitator is leader or chairperson of the Safe and Responsive Schools team. That person may be a teacher, counselor, psychologist, administrator, or a person in another role. Some teams have identified co-facilitators. The Guide provides direct guidance for the Facilitator in creating and assisting the team in the SRS planning process.

The facilitator may also serve a role as a “coach” who is able to rally support and enthusiasm for the efforts of the team to move forward in the Safe and Responsive School planning process. Like a good coach, the facilitator should acknowledge and reinforce the good work of team members, and should identify problems with the team and take appropriate action to correct them quickly.

Notes to assist the facilitator can be found throughout this *Guide*.

How can the *Guide* & related materials be accessed?

The latest available research reports, field testing information and copies of the *Guide* and other related materials can be found on the project websites at:

<http://www.unl.edu/srs> or <http://www.indiana.edu/~safeschl/> . Or may be obtained from the authors at the addresses listed.

Summary Chapter 1 - Overview of the Guide

- **The SRS Framework**

An approach to improving the behavior of students at school, and to preventing school violence based on targeting three levels of action:

Summary Box 1.

- Creating a Positive Climate.
- Early Identification and Intervention
- Effective Responses

- **The purpose of the *Guide* is to provide assistance to schools in using the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework to assess, plan and implement efforts to address school violence prevention, discipline reform and behavior improvement.**

- **The Safe and Responsive Schools *Guide* consists of three parts:**

- Overview and the SRS Framework
- The Process Guide
- The Resource Guide

- **The *Guide* is for school based teams, and in particular for the “facilitators” of these teams**

- *Adapted.* The *Guide* can be adapted to meet the needs of your school.
- *Developed & Field Tested.* The *Guide* materials were developed in close cooperation with several schools who provided input over three years.
- *Experts.* A panel of experts also had input into the Framework and *Guide*.

- **Obtaining the Safe and Responsive Schools *Guide* & related materials**

- <http://www.unl.edu/srs> or <http://www.indiana.edu/~safeschl/>

THE SRS FRAMEWORK



Introduction

In the past several years, incidents of dramatic and shocking violence have left teachers and students shaken and nervous about the potential for violence at their own school. A rash of copycat threats in school districts throughout the nation, and the seeming normalcy of many of the shooters, has led to the inevitable but uncomfortable conclusion that serious violence could erupt anywhere, at any time.

These concerns lead to an increasing focus on preventing school violence. Should we implement prevention programs to improve school climate and teach students civility? Can we identify early warning signs before the eruption of violence? Is it necessary to rely on zero tolerance and increased use of suspension and expulsion in the face of school disruption, or are there other options? How can schools be prepared to cope with an event of school violence or crisis? Is school violence related to other types of inappropriate or disruptive behavior in school? What types of strategies for violence prevention have been most effective, and how can they be implemented?

Data on school violence may also lead to a surprising conclusion about the importance of day-to-day discipline. In one study of rural educators, a majority of teachers and administrators agreed that violence was worsening at their school (Peterson, Beekley, Speaker & Pietrzak, 1996). But the behaviors they reported as escalating were not drugs, gangs and weapons offenses, but rather behaviors indicating incivility such as rumors and peer escalation of violent events, verbal intimidation and threats, pushing and shoving, and sexual harassment. Similarly, national surveys report that schools with fewer disciplinary problems in general also report fewer incidents of serious crime.

These findings have tremendously important implications, for they say that what we do in our schools on a day-to-day basis in terms of discipline may be related to the prevention of serious crime and violence. By implementing comprehensive programs

that improve overall school climate and reduce minor disruption, schools may be able to reduce the risk of more serious violent incidents.

The message of the *Safe and Responsive Schools (SRS) Guide* is that we can develop a variety of school-based programs that can significantly reduce the threat of serious violence and disruption. These programs may also reduce other more minor behavior problems, and can have a very positive effect on academic progress of students as well. The *SRS Guide* is based on extensive and direct involvement with twenty schools in two states, in urban, suburban and rural settings. The planning process and information provided by the *Guide* draws from the experiences of educators and administrators who developed SRS plans for their own schools.

An effective technology of school safety begins with knowledge and understanding. While it is beyond the scope of this *Guide* to describe all of the current knowledge about school violence prevention, it will assist schools to address many of these questions. The purposes of the *SRS Guide* are to:

- **Provide a Process** for schools to conduct a comprehensive assessment of their violence prevention, discipline and behavior improvement efforts, and develop a strategic plan for making these efforts more complete and effective.
- **Provide Information and Resources** about the available options schools may have to implement effective practices that strengthen their violence prevention and behavior improvement efforts.

What Do We Know About School Violence?

Overall, youth violence in the United States has increased at an alarming rate in the last fifteen years. Homicide has become the second leading cause of death for persons aged 15 to 24, and the leading cause of death for African-Americans in this age group. Between 1985 and 1994, annual arrest rates for weapons possession for youth less than 18 years of age increased 104% (Centers for Disease Control, 1996; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1996). **Are More Current Stats Available?**

Yet little of the violence reported for children and youth occurs in school; nor do national data show that the problem is getting worse (Heaviside, Rowand, Williams & Farris, 1998; Chandler, Chapman, Rand & Taylor, 1998). Less than one percent of homicides and suicides among school children in the period from 1992 to 1994 were school-associated (**Reference need here**). With a school homicide rate of less than one in a million, the chances of violent death among juveniles are almost 40 times as great out of school as in school. While shocking and senseless shootings give the impression of dramatic increases in school-related violence, national surveys consistently find that school violence has stayed essentially stable or even decreased slightly over time (see the websites listed in the box).

Unfortunately, not all schools are equally safe. National data suggests that middle and high schools, especially larger schools, are more at-risk for serious violence (**Reference needed**). Moreover, students in urban schools serving predominantly lower socio-economic status (SES) minority children are twice as likely to be victims of violence as students in suburban, town or rural areas (**Reference needed here. Isn't this**

Figure 1.	
Sources of Information	Web Addresses
National Center for Education Statistics <i>Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-1997, Students' Reports of School Crime: 1998 and 1995, and Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 1998</i> and subsequent reports.	http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubic1=98030 or http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch and enter NCES #98030 and http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98.crime and http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch and enter NCES #98251
U.S. Department of Education <i>Annual Report on School Safety, October, 1998</i> and subsequent reports	http://www.ed.gov/pubs/AnnSchoolRept98 and subsequent reports.
Justice Policy Institute <i>School House Hype: School Shootings and the Real Risks Kids Face in America</i>	http://www.cjcj.org/ Go to this site and type the report title in the search box.

mostly out of school violence?). In addressing the tragic incidents that have occurred recently in suburban and rural schools, it is critical that the more ongoing and severe problems of lower socio-economic standing (SES) urban schools and students not be forgotten or ignored.

Thus, data seems to fly in the face of teacher, student and public opinion that school violence is extremely serious and getting worse. But while school shootings involving multiple victims are still extremely rare from a statistical standpoint, statistics are hardly reassuring as long as the possibility exists that it could happen in *our* school, to *our* children. It is no doubt healthier that we seek to develop effective programs to prevent *any* death on school grounds rather than to become accustomed to increasingly horrific levels of violence in our nation's schools.

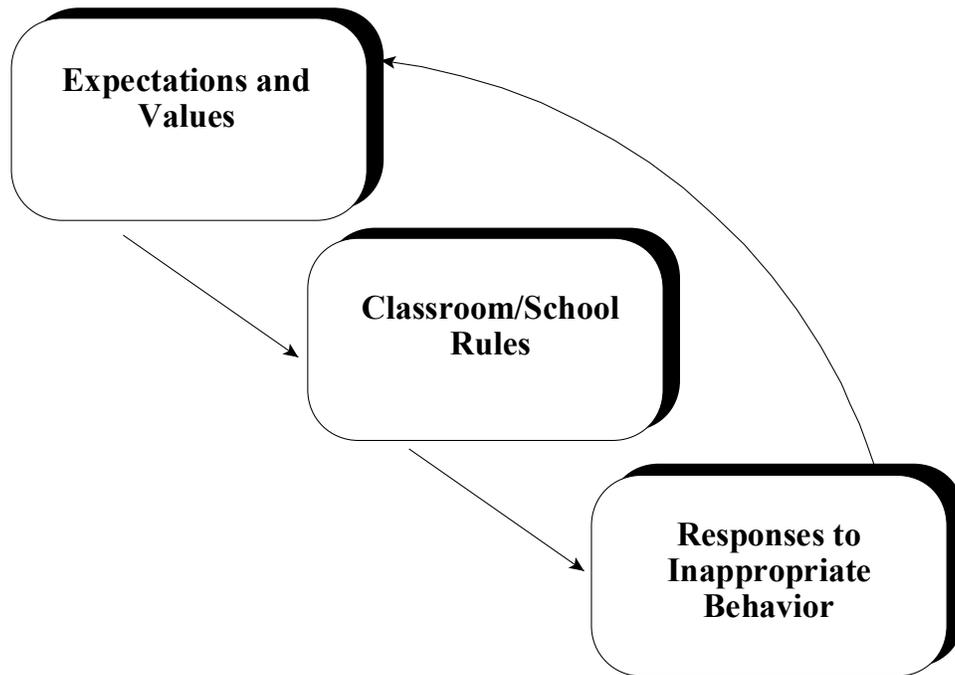
Teaching the Social Curriculum

Although school discipline has come to be associated with punishment and exclusion, the word *discipline* comes from the same Latin root as the word *disciple*: *discipere*, to teach or comprehend. Thus, the Safe and Responsive Schools model is grounded in the notion of discipline as instruction, or *teaching the social curriculum*.

What is the Social Curriculum?

In every school and classroom, there is a social curriculum that acts as a guide for student behavior throughout the school day. Though rarely as explicit as the written materials that constitute the academic curriculum, it is no less important in determining whether a student succeeds. As shown in Figure 1, schools and teachers constantly make their expectations known to students through verbal explanations, rules, and consequences. In a well-run classroom, these three components work together to teach students how they should behave in order to succeed in the classroom. In hundreds of interactions a day, the correspondence between expectations, rules, and consequences allows students to learn each classroom's unique social curriculum.

Figure 2. Components of the Social Curriculum. Classroom and school expectations define the desired social and behavioral climate of the school and classroom. These expectations are operationalized through classroom and school rules, and through positive and negative responses students receive to their behavior. The consistency of expectations, rules, and consequences teaches students about whether the “true” expectations of the school or classroom are consistent with stated policies.



In less well-managed classrooms and schools, inconsistency among expectations, rules, and consequences provides less opportunity for learning the implicit expectations of the social curriculum, and may even give students conflicting messages about the appropriate way to behave in a given classroom or school situation. Teacher expectations that the classroom will be an engaging learning environment stressing student initiative may be contradicted by an authoritarian or demeaning disciplinary style. Disciplinary responses that are inconsistent with written rules or unfair to certain students (see below on minority disproportionality in discipline) may give students the message that what those in authority say is not as important as what they do. For students who are sufficiently good observers, even consequences that are inconsistent with stated rules provide valuable instruction about the "real rules" of the classroom. For others, however,

understanding and behaving within the classroom's social curriculum is difficult. Those students need explicit instruction in the social curriculum.

Who Needs Instruction in the Social Curriculum?

Which students are likely to benefit from instruction in the social curriculum? The brief answer is that although there are clearly some children who need extensive social instruction, all children may need some social instruction regarding some issues.

The majority of students come to school with the ability to recognize teacher expectations and succeed in adapting their behavior to fit the classroom, regardless of how well those expectations are presented. For students who exhibit behavior problems, however, learning the social curriculum is by no means an automatic process. These students come into the classroom with perceptions and beliefs, growing out of their experience, that may leave them less capable of recognizing and responding to the typical social curriculum of schools. The literature in the field of conduct disorders illustrates how this process might operate. First, children who display non-compliant, aggressive, or antisocial behavior are often the victim of coercive interchanges in their family that have taught them that the most effective way to avoid abuse is to become increasingly abusive themselves. Second, in the face of extreme parental inconsistency, some children learn to act out to establish the limits, even if it means exposing themselves to harsh punishment. Third, perhaps as a result of unsafe or threatening home and community conditions, conduct disordered children develop an antisocial cognitive set, striking first and asking questions later. Finally, well-documented links between antisocial behavior and academic underachievement suggest that, as the difficulty of academic material increases, students with behavior problems will turn to off task and disruptive behavior in order to escape from academic demands (Center, Deitz & Kaufman, 1982).

It is not hard to see how exposure to these risk factors could leave a child with a very different understanding of "how the world works." Students who have experienced coercive family cycles (Patterson, 1992) may view a teacher request for compliance as just the beginning of a long battle that they need to resist as quickly and firmly as possible. When faced with unstructured classroom situations, children from inconsistent home environments may act out in order to understand the limits of their environment

(Wahler, Williams, & Cerezo, 1990). Students who experience daily personal threat in their home or community may strike out first in ambiguous social situations in order to avoid being aggressed against (Dodge, 1993). Finally, in school settings where academic performance is the yardstick of worth, students with a history of academic failure (Hinshaw, 1992) may strive, not to complete work, but to engage in off-task and disruptive behavior in order to escape from academic demands (Center, Deitz, & Kaufman, 1982).

Thus, the experiences of students at-risk for behavior problems leave them with social perceptions that are a poor fit with the standard expectations of most school environments. Acting out of these experiences and perceptions, the behavior of these students appears disruptive, irresponsible, or incomprehensible to teachers and administrators. But to the student whose experience has yielded a different set of social expectations, these behaviors may seem perfectly sensible, and in fact their only alternative. Our consequences, however rational they may appear to us, may seem highly unfair to those students, since they are acting in the only way they can, in accord with the only world they know. Without explicit instruction in the expectations of the social curriculum, it is highly likely that these students will fail both socially and academically.

Although some students have a particular need for explicit instruction in social competencies, it is probably also true that all students need some instruction in some skills at some point. The media violence that pervades our culture has been linked with increased levels of negative and aggressive interactions among both children and adolescents (Paik & Comstock, 1994). Surveys of high school students reveal a startlingly high proportion who are unaware of effective methods for solving social conflict (Opatow, 1991). Instruction for all students in the social curriculum may thus help address widespread misconceptions among today's youth about the nature of conflict and problem solving.

The Safe and Responsive Schools Framework

The Safe and Responsive Schools (SRS) Framework assists schools in implementing a comprehensive and preventive process for addressing school violence,

and for improving student behavior at school. The SRS Framework also assists schools to teach the social curriculum to all students, focusing special attention on those students who need explicit instruction and structure to learn it. The process is intended to enable schools and school districts to develop a broader perspective on school safety, stressing comprehensive planning, prevention, and parent/community involvement. It incorporates our best knowledge of school-wide behavior planning in a comprehensive model of systems change in school violence prevention, discipline reform and behavior change.

Components of Safe and Responsive Schools

In response to school violence, many schools have turned to harsh zero tolerance disciplinary procedures. Yet there is little evidence that such approaches make a positive contribution to school safety or improved student behavior (**Reference?**). Other schools have adopted just one program, such as a violence prevention curriculum, as their response to concerns about violence and behavior. Instead of a simplistic approach, our best data suggest that a comprehensive and preventive model is more likely to ensure safe schools and promote civil behavior.

- **Comprehensive.** Many efforts to reduce violence are narrowly focused, usually assuming that one new add-on program will be sufficient. Instead the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework addresses a complete range of potential actions schools might take. It assists schools in gathering data or indicators, helps participating schools to understand the important program components that they may already have in place, and assists schools in developing plans to implement new programs or interventions which address that school's needs. Moreover, it is important for schools to understand those students whom specific interventions are intended to serve. In addition it is important to understand the connections between programs. Programs that are mutually supportive result in a whole building approach and create a much stronger plan than a haphazard assembly of independent programs.

- **Preventative.** There is growing consensus that the best way to deal with violence is to prevent it from occurring. This involves preventing the conditions that foster inappropriate behavior that can lead to violence, as well as preventing students who have acted violently, or disruptively, from engaging in these behaviors again.

The Safe and Responsive Schools Framework provides a structure for a comprehensive approach to violence prevention and behavior improvement. It is oriented towards the prevention of all kinds of behavior problems, by fostering civility and creating community in schools so that academic and social learning can be enhanced.

Guiding Assumptions of the Framework

With its focus on a planning process, using available resources, determining strengths and identifying needs, the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework differs from other school safety efforts focused on simply adding a new program or function. The SRS Framework focuses on creating a comprehensive view of violence prevention and behavior improvement, and provides a structure for planning and making systems change occur in a school.

Needs and Readiness

The framework makes several assumptions about schools' needs and readiness for violence prevention and behavior improvement:

- **Schools have Some Things in Place.** Most schools are already doing some things that may be useful components of a violence prevention plan.
- **Schools are Missing Some Pieces.** Most schools have at least some components of comprehensive violence prevention and behavior improvement model that are either missing or inadequate.
- **The People in Schools are Motivated.** Most school staff, students and communities are motivated to prevent violence and improve student behavior at school.

- **Coordination and Integration are Needed.** Schools can be helped greatly if their existing and proposed activities related to violence prevention could be coordinated and integrated with each other to create a more comprehensive, intense whole. It is helpful to know how the various pieces fit with and support the others to make a comprehensive whole.
- **A Comprehensive Understanding is Lacking.** Most schools and educators do not have an overall understanding of the necessary elements of a comprehensive violence prevention program.

Positive Outcomes

Violence prevention efforts and activities can have positive effects on many other school goals and are connected to improvements in behavior and academic performance of all students:

- **Violence is Preventable.** In response to fears about violence, schools and communities often focus on reactions to disruption and violence. Yet we know that major violence is linked with day-to-day disciplinary issues, such as bullying and incivility. Our best data suggests that attention to school climate and prevention is a much more promising approach to improving student behavior and preventing disruption and violence. **(Reference?)**
- **Reducing Violence Reduces Other Negative Behaviors.** Efforts to reduce violence are related to efforts to prevent or diminish other inappropriate behaviors in school. There is great overlap between the interventions to reduce violence and interventions to reduce school drop out, student drug and alcohol use, teen pregnancy, school academic failure, and other problematic behavior. Efforts to prevent violence will likely prevent other problems as well.
- **Violence Prevention Enhances Positive Behaviors.** Efforts to reduce violence and other inappropriate behavior are related to efforts to increase desirable and socially appropriate behavior in school. Expanding positive behavior in schools reduces violence and inappropriate behavior.

- **Violence Prevention Enhances Academic Performance.** There is a strong connection between interventions to reduce violence and interventions that enhance student's academic performance. Prevention and climate efforts create enhanced academic learning for all students.

The Process of Change

Change is never easy, and change within schools will require understanding, motivation and sustained effort.

- **There is No Quick Fix.** It is human nature to look for the quickest and easiest way to solve a problem. Yet problems of school violence and disruption are complex and will not be fixed by the latest educational trends, or commercial programs claiming to have “the answer”.
- **Inside Knowledge, Thinking and Planning are Needed.** It is unlikely that outside experts will be able to make suggestions that will significantly alter a school's overall ability to prevent violence or improve behavior. The input, involvement and understanding of a school's students, parents, teachers and administrators are all important in creating and sustaining positive change. “Local” knowledge about the daily routines and the particular climate of a particular school are important.
- **Change Takes Time, Resources, and Coordinated Effort.** Improving safety and school climate does not happen overnight. Even with the best of plans, change can be frustratingly slow. If the improvements we desire are to occur at all, there must be a commitment on the part of school staff to take the time to work and plan together. That effort is more likely to be successful if it involves all those who we expect to be affected by change, including students, parents, and the community.

Together these assumptions about needs, outcomes and process suggest that it will be necessary to understand both major and minor threats to safety and civility in schools, so that we can develop a comprehensive and preventive approach to school safety. At

Figure 3. first, such changes may seem small and dependent on a few individuals, but over time, a comprehensive process has the power to reshape the climate of our school communities.

Students in School

Students with Intense or Chronic Behavior Problems 1-7%

Students and Behavior in School

Students Who are Engaged in Violence: Less than 0.000001%

As a way to structure our thinking about violence prevention, actions and interventions, the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework identifies three groupings of students (See Figure 3):

Students at Risk for Disruption or Violence 5-15%

- **Students With Minimum Risk.** A large number of students with few, if any, behavior problems and very small likelihood of engaging in violence.

This group is estimated to be 85-95% of all students.

All Students in School 100%



- **Students At-Risk.** A number of students, approximately 5-15%, who may be showing in various ways that they are having difficulties at school, and as a

result are at-risk for school problems such as academic difficulties, absences, inappropriate behavior and the like. If these problems worsen, or the warning signs these students are providing are ignored, these students may be more likely to develop more serious or violent behaviors, as well as other school problems.

- **Students with Intense or Chronic Behavior Problems.** A small number of students, approximately 1-7%, who already have serious or chronic behavior problems and who are already the focus of much time and energy in most schools. Some of these students have chronic encounters with the school discipline system, some are in special education programs on account of their behavior, and many are having serious problems at home or in the community as well as at school.

There are also a very small number of extremely violent students (much less than one in one million students) who may engage in violence similar to the school shooting incidents of the past several years. Very violent students might come from any one of these three groups, and as a result it is our belief that interventions, which focus on these three groups, may also prevent the very rare instances of extreme violence.

Three Levels of Action

The Safe and Responsive Schools Framework emphasizes concern for student behavior and related interventions by suggesting that schools should have different sets of actions or strategies for each of these three groups of students (See Figure 4). While some strategies cut across these levels or tiers, they are helpful in organizing the kinds of prevention and intervention strategies schools should have in place. The levels are:

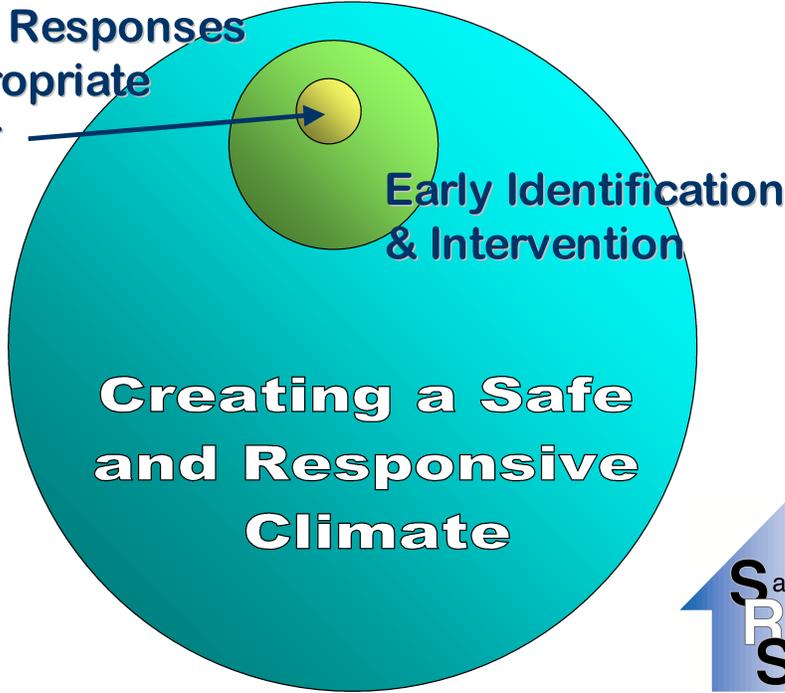
- **Creating a Positive Climate** promotes civility and teaches all students alternatives to violence with an emphasis on building a strong school community through increased caring, attentiveness, and feelings of belonging and support. Possible strategies include school-wide preventive programs such as conflict management and peer mediation, bullying prevention,

Figure 4

Three Levels of Action

The SRS Framework

Effective Responses
to Inappropriate
Behavior



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- **Effective Responses** to serious or persistent behavior problems address the needs of students who are chronically disruptive, inappropriate or violent through increased disciplinary alternatives, behavior intervention plans, and alternative programs, as well as adequate preparations for school-wide crisis and extreme behavioral problems.

Using the Framework

Multiple options are available for schools to implement programs and procedures at each of these three levels, but often these programs and procedures are not integrated or coordinated with each other. The Safe and Responsive Schools Framework assists schools to assess and coordinate existing programs and procedures as well as to identify needs for new programs and procedures. This framework addresses the complexity of preventing violence and addressing student emotional and behavior problems, and requires comprehensive planning and intervention. Yet it does not require all schools to look alike on these issues, but rather encourages schools to develop plans that correspond to the needs and the culture their own school. The *SRS Process Guide* provides step-by-step guidance for schools in decision-making using the framework, and offers schools choices regarding how best to address their needs. The *SRS Resource Guide* provides information about programs that are possible and how they fit into the framework. Thus the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework includes both the process and the resources schools need to implement the comprehensive framework.

The Safe & Responsive Schools Planning Process

The SRS Process relies upon a team-based approach to help participating schools restructure school discipline and school safety practices. This team of school leaders (including faculty, administrators, parents and students) will work together in a systems change process that includes activities in the following areas:

- **Needs Assessment:** Defining the strengths and needs of the school in the areas of discipline and school safety, including an inventory of existing programs, and identification of persons responsible for various tasks related to these topics.
- **Promising Practices Review:** Assessing available options for violence prevention and improving student behavior.

- **Plan Development:** Developing a Safe & Responsive Schools Plan, containing at least one strategy from each of the three framework components.
- **Plan Implementation:** Organizing resources, training and activities to begin to implement the contents of a Safe & Responsive Schools Plan,
- **Evaluation of Outcomes:** Identifying desired outcomes, and beginning to implement evaluation procedures to determine the impact of implemented interventions and systems changes.

Planning Process Outcomes

By the end of the SRS Planning Process your team can expect to gain the following:

- **Understanding Strengths and Needs** in your school for preventing school violence, reducing disruption and enhancing school climate.
- **Awareness of Strategies and Promising Practices** for preventing violence and disruption, and how they could be implemented in your school.
- **Knowledge of Resources Needed** for implementing effective strategies in your school.

In addition, the team will have created at least two documents:

- **A Safe and Responsive School Plan** that tailors specific strategies and interventions to the needs of your school.
- **An Evaluation Plan** to track key variables to determine whether the SRS Plan is making a difference.

More Information on Safe & Responsive Schools

Additional information about the Safe and Responsive Schools (SRS) Framework as well as other related topics such as “zero tolerance” policies, minority over-representation and school discipline policies can be found in the resources in Figure 5.

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Figure 5

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- **While the media may give the impression that school violence is increasing, it is not.**
Summary Box 2.
 - Between home, community and school, the school is the safest environment for children.
 - Middle and high schools have the highest risk, although even that is low
 - Lower SES and minority children are more at risk also.
- **The social curriculum are the classroom and school expectations for desired behavior**
 - Some students need explicit instruction in the social curriculum.
 - All students need some supports to learn the social curriculum.
- **Assumptions are described related to needs and readiness, outcomes, and the process of change.**
- **The SRS Framework identifies three groups of students**
 - Students With Minimum Risk
 - Students At-risk
 - Students with Chronic or Severe Behavior Problems
- **Three tiers of interventions are possible in the SRS Framework related to three groups of students:**
 - Creating a Positive Climate.
 - Early Identification and Intervention.
 - Effective Responses
- **The Framework employs a systems change process that includes:**
 - **Needs Assessment.** Define the strengths and needs of your school in the areas of discipline and school safety.
 - **Promising Practices Review.** Assess available options.
 - **Plan Development.** Develop a Safe & Responsive Schools Plan, containing at least one strategy from each of the three levels of intervention.
 - **Plan Implementation and Evaluation of Outcomes.**
- **Planning Process Outcomes to expect at the end of one school year:**
 - An understanding of strengths and needs.
 - An awareness of strategies and promising practices.
 - Knowledge of resources needed.
 - A Safe and Responsive Schools plan.
 - Implementation and evaluation of plan

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PROCESS GUIDE

SECTION 2

CHAPTERS 3-10

CHAPTER 3

TEAM FORMATION



The Safe And Responsive School Team

At the heart of the SRS planning process is a school-based team or committee. The activities of the SRS Team drive the violence prevention and behavior improvement planning process, by assessing the needs of their school and using that information to develop a comprehensive violence prevention and response plan.

Over the past several years, it has become popular to identify almost every group within a school as a “team”. While it is beyond our scope here to discuss the similarities and differences between *committees* and *teams*, for our purposes, the two words will be used more or less interchangeably, and it will not matter whether your school identifies their SRS group as a team or as a committee, or using some other name. We will generally use the word *team*.

Why A Team?

There are a number of *advantages* to a team-based approach:

- It brings together perspectives and ideas, and facilitates communication across different facets of the school community.
- It permits broad involvement in making important decisions.
- It prevents burnout that may occur when one person is solely responsible for a large area of responsibility.
- It may assist in developing ownership, commitment and consistency across a school staff in the implementation of violence prevention and positive behavior systems.

There are also *disadvantages* of teams or committees:

- It is difficult to find times to meet, and to coordinate school schedules.

- It may be difficult to stick to an agenda without getting diverted to other topics and issues.
- It may make time to inform and “bring people along” to achieve consensus
- Most schools are already overwhelmed with various committees and teams.

In spite of these disadvantages, the advantages of having a school behavior team or committee outweigh them. The issues around student behavior seem so important to the overall goals and success of a school that staff and community should be involved in the needs assessment, planning and implementation of these issues.

We also realize that there may be circumstances where a team is not possible. In this situation, we feel that it would still be possible for one individual, particularly a building administrator, to adapt and use the materials and process in this *Guide* to develop building level plans and interventions to improve behavior and prevent violence.

Planning For An SRS Team

There is no single way to form and sustain a successful school team; administrators must decide the composition of the team based on the needs their own school. Nevertheless, there are several issues that must be addressed including whether to create a new team; the relationship of this team to the school improvement process as well as other teams or committees with potentially overlapping functions. The process of forming and sustaining an effective team also itself requires planning.

Should this be a “new” or a “pre-existing” team?

The SRS team can either be a pre-existing committee, or a new one created for this purpose. Using a pre-existing committee may be easier to schedule, may prevent overlap and duplication, and may assist in limiting the overall number of committee meetings members need to attend. Nevertheless, using a pre-existing team or committee may have disadvantages. Integrating other pre-existing tasks or responsibilities with the new ones may be difficult; new tasks may require additional time resulting in too lengthy or too frequent meetings. On the other hand, a new team may be easy to get started, and

may create new enthusiasm. They may also be able to focus on the specific planning needed. However, the disadvantages are that it may stretch the same individuals to attend even more meetings; may create scheduling and logistical problems, and may appear to overlap with other groups with related functions.

In either case, the SRS Team should be incorporated into the school's existing committee structure to reinforce its importance to the school, and to clarify its role relative to other committee. It is also essential that an administrator be involved with the committee in order to tie in building planning to the day to day operation of the school, and to show the importance of the functions involved.

What is the relationship to “school improvement” planning?

Many schools have chosen to use an existing School Improvement Planning Team to take on the functions of the SRS team. Some states require schools to have such teams in place, and adding the functions of the SRS team to the School Improvement Teams permits behavioral and climate components to be added to the academic planning most of these teams are engaged in. Some schools have used a subcommittee of the School Improvement Planning Team for this purpose. If such a group exists in a school, the relationship between the SRS team and other school-wide planning groups should be clear, and the plans developed by the SRS team should be incorporated into the larger school planning process.

Coordinating with other teams related to student behavior?

Recently there have been suggestions for a variety of additional teams to address student behavior and behavioral issues in schools. These include a *positive behavior support team* used to define and teach behavioral expectations and monitor behavioral issues within a building (Sugai & Horner, 2001). It also includes individual behavior management teams (often all or some of the IEP team members for students in special education) that might conduct a functional analysis related to a student's behavior and develop and supervise the implementation of an individual behavior plan (Tilly et al., 1998). While teams such as the IEP team may be created only for students in special education, some have called for similar individual behavior management teams to be

created for non-disabled students (Jones, 1991). Additionally educators have been asked to participate in Wraparound Teams (Eber, 1997) or other service coordination teams as a vehicle for assisting families to create support networks and to coordinate services.

Others have suggested that a Bullying Prevention Team be created in a building to insure that bullying prevention and intervention remain at the forefront of educators' agendas (Olweus et al., 1999). A variety of others have been proposed as well including, Crisis Response Teams (Poland, 1999), which respond and help process crisis situations when they occur in schools; Security Assessment Teams (Trump, 1998) which identify school security issues, and offer suggestions to improve school security; School Safety Teams (Stephens, 1995), which plan overall school readiness for various potential safety risks or hazards in school, and Threat Assessment Teams (Fein, et al., 2002).

Clearly there are a large number of potential building level teams in schools, and many may have similar or related functions if they are functioning simultaneously. It is unrealistic for any school to have all of these teams in place, but teams that are in place should be coordinated with the SRS team. If these functions are not already taking place in school, as a part of the SRS planning process the SRS team may choose to take on some of these functions, or recommend that other individuals or groups do so. A "Task Responsibility Worksheet" for doing this will be included in later in this *Guide*. In this way the SRS team can serve as a clearinghouse for all of these functions within a school, and can insure that vital roles related to behavior are being performed.

Coordinating with district-wide safety planning committees?

In addition to building level teams, many school districts may have a district-wide safety committees charged with responsibility for creating district or individual school building "safety plans." Several states now require these "safety plans" in legislation or policy. If that is the case, the SRS team should also develop a way to communicate with that committee, and to provide planning information and updates to that committee. That committee might be able to use the same structure and process as the building-based SRS teams to make decisions related to district-wide safety and behavior planning.

What kind of administrative support is needed?

Administrative support, at both the school and district level, is essential to the success of the SRS Program. Unless building and district administrators believe in the need for improving a school's ability to prevent and manage inappropriate behavior and establish a climate of civility it is unlikely that the process or materials described here will be successful. This belief must be matched by a willingness to support and reinforce those who participate in planning and implementing school programs, and by a willingness to find resources to support new initiatives based on team plans.

Who and how many should be on the team?

A team can consist of from 3-10 members (5-8 most typical), and should include individuals who are respected by and representative of their colleagues. A team related to behavior should have a building administrator, a special education teacher, a counselor or psychologist, and other educators and staff members.

Students and Parents. In addition, we urge secondary schools to include at least one student on the team. There is some evidence that involving students in significant planning and decision-making roles related to behavior and violence prevention will itself result in improvements in perceptions about school climate. We also recommend that teams include at least one parent, and possibly a mental health professional from outside the school. Although the inclusion of these members is sometimes difficult to accomplish, teams will find that these individuals can offer unique and important perspectives.

Administrator. In order to tie the planning and implementation done by the team to other building planning and to day-to-day functioning, a building administrator is an essential and should always be a member of the team as well.

Who should provide team leadership?

It is crucial to identify effective leaders for the team. Leaders must be organized so that time can be used efficiently and effectively. The leader must be knowledgeable about his or her school, and its staff and students. The leader must be willing to intervene

when the group is distracted or diverted from its agenda, but must also be sensitive to the needs and concerns of the members, and willing to permit all to have time to learn and process, as well as time to voice their perspective. The leader must take the initiative to make sure that team decisions are implemented, and hold others accountable. Finally, the leader must also monitor and maintain the group’s focus on the long-term goals to be accomplished.

Typically the principal will identify the team facilitator, and in many schools the principal may choose to lead the team her or himself. In some cases that may be another administrator, but it may also be someone else who is capable of providing the necessary leadership to the team. Some teams have had teachers, psychologists, counselors or others provide leadership. It may be desirable to have co-facilitators so that some of the tasks can be shared, particularly if one of the facilitators may be called away during meetings to attend to other issues. For this *Guide*, we will identify the leader or chair as the “facilitator”.

What is the facilitator's role?

In addition to those roles already mentioned, one of the most important roles of the facilitator is to keep the team on track and on-task. Specifically, the facilitator keeps the team moving through the components of the process, and ensures that meetings are productive.

The facilitator’s role is to ensure that tasks are completed, not necessarily to do them. Tasks occurring outside of meetings are probably better distributed across team members. The most successful teams are able to break tasks into smaller parts and assign those parts to specific individuals, including staff, students, and parents – even to others not on the team in some cases. This spreads responsibility across team members, expands involvement and ownership, and helps prevent burnout.

What are responsibilities for team members?

Team members have four main responsibilities during a school year:

- Gathering and analyzing information about violence, behavior and safety issues in that school. This might include gathering office referral, dropout, survey data, as well as other kinds of data related to behavior in school.
- Learning about various programs currently in place, as well as programs that could potentially be brought into the school.
- Developing a plan for the implementation of a comprehensive violence prevention and behavior improvement plan for that school.
- Assisting administrators and staff to implement that plan.

What is the time commitment for the team?

We anticipate that the SRS materials will require about 22 hours during the school year that is the equivalent of about 14 bi-weekly meetings of 1.5 hours, or about 7 monthly meetings of about 3.0 hours each. The amount of time for each component may vary by school depending on the size of the school and the scope of their data gathering, needs, and plan. Some additional time to research different strategies outside of meetings may be needed. A table with a schedule and possible agendas for meetings is described in Chapter 4 later in this *Guide*.

Should this team be a permanent one?

While this *Guide* provides suggestions for a school year long process, it seems important that schools continue to revise plans and implement a comprehensive approach on an ongoing basis. Moreover, many interventions may take multiple years to implement. As school staff, students and needs change, plans will need to be updated. As a result, most schools may choose to make this a permanent committee, and maintain this team indefinitely institutionalizing it in the school structure. We feel that the importance of the goals, as well as the continuity this provides would warrant such a decision to maintain this committee indefinitely.

How can focus and enthusiasm maintained?

Although your team may be initially excited about the process, their enthusiasm may wane with time. This is more likely to occur when teams fail to meet for an extended period of time, or if team members do not understand the purpose of the various activities in which they are engaged. Strategies for combating slowdown include regularly scheduled meetings, explaining how each activity in the process contributes to developing a school safety plan and the importance of this plan for your school, differentiating short and long term goals, and assuring the team that the process does work and they are making progress. Additionally, you may want to discuss with your building administrator ways to provide recognition or perhaps even small stipends for team members.

A useful focusing strategy is to distribute an agenda specifying the tasks to be completed during the meeting, and the amount of time to be spent on each task. This helps to keep the meeting within its designated time frame. Finally, the facilitator helps to keep the discussion on task during meetings, keeps track of time and assists the team in reaching decisions within the available time.

The SRS school based team is at the core of the Safe and Responsive Schools planning process. **Summary Box 3.**

Why an SRS Team?

- A team creates broad ownership and involvement in decisions and implementation of behavior improvement and violence prevention planning.

Planning an SRS Team

- Decisions-
 - New or pre-existing team?
 - Relationship to School Improvement Planning Process
 - Coordination with other related teams & district safety committees?
 - Nature of administrative support
 - Who and how many on the team?
 - Who provides leadership?
- The facilitator helps to keep the team on track and on task, and may be an administrator, teacher or other team member.
- Team members will be responsible for:
 - Gathering and analyzing data
 - Learning about various programs
 - Developing a plan
 - Assisting to implement the plan
- The expected time commitment is estimated to be the equivalent of about 14 bi-weekly meetings.
- Consider making the committee permanent
- Work to maintain focus and enthusiasm

Resources

- A sample schedule with agendas of meetings is provided in Chapter 4

GETTING STARTED

Once the team is formed, you are ready to begin the process that will eventually culminate in the development of the Safe and Responsive Schools Plan. This chapter and the chapters that follow will guide the topics the team should discuss, and the process of developing an SRS plan.

We first describe the specifics of the activities and processes the team will work through in its initial organization and planning during the first two meetings. Three main topics will be addressed: Initial Orientation of the Team; Logistical and Organizational Issues for the Team; and Developing a Vision Statement.

Initial Orientation of the Team

It will be important during the first meeting to orient the school team to the SRS Framework and its pertinence to your school. Participants should be provided handouts that describe the three groupings of students identified in Figure 2, and the three “Levels of Action” of the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework (i.e., Creating a Positive Climate, Early Warning and Early Intervention, and Effective Responses) in Figure 3. The variety of strategies that have shown positive outcomes for students and schools could be briefly described as well. An overview of the planning process should be shared including needs assessment, and strategies for developing, implementing and evaluating a school plan.

This initial meeting should include a discussion of school safety and school climate needs as perceived by team members. Participants should leave with a better understanding of the nature of school violence, effective options for violence prevention, and an overview of the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework.

Logistical & Organizational Issues

One essential focus of the first meeting of any team are the organizational issues essential to effective teams.

What are some things to discuss during the first meeting?

These may include:

Introductions. Introductions of all of those attending as needed.

Purpose. The persons who established the team should indicate what the purpose of the team will be, and how the members were chosen. These topics are discussed further under “orientation” below.

Content Orientation. As described above.

Handouts. These should include: List of members; agenda for first meeting; possible schedule and agendas for future meetings; a copy of the “School Practices Questionnaire”; copies of each of the four “Safe School Survey Questionnaires”;

Future Meeting Schedule. It will be essential to establish a regular meeting time, and a length for scheduled meetings. If the decision has not already been made, the team should decide whether they wish to meet once a month for three hours or biweekly for an hour and a half, or use some other schedule. This might be decided with the overall year schedule in mind. A sample schedule and agenda is attached, and might be discussed in order to identify the major topics and tasks for future meetings.

Minutes or Notes. A recorder should be designated to take meeting minutes (this may be a rotating duty, or one individual may volunteer to take on this duty across several meetings). An agreement should be reached concerning when and how minutes will be distributed (e.g. hard copy at meetings; e-mail before meetings; etc.).

Time Commitment of Members. The team should discuss the commitment involved with the SRS process- both meeting time and other tasks that may need to be completed outside of meetings.

Liaison with Administrators and Other Committees. It will be essential that the SRS Team keep non-team member administrators and other pertinent committees informed of the committee’s progress, even if one or more administrators are on the team. To do so, it will be important to decide who will do this as well as how and when.

Communication with Others. The team should discuss the importance of sharing its activities and decisions with other constituents. These might include students, parents and other staff members not on the SRS team. Some plan for regularly reporting about the team’s activities should be developed such as regular newsletter reports, notes or flyers in mailboxes; meetings with student council or other groups; representatives reporting to other committees (such as the School Improvement Committee) etc.

What is the schedule and agendas for meetings?

The *Guide* includes a sample schedule of meetings throughout a school year, with potential topics to be addressed at each meeting. See below for a reproducible schedule.

The schedule is based on the SRS team meeting twice per month for one and one half hours each meeting. The times are estimated, and may be need to be adjusted- some tasks may take longer than estimated, and others less time. Also the overall meeting structure can be adjusted. For example a school team may choose to meet once per month for three hours. The schedule also includes an agenda that lists the topics that will be discussed at each meeting, and the outcomes or products related to those topics. More details about the purpose, materials, and suggested materials for various topics will be provided later in the *Guide*.

The chapters of the *Guide* that follow are generally organized according to that schedule. In order to keep on schedule, the team will often need to anticipate future needs for data and discussion. For example, although a discussion of a Safety Survey may not be scheduled until the middle of the school year, planning for the administration of the survey and the actual administration will need to occur well ahead of that time to have data ready to discuss. Thus the schedule includes cues to begin that planning in your first few meetings, even though you are still working on an earlier phase of the project. The process of change is never entirely straightforward, and must be responsive to the needs of your school. Thus, you may find your team needing to adjust or reorder the schedule, based on your school's needs and experience.

Figure 6. Possible Schedule and Agendas for SRS Meetings

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Agenda</i>	<i>Outcome or Product</i>
1 (Sept.) 1.5 hr	Kick-off meeting; overview of project; set future meeting dates; develop vision statement; estab. team mission; discuss agendas for future meetings; distribute Needs Assessment Wkst to team	Overview of project; first meeting dates set
2 (Sept.) 1-1.5 hr	Finish creation of vision and mission statements; Consider existing data and how it can be gathered and organized (using the Planning Data Availability Worksheet) making assignments for gathering/organizing; Consider method & time frame for administration of Safe Schools Survey to parents, students & staff (Use Safety Survey Planning Worksheet); distribute as soon as practicable.	Vision & Mission statements; Individually complete Needs Assessment Worksheet; Planning Data Worksheet completed.
3 (Oct.) 1-1.5 hr	Begin discussing as a team the Needs Assessment Survey, & Practices & Programs Inventory– Level I Creating a Positive Climate; compile consensus & prioritize top area of focus. Identify topics and responsibilities for research.	Part I: Creating a Positive Climate – Top priorities of focus selected
4 (Oct.) 1-1.5 hr	Continue discussing the Needs Assessment Wrkshgt; and Prac & Progrms Inventory Level II: Early Identification & Intervention; compile consensus & prioritize top area of focus; identify topics and responsibilities for research	Part II: Early Identification & Intervention – Top priorities of focus selected
5 (Nov.) 1-1.5 hr	Continue discussing– Level III: Effective Responses; compile consensus & prioritize top area of focus. Brainstorm actions to fill gaps and improve actions; identify research topics. Begin discussion of other school data including climate, office referrals and attendance data. Begin Task Responsibility Worksheet.	Part III: Effective Responses – Top priorities of focus selected
6 (Nov.) 1-1.5 hr	Review all school data- Analysis of office referrals, number of suspensions and expulsions; achievement; school risk and resiliency factors, existing school climate data; attendance data, and all others. Complete discussion of Task Responsibility Worksheet.	Brief summary of school data from all available sources. Complete Task Responsibility Worksheet.
7 (Dec.) 1-1.5 hr	Use Resource Guide to scan for effective practices; Present research conducted on selected topics by level; Identify resources and other limitations; investigate seeking outside funding.	Summaries of actions under consideration at each level.
8 (Jan.) 1.5 hr	Begin to formulate plans to address target areas at each level of action; review <i>Resource Guide & Fact Sheets</i> on priority areas & consider additional research as needed to create knowledge base.	Plan Development – Part I: Creating a Positive Climate
9 (Ja n.) 1.5 hr	Continue to formulate plans to address target areas – Part II: Early Identification & Intervention; review Fact Sheets on priority area & gather additional information as needed to create knowledge base	Plan Development – Part II: Early Identification & Intervention
10 (Feb.) 1.5 hr	Option: Discuss Safe Schools Survey results if distributed in winter- make adjustments in plan based on results Continue to formulate plans to address target areas – Part III: Effective Responses; review Fact Sheets on priority area & gather additional information as needed to create knowledge base.	Plan Development – Part III: Effective Responses
11 (Feb.) 1.5 hr	Create final plan, integrating previous data and plan development from each level.	Draft of complete SRS plan.
12 (Mar.) 1.5 hr.	Finalize plans & discuss fine details – discuss timeline for implementing plans & monitoring procedures; determine specific roles of each team member to help with plan implementation	SRS Plan Implementation Monitoring of plan
13 (Mar.) 1.5 hr	Review team activities & progress throughout year; discuss future directions; possibly consider options for summer work; plan for next school year – set future meetings for summer & fall	Future directions & plan for next school year; mtng schedule & logistics
14 (Apr.) 1.5 hr	Discuss implementation of plans – effectiveness of plans; Discuss future directions; Evaluate both the SRS planning process, and the outcomes of the SRS Team planning to date.	Process and outcome evaluation of SRS activities

Holding an optional kick-off workshop?

If possible, it may be helpful to bring in an outside consultant or trainer for a workshop on the current best thinking in violence prevention and school behavior improvement. Such a workshop could be arranged just for the SRS team, or have a component for the entire building staff. This would provide an opportunity for the Team to become familiar with current research and thinking on these topics, and clarify how the SRS framework and process will be useful in organizing a comprehensive approach.

What is the “homework” after the first meeting?

Current Practices & Programs Inventory. Each member is asked to read, think about and complete the SRS School Practices Inventory individually (See Chapter 7), and that it will be the focus of group discussion at future meetings. The facilitator should outline how the team will discuss the survey in subsequent meetings.

Safe Schools Survey Questionnaires. The team will also begin discussing logistical issues regarding the SRS Safe Schools Questionnaires and survey (See Chapter 7). Is another Safety Survey already in place? If not, administration of the SRS Safe Schools Survey should be considered. Several details about how and when the survey should be administered (paper and pencil or web-based; and scan-able or manual data entry) will require team decisions, and are discussed in detail in a later section of this *Guide*, but facilitators are urged to be familiar with these issues before discussion begins.

Other? The team may also identify other sources of information which might need to be gathered before the next meeting.

Developing a Vision Statement

What is a school vision statement?

A vision is a bold statement; it helps us keep our focus on the ideal. In this case, the vision statement should be one that addresses a vision for the school as related to violence prevention and positive behavior of students. While it might include academics

and be quite far reaching, it should address issues of desired behavior and civility within schools. Unlike a mission statement, which provides a clear definable path, a vision statement offers a vivid picture of possibility. It can also serve as a filter when making decisions; “Does this proposal help move us towards our vision? Is this action plan true to the values of our vision statement?”

Why is a vision statement important?

A shared vision statement provides a common vocabulary and a reminder to focus on what is most important and essential to our beliefs. One elementary teacher described a vision statement in this way: “Without a vision our behavior becomes reflexive, inconsistent and shortsighted as we see only the action that will most quickly put out the fire.” A shared vision emerges from people who care about one another and their work, who possess a strong individual/personal vision, and who see the collective vision as one that encompasses personal visions.”

How do I develop a vision statement?

The facilitator will lead the team in developing a vision statement. While a general brainstorming session may be used, a technique that folds the ideas of small groups of increasingly larger sizes into one concise statement allows for the development of a vision draft in a relatively short time.

- Ask each individual to write descriptive phrases on the ideal safe and responsive school. What would the school look like, sound like? What would students, teachers, parents, staff and community members be doing in this ideal school?
- What commonalities exist? What seems to be of greatest importance? Are there aspects that were not common to all the groups that should be included? Can these be folded into the vision statement? Take notes on the discussion.
- One or two individuals edit the draft statement in to cohesive paragraph that includes all the commonalities and other ideas that emerged from the team discussion.
- Distribute this draft of the vision statement before the next team meeting.

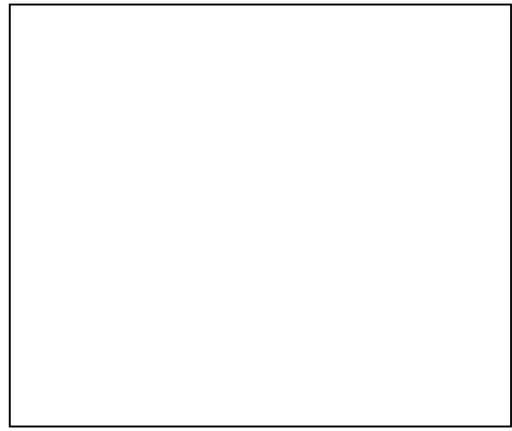
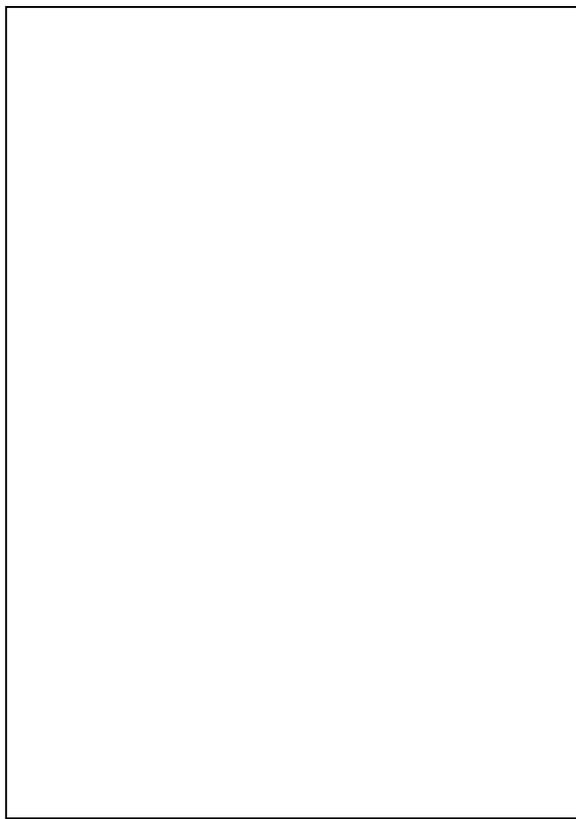
Figure 7.
School Vision Statement A

Public Schools are committed to providing programs that will allow students to learn in a safe and secure environment. MPS will remain strong in the belief that it is school's responsibility to be proactive rather than reactive when dealing with students and situations that challenge our daily norms. MPS will strive to offer a curriculum that will develop the intellectual growth, academic achievement, the character development and physical well-being of our students.

Figure 8.
School Vision Statement B

The vision is to create safe environments where young people can grow and develop into adults free of violence.

Examples of a vision statement



Creating an SRS Team “Mission Statement”

Once the Vision Statement activity is completed, it may also be useful to ask the group to identify a “Mission Statement” for the SRS team for the coming school year. This statement can be a specific identification of the goals for this team to accomplish during the coming year. Such a statement captured in writing will make clear for all the expectations related to the committee, and will afford the chance for the Team to calibrate its own expectations with those of this *Guide*. Additionally, the team mission statement will be useful for later evaluating whether the team accomplished the identified goals. Unlike a vision statement the team mission statement should be relatively specific and detailed, and should focus on measurable outcomes that the team can be expected to accomplish.

Why is a team mission statement important?

Focusing on the mission of the SRS Team will also permit the team to prioritize the overall responsibilities of the SRS team, particularly if there are additional responsibilities other than those described in the *Guide* that have been made to this team.

As described earlier, there may be many different teams or committees with various responsibilities. This mission statement should distinguish the SRS team’s functions and goals from other committees or teams. It may also suggest how these committees or teams relate to each other.

How do I develop a team mission statement?

A process similar to that used in developing a “vision statement” may be used to develop a team “mission statement”. A team mission statement should identify the specific purposes and outcomes expected for this team in this school. Teams can expect to spend from one to two hours developing Vision and Team Mission Statements.

Figure 9.
Team Mission Statement A.

The SRS team will review current practices & programs at Middle School that promote a safe & responsive educational environment. The

Examples of a team mission statement

team will evaluate the benefit of implementing other interventions as a result of this self-analysis and the Safe Schools Survey administered to a sample of parents, students, and teachers.

As with a vision statement, a team mission statement may take many forms. It should, however, reflect the overall goals and outcomes which the team feels will result from their work.

Figure 10.
Team Mission Statement B.

The SRS team will examine our schools current practices, and collect data about how they are working. We will then use that information to develop a plan which insures that our school is doing all it can to create positive behavior in our students and prevent violence, and inappropriate behavior.

SUMMARY CHAPTER 4 - GETTING STARTED

AGENDA – INITIAL MEETINGS #1 & #2

- An orientation to the SRS framework
- Logistical **Summary Box 4.**
 - Introductions
 - Future Meetings Schedule
 - Minutes
 - Time Commitment of Members
- Development of a School-wide Behavior Vision Statement.
- Development of a SRS Team Mission Statement

Purpose

- To orient the team to the SRS Comprehensive Framework and its underlying structure.
- To decide logistical issues regarding the SRS Safe Schools Survey.
 - To distribute the SRS School Practices Survey and other documents for Team members review and response.
- To provide an organizing framework for team members to focus on what is most important and essential to the team’s belief.

Materials & Resources

- School Practices Survey Questionnaires
- Web-Based vs. Pencil and Paper Survey cost and technical information.
- Safe Schools Survey Questionnaires.
- School Practices Survey.

Procedure on Vision and Mission Statements

- Team members write short statements on the ideal safe and responsive school.
- Small groups work together to find the commonalities in their visions.
- The whole team discusses and drafts a statement based on common vision.
- One or two team members edit and bring it back to the group for consensus or further discussion.
- A similar process will be used to create a specific “Mission Statement” for the SRS Team.

Time

- Teams can expect to spend one to two hours in developing a draft of the vision and Team mission statements.



Why Gather Data?

The Safe and Responsive Schools process is, first and foremost, a process of self-exploration for each school. How are we doing in school violence prevention? Are there problems with behavior in our school? What are our strengths and resources? What are our most important needs? What do students, staff, and parents think about the safety of our school? Do students and faculty members feel a sense of connection to this school?

The data gathering process is an integral component of the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework providing the team with a method for identifying the concerns of parents, faculty, and students within the school. It allows teams to identify the behavior systems and programs currently in place, and to gain an awareness of the available resources in their school and the gaps that may exist in those resources. Based on the information gained through gathering and analyzing data schools can begin to identify which violence prevention and behavior improvement strategies will best address the needs of their school.

Moreover, much of the data can be continuously monitored when new programs are implemented, and when new positive behavior supports are in place to determine the effectiveness of these programs or supports. As a result, the team should develop systems to continuously gather and analyze data where possible rather than viewing the task as a one-time effort.

Categories of Pertinent Data

The first step is to gather, analyze and interpret data that might help the team and others understand what is currently in place, and what might be needed. We will start by identifying many of the types of data that the team might wish to gather, along with some

questions that this types of data might be able to answer. Later we will also specifically suggest how to gather and use some of these data.

There is a potentially wide array of useful data which may be important. Many of these categories of data may already be available in many schools, although sometimes the data may need to be gathered from various files, recorded and analyzed in order to be useful. Other types of data listed may not currently be available, and a system may need to be created to gather and analyze these categories of data. For secondary schools, some of these types of data will be much more important than for elementary schools and vice versa. The categories of data may include, but are not limited to those on the list that follows. They are in alphabetical order. Each team should decide the relative importance of that type of data for their school.

- **Absences and Tardiness Records.** How many students are consistently absent? How are these students doing academically and behaviorally? Are there days or times when absences are more common? Are some teachers or subjects less likely to have students be truant or absent than others?
- **Academic Achievement Data.** What is the academic achievement level of students? Who are the students who are struggling? Is there a way to identify them? Are these same students also at risk for having trouble with their behavior? How does achievement relate to student grades (see below)?
- **Classroom, School & District Discipline Policies and Expectations.** What are the rules and procedures used by teachers used for discipline and behavior management in the classrooms in this school? What are the school's and district's discipline policies? When and how are these distributed to students and parents?
- **Current Practices and Programs In Place.** What are the current practices or programs in place in this school that address behavior at one of the three levels of action? What are the programs or procedures that prevent behavior problems? What programs exist which address the needs of students who seem to be at-risk of deteriorating academic or behavioral performance? What programs and procedures are in place to address the needs of students with serious behavioral needs? Are emergency plans and procedures in place? What are the limitations

or impediments to the success of these programs? What are the areas where new programs are needed?

- **Dropout Data.** How many students have dropped out of this school (if applicable) during the past several years? Are these numbers increasing or decreasing? Why?
- **Environmental Expectations.** What are the behavioral expectations for students in and around school? How are these operationalized? How are these reflected in community and parent expectations?
- **Grades Data.** How many students in this school have failing grades? Are there students whose grades are declining dramatically? What percentages of students are failing on academic standards or requirements? How do grades compare to achievement test/standards measurement data? How do they relate to office referral data?
- **Needs Assessment Related to Behavior.** What do students, staff and parents identify as the problems or needs related to student behavior in school? Related to procedures for handling discipline or classroom management? What do they identify as the strengths? What are the similarities and differences in perceptions of these three groups? What does each group believe should be the priorities?
- **Office Referral Data.** How many students are sent to the office, and for what reasons? Are there locations where referrals occur more frequently? Are there times of the day or year when referrals happen more often? Are there students who have a pattern of frequent office referrals? What are the responses to office referrals- are they different for different “offenses”?
- **School Climate.** What are the attitudes and perceptions of students, staff and parents regarding various components of the school climate? Do students feel comfortable and that they belong at this school? What is the *esprit de corps* of students and staff? What is the nature of interpersonal communication within the school? What are the administrative staff’s leadership styles? interpersonal communication, sense of ownership, belonging and the like have been long thought to be important to the learning process. A positive climate, sometimes

also called a positive learning environment, may facilitate learning, while a more negative one may impede learning.

- **School Population Risk & Resiliency Factors.** What are the risk and resiliency factors that may be affecting students in this school? How many students are experiencing poverty? How many are minorities? What are the parent and community supports for children in this community?
- **School Safety.** How safe do students, parents and staff feel at this school? How often do these constituencies observe inappropriate behaviors in and around school? What are these behaviors? Have they seen weapons or drugs? How often does fighting or bullying occur before, during or after school? What are the specific circumstances that create feelings of safety or danger in school?
- **Special Education Referrals.** How many referrals for special education are made in this building each year? In what categories? In particular how many students are referred for emotional or behavioral disorders? Are these increasing or decreasing over the past few years? Why?
- **Suspension and Expulsion Data.** How many students are suspended each semester or year? How many typically expelled? What are the offenses? When and where do these offenses occur? Are the same students frequently suspended? Does suspension for other offenses typically precede expulsion? Is there some form of in-school suspension? What are the same data for this program?
- **Other Pertinent Data?** What additional data might be helpful? Are there any other pieces which may have been overlooked, or which are important to this particular school?

Once the team has discussed these types of data, and their potential use, it might be important to prioritize the importance of these various types of data for their own needs, and for the team's school. A worksheet has been developed for the team to be able to discuss, prioritize, and plan for obtaining these types of data in Figure 10. Additionally it might be possible to identify whether each piece of high priority data is presently available in the school, and if so where that data is stored, and how it can be

Data Guide for Information)	Priority? 1=Low to 5=High	Data Currently Available? If yes, where? If no, how could data be gathered?	Person Responsible? (To gather, organize and analyze)	Time Frame (For Gathering & Reporting On Data?)
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athering Data

Figure 11. SRS Planning Data Availability Worksheet

s and s Records.		Yes No		
c nent Data.		Yes No		
m, School & Discipline Expectations.		Yes No		
Practices and s In Place.		Yes No		
Data.		Yes No		
mental ions.		Yes No		
Data.		Yes No		
ssessment o Behavior.		Yes No		
eferral Data.		Yes No		
limate.		Yes No		
opulation esiliency		Yes No		
afety.		Yes No		
Education		Yes No		
on and n Data.		Yes No		
rtinent Data?		Yes No		

accessed and displayed in a useful format. If a priority type of data is not currently available, the team can discuss how a method for gathering this data could be initiated.

Finally, whether or not the data is currently available, the team might like to identify individuals who will be responsible for gathering, organizing, and displaying each type of data, as well as a time frame for doing so. These individuals may need to spend considerable amounts of their time to obtain and organize the data outside of the team meetings. The facilitator should ensure that individuals are clear about these responsibilities, and that the individuals are supplied with the resources and support to accomplish these data gathering tasks.

How can we gather and use survey and focus group data?

Surveys or focus groups are the most frequent ways to gather data on several of these categories. Many schools may already use these strategies, but these are particularly useful in addressing school climate, school safety, current practices and perceptions about behavioral needs.

These two approaches can each be conducted with groups representing some of the school's common constituencies, including parents, students, staff and community members.

- **Surveys** In typical surveys a questionnaire is provided to a fairly large target group of individuals. Then the responses are tallied and used to provide insight on various issues. Although surveys attempt to be objective, and sometimes factual questions are asked, they are also used to measure perceptions and attitudes. The value of the survey results depend on whether the respondents are representative of the larger target group. Surveys may be conducted via telephone, paper and pencil or web-based entry.
- **Focus Groups** Focus groups are small meetings where a series of questions are asked of a small number of key representatives from a particular target group in a group conference setting. While there may be a structured set of stimulus questions, the group usually has freedom to talk, interact with each other, and brainstorm related ideas. Careful notes are taken of the conversation, attempting to capture the gist of the ideas communicated, and any consensus that develops.

Focus groups are also used to obtain perceptions and attitudes. They have the advantage of permitting the group to come up with new ideas and information. The disadvantage of focus groups is that they involve a small number of persons, and even if carefully selected to be representative, they may not be so.

Can existing data be used where available?

During the SRS needs assessment process, the team will gather and analyze as much pertinent existing data as is possible in each of these categories. The data will be used to guide the development of the school’s Safe and Responsive School Plan.

Some schools may already be gathering and analyzing some of these categories of data. In that is the case, and if the team is satisfied that adequate data which reflects the current school situation is available, it is not necessary to gather “new” data for those categories. However, if such data is not currently available, or not analyzed for some of these categories, the SRS team should consider creating methods to gather and analyze all of the remaining categories of data.

What is the Facilitator’s Role?

The facilitator has a key role during the needs assessment in ensuring that the team perseveres, and that efforts are coordinated and efficient. At times the team may become frustrated with the time spent assessing school needs, rather than actually “doing something.” Team members may be anxious to begin designing or even implementing the school plan. It is important to stress that the needs assessment process is a necessary step in the planning process that enables the team to gain a clear picture of the school’s needs and provides a basis for creating a school plan tailored to the school.

Gathering and Displaying Data

Often, in order to gather useful data, it is helpful to know how it might be displayed. The following section suggests how data can be gathered and displayed in a

way which might permit useful analysis to answer the questions related to that type of data identified earlier.

• Absences and Tardiness Records.

Some of the types of information for a particular school such as Absences and Tardiness, and Dropout data require little need for explanation. Simple tables and graphs may be adequate to display many of these types of information (See Figure 11 & 12). The examples illustrate how these types of data might be formatted once they have been obtained from the appropriate source or records. They are included for illustration only, and individual schools may find many other ways to analyze and display these data.

Figure 12. Sample Formats for Analyzing Student Absence Data

Absences by Quarter and School Year

Period	Total Number of Students Absent During This Period	Number of Days School is in Session for Students	Percentage of Students Absent
1 st Quarter			
2 nd Quarter			
3 rd Quarter			
4 th Quarter			
Total School Year			

Absences by Students

Students With the Most (or fewest) Absences	Total Number of Absences for this Student	Percentage of Total Student Attendance Days this Student was Absent
Student A		
Student B		
Student C		
Etc.		

Figure 13.

Sample Empty Tables for Displaying & Analyzing Tardiness Data

Tardiness by Teacher Reporting

Teacher	Total Number of Students Served by this Teacher	Number of Students Reported as Tardy During First Quarter	Percentage of Students Tardy
Teacher A			
Teacher B			
Teacher C			
Etc.			

Tardiness by Daily Class Time Period

Period	Total Number of Students in All Classes During This Period	Number of Students Reported as Tardy During First Quarter	Percentage of Students Tardy
1 st Period			
2 nd Period			
3 rd Period			
Etc.			

Tardiness by Students with Most and Least

Students With the Most and the Fewest Tardiness	Total Number of instances of Being Tardy Reported
Student A	
Student B	
Student C	
Etc.	

These types of tables might permit answers to these questions: How many students are consistently absent? How are these students doing academically and behaviorally? Are there days or times when absences are more common? Are some teachers or subjects less likely to have students be truant or absent than others?

- **Academic Achievement Data.**

What is the academic achievement level of students? Who are the students who are struggling? Is there a way to identify them? Are these same students also at risk for having trouble with their behavior? How does achievement relate to student grades (see below)?

- **Classroom, School & District Discipline Policies.**

Gathering classroom, school and district school discipline policies simply requires gathering and examining documents. Classroom teachers might be asked to identify and write down their classroom rules and procedures if not already in writing. These should be gathered for multiple or even all classrooms or teachers. These can then be examined for the degree to which they represent our best knowledge about classroom management. Are rules simple, clear, worded directly? Are the worded positively- identifying what students should do, rather than merely identifying inappropriate behaviors? Is the list of

rules short and easy to remember? Is there evidence that the rules are explained and taught to students adequately?

Most schools and school districts also have written policies related to office referrals, in-school suspension (if applicable), or other related discipline options. Many times these are formulated into a building and/or district “Code of Conduct”. These documents should be gathered and analyzed by the team. Once gathered they might be examined to determine whether they represent the best thinking about what these issues. Do they clearly and explicitly identify both appropriate and problematic behavior? Are the consequences they identify aligned with the seriousness of the offence? Do they include multiple options for consequences? How are they distributed to students and parents, and taught to students? Each team must examine these policies and propose changes and improvements that they feel might increase their effectiveness at reducing future behavioral problems in school.

- **Current Practices and Programs In Place.**

Before identifying new programs it seems obvious that team should identify what a school already has in place. What are the current practices or programs in place in this school that address behavior at one of the three levels of action? What are the programs or procedures that prevent behavior problems? What programs exist which address the needs of students who seem to be at-risk of deteriorating academic or behavioral performance? What programs and procedures are in place to address the needs of students with serious behavioral needs? Are emergency plans and procedures in place? What are the limitations or impediments to the success of these programs? What are the areas where new programs are needed? Although there may be many ways for a team to find the information they need to answer these questions, the next Chapter of this *Guide* will provide a worksheet that will stimulate discussion and permit these questions to be answered.

- **Dropout Data.**

How many students have dropped out of this school? School dropout data might also be displayed in simple tables like the one in Figure 13.

Figure 14.
Sample Secondary School Dropout Data for a Hypothetical School

Average Student Population This School Last School Year	Number of Students who Have Dropped Out During Last School Year	Percentage of Students Who Have Dropped Out
651	9	1.38 %

Can the students who dropped out of school be interviewed or surveyed to determine their reasons for dropping out? Perhaps a focus group with these students or their parents, could be used to gather this data. Can school records be examined to determine if these students were having academic or behavioral difficulties in school? How many of these students had records of disciplinary action or multiple office referrals?

- **Environmental Expectations.**

What are the behavioral expectations for students by parents and the community? What are the behavioral expectations for students in and around school? How are these operationalized? How are these reflected in community and parent expectations?

- **Grades Data.**

A list of students with failing or rapidly declining grades can be created, and cross checked with other lists of students in other categories of data which might indicate that the student is “at risk”. The percentages of students who are failing on academic standards or requirements can be calculated. Grades can be compared with achievement test scores for that student.

- **Needs Assessment Related to Behavior.**

What do students, staff and parents identify as the problems or needs related to student behavior in school? Related to procedures for handling discipline or classroom

Systems for entering & managing office referral data

ABI online program (Excel template): specifically by the nature of the problem behavior that resulted in the referral. It also includes information about the date, time, and location of the problem,

BoysTown: www.girlsandboystown.org/pros/training/education/index.asp

Powerschool: www.apple.com/education/powerschool/ as well as the referring staff member. It may also include information about how that staff member had intervened related to this behavior in prior incidents with this student

The School Wide Information System (SWIS): www.swis.org (if applicable), as well as a space for the person receiving the referral to identify a disposition of the referral.

Schoolmaster: www.schoolmaster.com

Typically, each school has a system for recording and tracking office data. Secondary schools may be more likely to have such a system in place, often with computerized data entry, while in elementary schools such data may not be used as frequently. Some elementary schools may not even have an office referral form in place. If a school does not have such a system in place, the team should consider whether creating a system to gather this data should be a priority.

There are also several commercially available systems for managing, recording and entering data about office referrals. These offer schools a variety of services which

Figure 15. Examples of office referral data management systems.



may include pre-determined office referral forms, methods for easy data entry or even web-based analysis of data typically with fees for these services. Some of these may also have an office referral component of a larger school data management information system.

Office referral data are the result of the analysis of all completed office referral forms for a school for a period of time. This allows a school to look at disciplinary issues

that may need to be addressed within the SRS planning process. Pertinent office referral data may include total number of office referrals per month, per quarter, types of office referrals, locations of referrals, students being referred, types of disciplinary actions taken, as well as absences and tardy reports. Schools may also wish to look at suspension and expulsion data in terms of numbers and reasons for suspension/expulsion.

By looking at their office data, a school may find that the majority of office referrals have occurred in the lunchroom and hallway. With this information, a school may do further assessment to examine the reason for the high referrals in these locations (i.e., behaviors resulting in referral, students accounting for referrals, teacher referring, disciplinary action taken). A school may then use this information in the planning process to help develop a plan to address this issue.

Figure 16. Sample Secondary School Office Referral Offence Chart

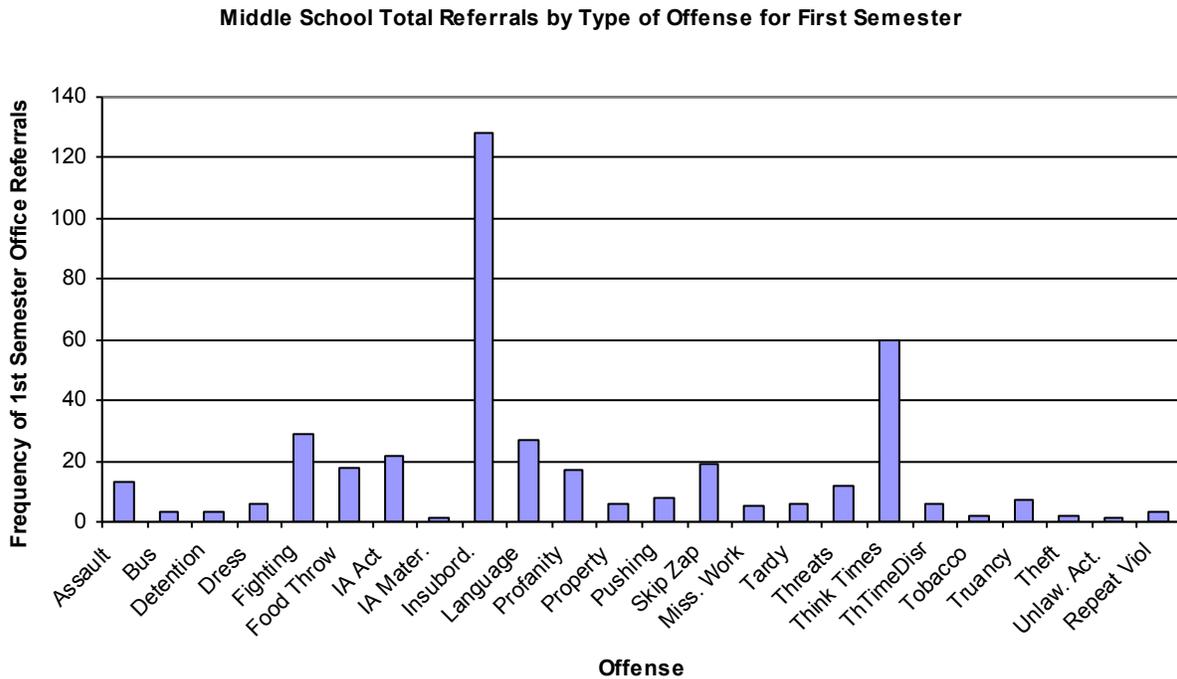


Figure 17. Sample Secondary School Office Referral by Month Chart

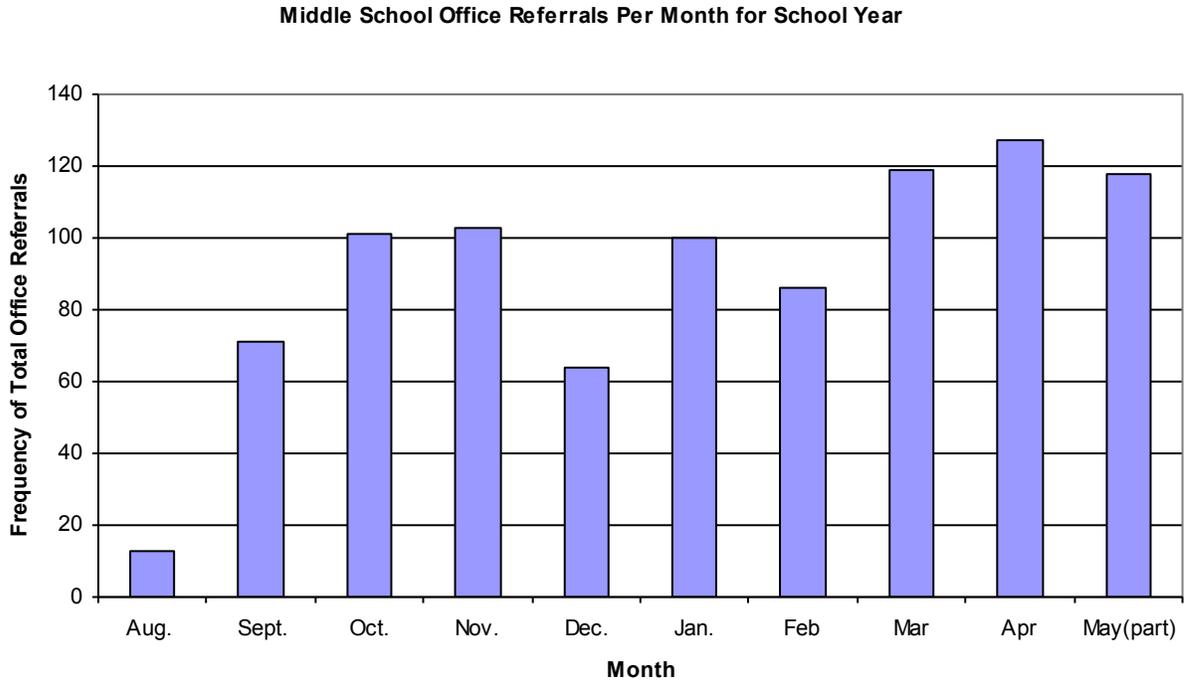


Figure 18. Sample Secondary School Office Referrals by Number of Referrals per Student

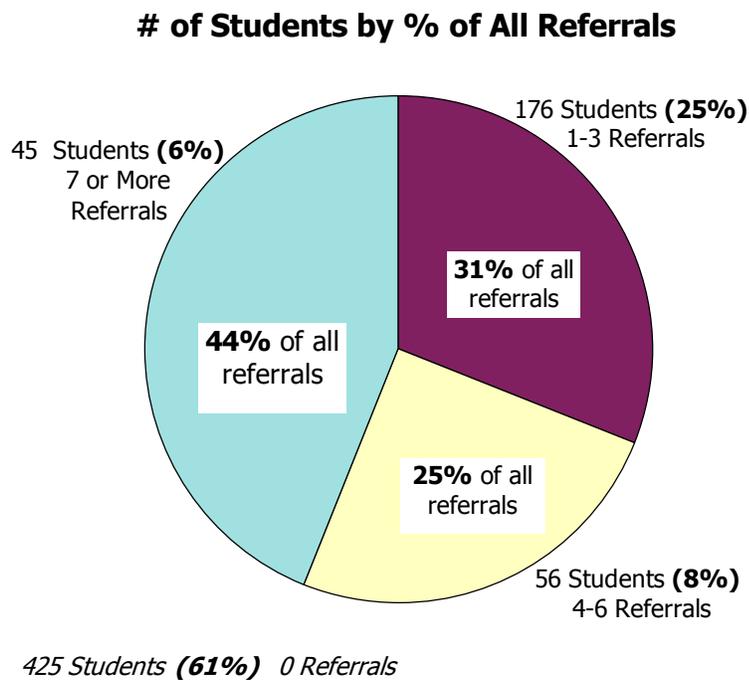
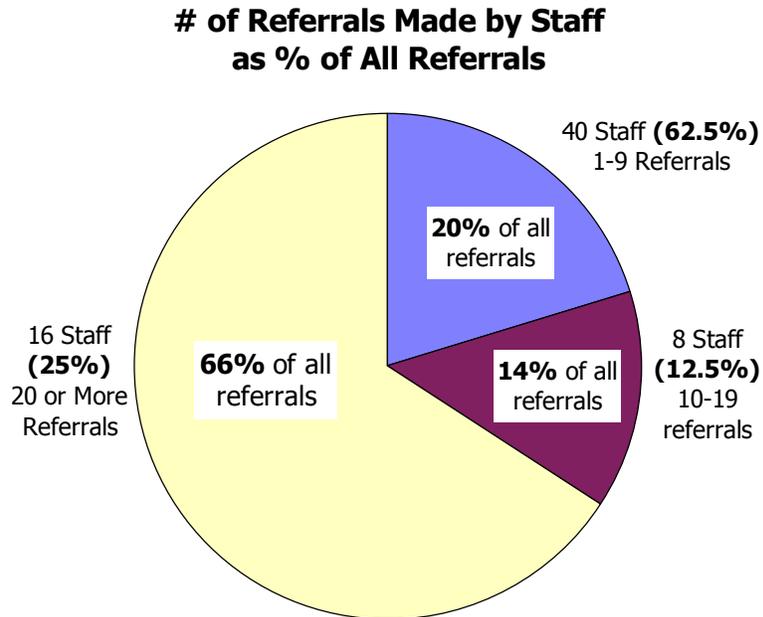


Figure 19. Sample Secondary School Office Referral by Staff Source of Referral



The sample charts and graphs included here are intended to be simply illustrative of some of the ways office referral data might be displayed in order to be useful to the team and administrators for making decisions. School teams may come up with pertinent ways of displaying data for their school, and once identified, these charts and graphs can then be updated each month, quarter or semester. The resulting data can assist schools in detecting changes in office referrals, as well as answer a variety of other questions.

- **School Climate.**

What are the attitudes and perceptions of students, staff and parents regarding the learning environment at this school? What are the attitudes and perceptions of students, staff and parents regarding various components of the school climate? Do students feel comfortable and that they belong at this school? What is the *esprit de corps* of students and staff? What is the nature of interpersonal communication within the school? What are the administrative staff's leadership styles? Interpersonal communication, sense of

ownership, belonging and the like have been long thought to be important to the learning process and are also widely believed to also be factors influencing the prevention of inappropriate behavior. A positive climate, sometimes also called a positive learning environment, may facilitate learning, while a more negative one may impede learning.

While there are potentially many ways to measure climate the most common has been a survey method of attitudes of various stakeholders in the school (especially students and staff). Numerous instruments, which cover a very wide range of variables, are identified as measuring school climate. Key variables for our purposes here might include, sense of belonging, sense of caring, orderliness, civility, and the like, but other variables mentioned earlier may also be important. Data should be specific enough to permit the team to analyze the specific variables for their school. Schools may use existing school climate data if it is available, or may use a new survey such as the SRS Safe Schools Survey described in the next chapter.

- **School Population Risk & Resiliency Factors.**

What are the risk and resiliency factors that may be affecting students in this school? How many students are experiencing poverty? How many are minorities? What are the parent and community supports for children in this community? An environmental scan of the school, neighborhood and community might be valuable here. Community and governmental agencies may be sources of this type of information, if the school does not already have ready access to this type of information. A summary of this data should identify both the risk and resiliency factors which apply specifically to that school.

- **School Safety.**

In order to obtain a measure of perceptions about school safety, it is necessary to ask key stakeholders in the school about their perceptions. How safe do students, parents and staff feel at this school? How often do these constituencies observe inappropriate behaviors in and around school? What are these behaviors? Have they seen weapons or drugs? How often does fighting or bullying occur before, during or after school? What

are the specific circumstances that create feelings of safety or danger in school? While there may be many ways to answer these questions, one of the most common is a survey. Perceptions of safety are difficult to measure and may be influenced by emotions and media hype. Therefore the wording of questions should be carefully thought through, and the results interpreted with care. The SRS School Safety Survey is one example.

- **Special Education Referrals.**

Has the number of referrals for special education increased or decreasing over the past few years? Why? Is the number of referrals similar to or different from other similar schools? How many of these referrals are based entirely or in part on problems with student behavior? Is the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process effective? How many referrals to the SAT have involved behavior? These data could be displayed in simple tables similar to those described earlier for school drop-out data.

- **Suspension and Expulsion Data.**

Most schools keep records of students who are suspended and expelled. These records could be compiled to create overall rates of suspension or expulsion for a school. The suspension data could be displayed in a variety of ways including those illustrated in the sample table in Figure 20. Similar data could be calculated for each semester, and could be used to track changes through time for semesters and years.

Figure 20. Sample Secondary School Suspension Data for a Hypothetical School

Average Student Population This School Last School Year	Number of Students Who Were Suspended During Last School Year	Percentage of Students Who Were Suspended
651	32	5.0 %

Number of Office Referrals for School Year	Number of Days of Student Suspension During Last School Year	Percentage of Days of Suspension per Office Referral
999	112	5.0 %

Similar tables might be created to display and track expulsion data as illustrated in the examples in Figure 21.

Figure 21. Sample Secondary School Expulsion Data for a Hypothetical School

Average Student Population This School Last School Year	Number of Students Were Expelled During Last School Year	Percentage of Students Who Were Expelled
651	6	0.9 %

Average Student Population This School Last School Year	Number of Students Were Expelled During Last School Year	Percentage of Students Who Were Expelled
651	6	0.9 %

These rates of suspension or expulsion could then be compared to other similar data from other schools either within the same school district or from elsewhere (if available).

Figure 22 shows an example of a table which displays the rates of suspension and expulsion for 16 middle schools in an urban district. Note the wide range of rates among these schools.

Figure 22. Sample Middle School Comparison of Suspension and Expulsion Rates for a Hypothetical Schools.

Middle School Suspension Rates in a Large Midwestern Urban School District by School	Percent of Office Referrals Resulting in a student Suspension	Percent of Office Referrals Resulting in a Student Expulsion
1	11.3	0.3
2	13.9	0.6
3	16.5	0.4
4	17.0	0.5
5	17.2	0.7
6	23.3	0.6
7	26.1	0.9
8	30.3	0.5
9	32.2	0.6
10	32.9	0.9
11	34.0	0.8
12	35.0	0.7
13	37.9	0.5
14	38.4	0.9
15	58.9	1.0
16	86.5	1.7
Average Rate	31.97	0.725

In addition, a school might create a list of the individual students who were suspended or expelled, along with the student's behavior that resulted in the suspension or expulsion. This list might be cross checked with other data such as data related to achievement, grades, suspension and expulsion, etc.

- **Other Pertinent Data?** What additional data might be helpful? While the categories of data described above cover much ground, there may be other topics or sources of data that may be pertinent to a particular school, and to the behavior of students in that school. For example, some schools may need to work with police and other agencies to focus on data related to gang activity, or drug and alcohol abuse. Each team should look over all of the types of data to make sure that they are comfortable that they have a thorough and comprehensive set of data for planning.

Why Gather Data

- Data is a vehicle to determine what is in place and what is needed.
- Data can be used to monitor the effects of changes

Summary Box 5

Categories of Data

- Absences and Tardiness Records
- Academic Achievement Data
- Classroom, School & District Discipline Policies
- Current Practices and Programs in Place
- Dropout Data
- Environmental Expectations
- Grades Data
- Needs Assessment
- Office Referral Data
- School Climate
- School Population Risk and Resiliency Factors
- School Safety
- Special Education Referrals
- Suspension and Expulsion Data
- Other pertinent data?

Survey and Focus Group Data

- In addition to other existing archived data, both survey and focus groups may be useful tools in gathering additional data.

AGENDA –MEETINGS #3 & BEYOND

- An orientation to the needed data
- Using the “Planning Data Availability Worksheet” decisions will need to be made about whether data is currently available, and if not, how it might be gathered.
- Beginning plans and assignment of responsibility for gathering and displaying the various types of data along with a time frame will also be needed.

Time

- Teams can expect to spend about an hour making preliminary plans to gather data and assigning responsibility.
- Considerable time outside of meetings may be needed for individuals to gather and display the data so that it is ready for team discussion.
- Time should be allotted to almost every meeting to discuss parts of the data as per the schedule determined by the team.

INSTRUMENTS & PROCEDURES



In order to facilitate the ability of schools to gather and use some of the data described in the previous chapter, several instruments or worksheets have been created to assist the SRS process. These instruments address some but not all of the data categories mentioned in the last chapter. Specifically, these will include identifying existing programs and practices; needs assessment perceptions; determining responsibility for various tasks related to behavior in school; and, assessing school climate and perceptions of safety.

Data Instruments and Procedures

For these areas, more detailed advice and procedures are provided for those schools that might find this helpful. In most cases forms or examples are provided, and options for gathering, entering and analyzing the data are discussed in some detail. If a school is already gathering similar data from another instrument or source, it is not necessary to implement the SRS instruments. School teams are encouraged to use existing available data where possible, and to only gather “new” data when necessary. The overall set of data must provide a complete picture of the factors affecting behavior at this school.

The Safe and Responsive Schools instruments described in this chapter are:

- **A. SRS Practices & Programs Inventory**
- **B. SRS Needs Assessment Worksheet**
- **C. SRS Task Responsibility Worksheet**
- **D. SRS Safe Schools Survey**

A. SRS Practices & Programs Inventory

The *SRS Practices and Programs Inventory* is intended to serve as a vehicle for identifying existing programs and practices within a school.

What is the “Practices & Programs Inventory”?

The *Practices & Programs Inventory* is a worksheet with a rating scale to rate the degree of implementation of each item. It assists teams in assessing their school's strengths, areas of concern, and resources by assessing their school's use of various intervention practices, strategies or programs organized by the three levels of action of the SRS framework described earlier. Within each of these three levels of action, several examples of potential interventions or programs are listed, and the respondents rate the implementation of that intervention in their school, noting comments, questions or discussion points as they proceed. The items listed are not intended to be exhaustive although many common intervention ideas are included. There is also an opportunity to add and rate other interventions or programs in each level that might be used in your school.

What is the purpose of the “Inventory”?

The purpose is to identify existing practices or programs currently operating within the school, which fit the three levels of action related to the SRS Framework. A secondary purposes are to determine the relative degree to which these practices or programs are implemented in this school; whether they are known across staff, students and parents; and the degree to which they are perceived to be effective in accomplishing their intended objectives. As a result, the school will be able to identify programs which are already in place and functioning well, as well as programs which are in place, but which may need further attention or changes to make them fully integrated and serving the intended needs within the school. In this process, the Inventory will also permit schools to identify “gaps” where no current programs are in place, but where they may be needed.

Organization of the “*Inventory*”?

The three levels of the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework organize the inventory. In discussing the inventory, the team can attempt to determine what practices or programs are already in place at each level, whether they need to be redirected or revitalized in some way, and whether additional practices or programs might be needed at each level. A sample page from the inventory is in Figure 23.

- **Creating a Positive Climate.** This section assesses the extent to which there are preventive programs in place for all students in a school. In particular, programs which build a positive school climate and sense of community (e.g., parent involvement, student pride in the school, and school-wide preventative programs such as violence prevention curricula and peer mediation).
- **Early Identification and Intervention.** This section assesses the extent to which programs or resources are available to identify and provide prevention and support services for specific students who are at-risk (e.g., using office referral information to monitor students, counseling programs, threat assessment, mentoring or tutoring programs and the like).
- **Effective Responses** assesses the school’s ability to handle both school-wide crisis situations and extreme individual behavioral problems (e.g., include development of a school-wide crisis plan, individual behavior plans for disruptive students).

What are the ratings on this *Inventory*?

The response scale for inventory items ranges from one to five with 1=No Awareness; 2=Know Of, But Not Used; 3=Good Awareness, Beginning To Use; 4=Frequently Used; 5=Well-Established School-Wide. The ratings attempt to identify the level of implementation in the school of each program or item rated, not whether the individual completing the inventory has implemented the program. Team members should document their ratings of “3” or higher by briefly describing examples of the specific implemented program or activity.

Figure 23. Completed Sample Page of Practices and Programs Inventory

I. Creating a Positive Climate
To what extent does your school have:

1. *Programs for students who are struggling academically?*

1	2	3	4	5
No awareness	Know of, but not used	Good awareness Beginning to Use	Frequently used	Well-established school-wide

Documentation: **Some teachers offer after school tutoring, study skills are offered for 7th Grade, and some academic counseling.**

2. *One or more programs that focus on building a sense of community or a sense of belonging for students in your school?*

1	2	3	4	5
No awareness	Know of, but not used	Good awareness Beginning to use	Frequently used	Well-established school-wide

Documentation: **Clubs, homebases, band, choir, sports, teaming**

3. *A curriculum for all classrooms for teaching social skills or life-skills?*

1	2	3	4	5
No awareness	Know of, but not used	Good awareness Beginning to use	Frequently used	Well-established school-wide

Documentation:

4. *Established programs to increase parental involvement (beyond PTO)?*

1	2	3	4	5
No awareness	Know of, but not used	Good awareness Beginning to use	Frequently used	Well-established school-wide

Documentation: **Parents sharing books, community read and feed**

5. *A peer mediation or student conflict manager program?*

1	2	3	4	5
No awareness	Know of, but not used	Good awareness Beginning to use	Frequently used	Well-established school-wide

Documentation:

How is the *Practices & Programs Inventory* completed?

Team members complete the inventory individually first and bring their completed surveys to the SRS team meeting where the Inventory will be discussed and synthesized across individuals. In larger schools, team members may first consult with colleagues through informal discussion or more formal meetings (e.g. at department meeting) to make the responses by that individual SRS team member as complete as possible. Other faculty or staff may recall or know about practices or programs that the team members are unaware.

How do we reach a consensus on the *Inventory*?

Once each team member has completed the *Practices and Programs Inventory*, the entire team will discuss and attempt to arrive at a consensus about each question, resulting in a group consensus response to the *Inventory* in addition to the separate individual member responses. This discussion and consensus step will assist the team members to learn from each other about programs that are already in place in their school, as well as areas where none exist. Surprisingly, in the SRS Project site schools, many team members were not aware of all of the programs in place within their school. More importantly, it will assist them to think about the function of each of these program and the students who are served at each level of action.

Results of the *Inventory*?

The *Practices & Programs Inventory* allows teams to identify programs that are well established in their school, areas where schools can build upon pre-existing or pilot programs, and areas where needs are not currently being addressed. The results from the inventory help the teams focus on potential actions or intervention strategies to meet identified needs that emerge from the *Inventory*. For example, if a team identifies a few programs in place for the “Early Identification and Intervention” with students who are “at-risk” in its building, but adequate programs at the other two levels, the team may make developing programs at that level a high priority. Moreover, the *Inventory* may assist team members to identify which type of program might best match their building’s

needs. For example, after discussion the team might decide that a “mentoring” program may be most suited to the building’s needs rather than another alternative. Further information about most of the programs listed on the *Inventory* can be found on the Fact Sheets in the *Resource Guide* section of this *Guide*.

In addition to helping to identify potential gaps, and potential interventions at each level of action in the SRS Framework, the *Inventory* might also lead to discussion about how to make an existing program, such as a “mentoring” program that might already be in place in a school, more effective. Such a program might not be serving enough “at-risk” students, or might be providing service to students other than those students at the “Early Identification and Intervention” level of action. Such a discussion might suggest actions to refocus, bolster and improve the implementation of existing programs in a school. Perhaps if too few mentors are available to the program and that is diminishing its effectiveness, the team might discuss and problem solve how to recruit more mentors or solve other problems identified in the discussion.

Through this process some of the team members of schools who piloted this *Inventory* became aware of programs that were being utilized in other classrooms, or in the school that that they had been unaware of previously. Some discussion focused on whether the appropriate staff was informed adequately about the programs. Questions about how existing programs were targeted to appropriate groups of students according to the three tiers of the SRS Framework were also raised, and needs for clarification identified.

What is the Facilitator’s Role?

At meetings three, four and five the team will discuss individual ratings in order to reach a group consensus on each item. During this phase, the facilitator guides a group discussion on each item until a consensus is reached. For each item, ask team members to volunteer their ratings for that program or strategy. Allow group members to make any comments they wish about the program under discussion. If there are discrepancies or disagreements on ratings, have team members cite the examples used to justify their rating. Finally, help the team reach a consensus rating before moving on to the next item

on the survey. A recorder should take notes on the discussion and record the final consensus for each item on a fresh *Inventory*.

We estimate that each of the three sections of the *Practices & Programs Inventory* will take one team meeting each. After coming to consensus on its ratings for all three sections, the team will review its overall results across the three sections. In what areas do we feel our programming is strong or sufficient? Is there an area or areas that these ratings suggest we need to work on? Areas where new practices or programs might be desirable?

At this final meeting, the team will also discuss the needs assessment questions at the end of the *Inventory*. These broader questions assist the team in identifying their school's major areas of concern and areas of strength.

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that the purpose of the *Practices & Programs Inventory* is not to engage in self-criticism, but to gain an accurate picture of available school practices and resources. This process should permit the team to understand and celebrate the things in their school which are working well, but to also understand and acknowledge gaps or weaknesses.

SUMMARY: *PRACTICES & PROGRAMS INVENTORY*

Chapter 6 - Instruments and Procedures

DATA INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

MEETINGS 3-5 AND BEYOND

Summary Box 6B.

Purpose

- To assess the school's strengths, resources, and areas of need in school violence prevention.
- To guide the prioritization and selection of practices, programs and intervention strategies using the SRS Framework.

Materials

- Copies of the *Practices & Programs Inventory* for each team member.

Procedure

- Distribute the *Inventory* at end of meeting two.
- Team members individually complete the survey prior to the next meeting, with input from colleagues.
- Team discusses individual responses and reaches a group consensus.
 - Team members volunteer ratings.
 - Discuss differences in individual ratings. In case of discrepancies, team members cite evidence for their rating.
 - Come to team consensus on rating for each item, noted by recorder.

Time

- Individuals can expect to spend 20 to 30 minutes completing the School Practices Survey on their own.
- Teams can expect to spend up three hours over several meetings discussing individual team member's inventory results and reaching a team consensus inventory.

B. SRS Needs Assessment Worksheet

One key piece of information that is sometimes overlooked is to simply ask the staff what they see as the current strengths, weaknesses and needs are related to behavior and safety. The SRS Needs Assessment Worksheet is a vehicle to do just that.

What is the “Needs Assessment Worksheet”?

The *Needs Assessment Worksheet* is a simple questionnaire that asks respondents for their opinions regarding behavior, discipline and safety. It contains several open-ended questions which are intended to tap into the concerns and perceptions of the school staff on these topics.

What is the purpose of the “Worksheet”?

The purpose is to permit all of the team members and other staff members to have their chance to identify what they perceive to be existing strengths or weaknesses for the school regarding behavior, discipline and safety. A secondary purpose might be to determine the degree to which there is consensus about these issues. The *Worksheet* is also intended to be a vehicle for discussion among the team members.

How is the *Worksheet* completed?

Team members complete the inventory individually first and bring their completed surveys to the SRS team meeting. In addition, the team members may also seek input (in writing or orally) from other staff members. It would also be possible to provide a copy of the worksheet to all staff members, if the school chooses to do so.

How are the results compiled?

Depending on the number of completed worksheets they can be summarized or tallied in a brief written report. Unlike the Practices and Programs Inventory, it is not necessary to attempt to reach consensus at this point on the results of the worksheet, but a

summary of the results will be an important piece of information later in the planning process.

Figure 24. Sample Portion of First Page of SRS Needs Assessment Worksheet



Needs Assessment Questionnaire

School: _____ Date: _____ Name: _____

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DIRECTIONS: *Team members should complete individually, and then, as a team discuss and complete a team response to the questions.*

- 1. What types of inappropriate behaviors are of greatest concern for our school (e.g. fighting, bullying, harassment, weapons, incivility, etc.)?**
- 2. What do you feel your school’s teachers would say was the most common problem that they have related to student behavior?**
 - A. In the classroom?**
 - B. Outside the classroom (during passing, lunch or other non-structured times)?**
- 3. What do administrators in this building feel are the most common problems related to student behavior which occur at our school?**

[continues]

SUMMARY: *SRS NEEDS ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET*

DATA INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Chapter 6 - Instruments and Procedures

MEETINGS 3-5 AND BEYOND

Summary Box 6C.

Purpose

- To assess the school's strengths, resources, and areas of need in school violence prevention.
- To make sure that staff input is received regarding issues of behavior, discipline and safety.

Materials

- Copies of the *Needs Assessment Worksheet* for each team member.

Procedure

- Distribute the *Worksheet* at end of meeting two.
- Team members individually complete the survey prior to the next meeting, with input from colleagues.
- Team can choose to distribute the *Worksheet* to all staff if that type of broad input would be helpful.

Time

- Individuals can expect to spend 10 to 20 minutes completing the *Needs Assessment Worksheet*.
- Teams can expect to spend up to 1-2 hours discussing results; not team consensus on this *Worksheet* is necessary.

C. SRS Task Responsibility Worksheet

In order to be able to address behavior in schools, it is also necessary to identify the current behavior strategies and disciplinary actions utilized at your school and who has responsibility for these. These might be compared to other functions and tasks which may not currently be assigned. Then some agreement might be reached to be sure that important responsibilities are not overlooked. This section will assist the team to examine for their school the responsibilities related to behavior and violence prevention.

Who is responsible for student behavior and conduct in a school?

Historically school administrators have been responsible for the most of the school-wide decisions related to behavior and discipline in a school. These have included the actual work of dealing with students sent to the office, as well as the organizational management of any other disciplinary options to be made available. In addition, some legal considerations related to discipline have resulted in the need to formalize these procedures in a Code of Conduct for the school (sometimes these Codes are made district wide). While it is beyond our scope to analyze all of these issues here, it is clear that a variety of these responsibilities are assigned to administrators.

Figure 25. Sample Table of Persons Responsible for Disciplinary Actions.

Person Responsible	Disciplinary Actions
Principal	Overall responsibility for behavior in this school, including safety related to behavior and violence.
Principal or Assistant Principal	Responding to students sent to the office. discipline or office referrals; Notifying parents of inappropriate behavior; etc.
Attendance Officer or Building Administrator	Notifying parents, and possibly social service agencies of excessive absences or tardiness.
Classroom Teachers	Responsible for the behavior of students in the classroom, and for appropriate classroom management
Detention monitoring (If applicable)	Rotating teacher assigned by week.
In School Suspension (If applicable)	Para-educator assigned by the semester, and supervised by the Assistant Principal
Others?	Others?

Who is responsible for other functions or tasks?

As already mentioned earlier in this *Guide*, there may be many different committees or teams with responsibility for certain aspects of behavior management, discipline and aspects of violence prevention. Many of these tasks have been identified in recent literature. A listing of some of these proposed committees or teams, and their functions are listed in Figure 26 although this list should not be viewed as necessarily complete. The SRS Team might examine this list, discussing and adding additional possibilities.

Figure 26. Behavior and Violence Prevention Teams Proposed for Schools.

Team Name	Team Function	Source	Type
Bullying Prevention Team	To insure that bullying prevention and intervention remain at the forefront of educators' agendas	Olweus et al., 1999	School
Individual Behavior Management Team(s)	To conduct a functional analysis related to a student's behavior and develop and supervise the implementation of an individual behavior plan. While teams such as the IEP team may be created only for students in special education, some have called for similar individual behavior management teams to be created for non-disabled students	Tilly, Knowster, Kovalski, Bambara, Dunlap, and Kincaid, 1998; Jones, 1991	Individual
Crisis Response Team	To respond and help process crisis situations when they occur in schools	Poland, 1999	School
Positive Behavior Support Team	Used to define and teach behavioral expectations and monitor behavioral issues within a building	Sugai & Horner, 2001	School
School Safety Team	To plan overall school readiness for various potential safety risks or hazards in school, which plan overall school readiness for various potential safety risks or hazards in school,	Stephens, 1995	School
Security Assessment Team	To identify school security issues, and offer suggestions to improve school security	Trump, 1998	School
Threat Assessment Team	To receive, classify and respond to threats made by students or others related to school	Fein, Vossekuil, Pollack, Borum, Modzeleski, & Reddy, 2002	School
Wraparound Teams	Service coordination teams as a vehicle for assisting families to create support networks and to coordinate services.	Eber, 1997	Individual

Tasks or Responsibilities Related to Behavior.

While it is unlikely that any school would have separate teams which address each of these functions, it may be necessary for a school to carefully consider whether each of these functions are important, and then to determine if the function is currently being performed in that school, and if so, by whom.

What is the *SRS Task Responsibility Worksheet*?

In order to assist schools to identify and then assign responsibility for a variety of these functions, a worksheet is provided for the team to use for this purpose in Figure 27.

How should the *Worksheet* be used?

Each member of the SRS team should individually complete the SRS Task Responsibility Worksheet before the Team meeting where the Worksheet will be discussed. The member should attempt to add to the list of functions or tasks, as well as identify who they believe is responsible for each function on the list for their school.

The SRS members together as a team should then discuss and add to the tasks on the worksheet including any tasks or responsibilities related to behavior that occurs currently at this school, including any tasks completed by administrators. The team can also brainstorm to determine if any others not currently in place in the school could be included.

The Team can then discuss and determine the relative importance of these tasks in the column on the worksheet for that purpose. Next the team can determine who is currently taking responsibility for each function or task on his or her expanded worksheet. If no one is currently responsible for a function or task, the team might discuss if some person or group should be assigned this responsibility. If the team decides on a task that would be important but is not yet being done the team can discuss the best way to assign responsibility. After discussion and analysis by the team, a combined SRS Task Responsibility Worksheet should be completed.



Figure 27.

Task Responsibility Worksheet

School: _____ Date: _____ Name: _____

Functions or Tasks	How important is this function or task for this school?	Is this task performed in your school now?	Person or group responsible?	Changes needed?
<i>I. CREATING A SAFE & RESPONSIVE CLIMATE</i>	1=Not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=very important	Yes/No, Explain	Name, Position	Yes/No, Explain
To insure that bullying prevention is implemented by educators, and to plan training and data gathering.				
To define and teach behavioral expectations and monitor behavioral issues within a building.				
To establish school-wide rules of conduct; To establish school-wide positive behavioral expectations				
To insure that all parents and students are provided information about the school’s code of conduct.				
To provide supervision related to behavior in hallways, lunchrooms and school grounds.				
To provide consultation & support to classroom teachers regarding management & behavior problems.				
To identify school security issues, and offer suggestions to improve school security.				
Others? Specify.				
<i>II. EARLY IDENTIFICATION & INTERVENTION</i>	1=Not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=very important	Yes/No, Explain	Name, Position	Yes/No, Explain
To respond to students sent to the office for discipline				
To notifying parents of inappropriate behavior				
To receive, classify and respond to threats made by students or others				

related to school.				
Notifying parents, and possibly Social Service agencies of excessive absences or tardiness.				
Implement a early screening, identification & intervention program for inappropriate behavior				
Others? Specify.				
III. EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO INAPPOPRIATE BEHAVIOR	1=Not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=very important	Yes/No, Explain	Name, Position	Yes/No, Explain
To conduct a functional analysis related to a student’s behavior and develop and supervise the implementation of an individual behavior plan.				
To engage a process of assisting families to create support networks and to coordinate services.				
To respond and help process crisis situations when they occur in schools.				
To plan overall school readiness for various potential safety risks or hazards in school.				
To manage the in-school suspension or other similar programs in the school including detention or Saturday school if applicable.				
To insure that any student suspended or expelled receives appropriate Due Process, and that parents are appropriately notified.				
To insure that special education students received appropriate additional due process procedures as mandated by federal law.				
Others? Specify.				

SUMMARY - SRS TASK RESPONSIBILITY WORKSHEET

Purpose

- To identify functions and tasks related to behavior, determine who has responsibility for them, and how important those activities are for the school.
- To consider the best method for organizing these functions and activities in this school to accomplish those tasks deemed important, and assign responsibility if necessary.
- To make sure that students, parents and community members are aware of the persons or groups responsible for these functions.

Summary Box 6D:

Materials

- Copies of the *Task Responsibility Worksheet*.

Procedure

- SRS Team members individually complete the worksheet
- SRS Team then examines and discusses the functions of various behavior related committees suggested.
- Committee then determines the importance of these functions or tasks for its school, and modifies or adds to the list.
- Committee then determines how these functions or tasks are presently being completed in their school, if applicable.
- Finally, the team discusses and arrives at a recommendation about how these functions or tasks might best be accomplished at this school, including how to assign or reassign responsibility for these tasks, and any new functions which should be assigned.

Time

- Teams can expect to spend 1-2 hours discussing these functions and tasks, and identifying how they are currently organized, as well as developing a suggested way to assign responsibility to individuals or teams.

D. *SRS Safe Schools Survey*

What is the *SRS Safe Schools Survey*?

The *SRS Safe Schools Survey* assesses perceptions of school climate and safety. It is a vehicle to measure whether respondents perceive that they feel unsafe, how often they perceive inappropriate behavior occurring in and around school, how much learning occurs and how comfortable they are in the school environment among other related topics. The *Survey* addresses respondent attitudes about safety, environment and climate.

There are four questionnaires that are part of the *SRS Safe Schools Survey*, one each for:

1. Secondary Students,
2. Elementary Students,
3. Teachers and other Staff, and
4. Parents.

The secondary student questionnaire consists of 45 items, the elementary questionnaire consists of 25 items, the staff questionnaire consists of 40 items, and the parent questionnaire consists of 25 items. Each also has from 5-9 demographic questions in addition to the other items. There is considerable overlap of items across these four questionnaires, making it possible to examine discrepancies between the perceptions of parents, students, and staff. All versions contain the same four sub-scales:

Climate/Belongingness, Incivility and Disruption, Personal Safety Issues, and Delinquency/Major Safety Issues. The questionnaires are each included in the Resource Section of this *Guide*, and are also available in electronic form.

The *SRS Safe Schools Survey* provides your team with data on student, staff and parent perceptions of school climate and safety. The *Survey* was designed to be a comprehensive and technically adequate measure of school safety and school climate.

How was the *Survey* developed?

The survey drew upon previous national surveys of school violence, such as the 1995 School Crime Supplement Questionnaire. These other surveys tended to focus

primarily on more dramatic violence (e.g., fights with weapons, drug usage). The SRS School Safety Survey drew on these, as well as a number of questionnaires that reflected more general issues of school climate, including surveys of bullying (Swearer & Paulk, 1998; Swearer, 2001), conflict resolution (Crawford & Bodine, 1996), and general school climate (Kelly et al., 1986), although all items are new and formatted especially for this questionnaire.

Technical Characteristics of the *Survey*?

There are four separate forms of the *Survey*: Secondary Student (45 Items), Elementary Student (25 Items), Staff (40 Items), and Parent (27 Items). Each of the form was based on two years of pilot testing. An original pool of 120 possible items was shortened to the current form through factor and reliability analyses. Two “lie scale” items were included on the Secondary Student version of the survey (“I am reading and responding to this survey carefully”, “My answers to these questions accurately reflect my feelings”). Similar items were worded to be relevant to the target respondents, and the elementary version was intentionally shortened.

Principal components factor analysis yielded very similar factors for responses within each of the questionnaires. The following five factors were the only factors in the elementary student version, but also emerged for each of the other three questionnaires:

- **Belongingness.** The extent to which the school climate is perceived as a positive one that promotes learning, and in which students and staff feel they belong and are treated fairly.
- **Incivility and Disruption.** The extent to which relatively minor disruptions, such as harassment, fighting, and arguments are present at the school.
- **Personal Safety.** The extent to which students or staff member feels safe in general or in particular locations in the school. Parents describe perceptions of safety for their children.
- **Delinquency/Major Safety.** The presence or absence of incidents or behaviors that relate to delinquency or pose serious threats to school safety, such as possession of a knife, or drug or alcohol possession.

- **Effective Learning and General Climate.** Includes perceptions about how much learning is occurring in the school environment, and how supportive staff and environments are to learning.

In addition, on the Staff and Secondary Student Questionnaires a similar factor emerged:

- **Drugs/Alcohol.** Perceptions about the degree to which drugs and alcohol are available and used by students at school.

Finally, on both the Secondary Student and Parent Questionnaires another similar factor emerged:

- **Personal School Experience.** These items described perceptions regarding whether the student themselves or that parent's child were felt to be getting a good education, and learning effectively at that school

A lie scale was also included on the secondary student questionnaire. A list of the items used in the factors for each questionnaire can be found at the beginning of the charts and graphs printout for each questionnaire as described below. For the most part the factor loadings were quite high on all factors, with the majority of items loading between .50 and .80 on each scale.

Reliability analyses for each of the versions of the survey yielded the following overall and scale values for Cronbach's alpha (a measure of the internal consistency of the scale on a scale ranging from -1.00 to 1.00) as seen in the Figure 28.

Figure 28. Table of Reliabilities scales of the SRS Safe Schools Survey.

Version	Reliabilities by Scale for Common Scales					
	Overall	Belong- ingness	Incivility/ Disruption	Personal Safety	Major Safety	Effective Learning & Gen. Climate
Second. Student	.93	.94	.83	.90	.85	Not common across forms
Element. Student	.87	.82	.88	.75	.36	Not common across forms
Staff	.93	.90	.85	.85	.85	Not common across forms
Parent	.94	.93	.87	.88	.62	Not common across forms

Can the Survey be used to compare a school with other schools?

It is important to bear in mind that the Safe and Responsive Schools Safe Schools Survey does not have a nationally representative sample of schools to use as a norm group. Thus, there is no way for us to know how the results may compare to other schools. Individual schools districts may choose to examine and compare the data from their schools, and to the data that is available to date from participating schools (access SRS website for this file). While this may be useful, these comparisons should be done with extreme caution due to the different circumstances in each building. The questionnaire results are more useful for making comparisons within schools by scale to determine for instance that a certain school has higher ratings among students in the area of Major Safety vs. Incivility/Disruption, or for making comparisons across groups within a school (e.g., students vs. staff). Without a norm sample, teams cannot compare their results to those of other schools in an overall sense.

How does the Safe School Survey assist your team?

The survey assists teams by identifying areas of concern and provides data for the strategic planning process. School teams that have used the survey felt that the results helped them develop an awareness of how staff, faculty, parents, and students perceive the school community, and that the survey results provided critically important information for the development of a school based safe and responsive schools plan as described earlier in this *Guide*.

Decisions related to administering the SRS Safe Schools Survey?

In order to administer the *SRS Safe Schools Survey* questionnaires, the team will need to work with the school administration to make several important decisions about implementing the survey. These decisions focus on the issues of:

- Whether the survey will be administered to all students, staff, and parents or only a sample of these populations.

- Whether the pencil and paper (with data entry by hand or via scanner) or web-based versions of the questionnaire will be administered to each group, and how data files will be created.
- The method and occasions to have each group complete the questionnaires, especially parents.
- The most appropriate dates and times to administer the questionnaires to each group.

Should we survey all students, staff, and parents or only a sample?

One decision that teams must make is whether to administer the survey to every student, staff member, and parent within their school, or whether they wish to survey a representative portion, or sample, of their school population. Sampling is beneficial when it is not feasible due to cost or logistics to administer the survey to every student, staff, and parent. Sampling may be done with only one or two of the groups. For example, it is possible to survey all students and faculty and only a sampling of parents.

When sampling is used, schools should attempt to obtain a sample that is representative of that group. Typically that involves having an adequately large number in the sample to make it likely that the sample would reflect the perceptions of the entire group had all of the population been measured.

A sample may be random from the entire population, but it may also be stratified where random samples are taken from certain predefined groups such as grade level or class groups, or neighborhood geographic groups. The stratified approach may make data gathering easier, or make sure that certain groups are included in the sample, but will require overall larger samples to insure that overall sample is representative.

If sampling is used, how many subjects are needed?

The sample should be large enough to permit the team to be comfortable that the resulting data would represent the entire group even with non-responders. The precise number of students needed to represent the entire school population is based on arcane statistical concepts that are beyond our scope here. However the attached table included here may allow you to estimate, given the total numbers of the group of students, parents

Note: These figures provide a 5% margin of error. This means that if 100 different random samples of a specified size are drawn from the same population, in 95 of those samples the results will not vary more than 5

Figure 29. Sample Size

Number in Group	Suggested Sample
2000	323
1950	322
1900	321
1850	319
1800	317
1750	316
1700	314
1650	312
1600	310
1550	309
1500	306
1450	304
1400	302
1350	300
1300	297
1250	295
1200	292
1150	289
1100	285
1050	282
1000	278
950	274
900	270
850	265
800	260
750	255
700	249
650	242
600	235
550	227
500	218
450	208
400	197
350	184
300	169
250	152
200	132
150	109
100	80
90	74
80	67
70	60
60	53
50	45
35	33

percentage points, higher or lower, from the results that would have been obtained if all individuals in the population were surveyed.
Note: These figures assume that the sample was randomly selected.

or staff, how many individuals would be needed in a reasonable sample of that size group. Simply find your school's population in the left hand column, and the right hand column tells how many of that group should be sampled. This table assumes a random sample; you may still use the table for guiding stratified sample, but will be less able to be sure that your sample is truly representative. As you can see, the smaller the target population, the larger proportion of that population needs to be sampled.

Cost. One important factor in your decisions about sampling may be cost. That will also be affected by your choice of paper and pencil or web based data entry, and the methods of entering data. These topics are discussed below. Once these decisions are made, overall costs can be estimated for either whole population or sampling procedures.

Permissions. One other factor to consider is parent permissions for obtaining student data.

Most of the time schools do not need parent permission to obtain data on the Safe Schools Survey, but some state laws may require parents be informed, or that parents provide permission for their child to participate in surveys of some kind. Consult your state department of education for regulations on these topics in your state.

What are options for completing the questionnaires and data entry?

There are three primary ways to administer the “Safe Schools Questionnaires”:

A. Traditional Paper and Pencil

A sufficient number of copies of each of the four versions of the questionnaire can be duplicated for each group to whom the questionnaire is administered. The persons filling out the questionnaire then mark their responses on the paper. The paper copies are gathered, and someone then keys into a computer file the responses of each item on each questionnaire.

Advantages: This method is familiar to most people, and is relatively easy to administer. No special equipment or tools are required. All returned questionnaires can be used.

Disadvantages: It is very costly to have someone key into a computer file the responses for all questionnaires completed. In addition, such entry is usually prone to lots of errors. As a result, the costs for data entry can be substantial, above and beyond the cost of the necessary copying. In addition this process usually takes substantial amounts of time, delaying the availability of results.

Conclusion: Although this approach is always an option, it is usually best if there are relatively small numbers of completed questionnaires anticipated, and if data entry staff are available.

B. Paper and Pencil with Scanned Responses.

In this case the paper copies are designed with designated response areas, and the person completing the questionnaire may be asked to use a specific tool such as a #2 lead pencil to mark responses. The paper copies of the questionnaire can then be scanned on a machine for this purpose, which will identify responses, and place them into an electronic

file. There are two options for this scanning: 1. Questionnaires can be created, and scanning conducted by a commercial organization that specializes in this procedure; or, 2. They may be created and scanned using locally owned equipment and personnel.

Advantages: With advance planning this method has many of the advantages of the traditional paper and pencil approach in ease and familiarity, but diminishes the time and cost in creating a data base from the questionnaires. Larger districts or intermediate units may have the necessary equipment and personnel available at relatively small costs, especially when larger numbers of completed questionnaires are anticipated.

Disadvantages: If a commercial agency conducts the survey, there will be agency costs for creating the scan-able questionnaires, and then for the actual scanning of the completed questionnaires. These costs can be substantial, though they may be reduced when there are a large number of questionnaires to be scanned. Conversely, if this is done internally, the necessary scanning equipment, and support staff to operate it must be available in the desired time frame. Sometimes improperly marked questionnaires, or other technical problems may make some otherwise valid data unreadable.

Conclusion: Scanning equipment may be particularly useful when large numbers of completed questionnaires are anticipated, thus justifying the set up costs and making the cost of entry per questionnaire low. Many larger school districts may have this equipment and expertise available, as it can be used for all kinds of questionnaires and even tests that may be used in a school system spreading the cost over numerous uses.

C. Web-based Administration

Here respondents log onto an Internet website using a provided password. Once on the site, they will be asked to respond by clicking their responses to a representation of the questionnaire that appears on the screen. The web host software then captures each person's responses, and accumulates them as the questionnaires are completed over a designated period of time. After the designated period, or when all persons have finished their entry, the computer then also creates an electronic file with the resulting data.

The Safe and Responsive Schools Project may be able to make available a sample of the programming file used to undertake a web based questionnaire entry. This file would need modification by a trained technician to be adapted to the website requirements and equipment of a particular school.

Advantages: If the equipment and technical support personnel are available in a school, this approach may be very low in cost. This approach may work particularly well for students who can be cycled through a computer lab in order to complete the questionnaire. This will reduce the time and cost of paperwork, as well as being potentially a more appealing method to complete the questionnaire. Once set up is completed, the bulk of the set up time is saved in future uses of the survey such as bi-annual administration of the survey.

Disadvantages: The disadvantages to this approach are that everyone completing a questionnaire will need access to a computer, and for some people (such as parents) they may not be familiar with the technology or how to operate the mouse and buttons to enter their responses- the technology may interfere with their ability to respond. Arrangements for access to computers may be necessary. Web based entry will also require the technical support staff to program the website for this activity and to gather the data in an appropriate file. If errors occur, data may be lost, without any way to recover it since there is not a backup hard copy.

Conclusion: This approach can best be used when the appropriate support staff and school website capabilities exist, and can be useful for large numbers of students and also staff to complete the questionnaire. This could be especially useful where there district-wide implementation across numerous schools. It may be much more difficult to obtain parent responses using this approach, though one of the other approaches might be used for that group in conjunction with web based entry for students and staff.

What is the best method & occasion to administer questionnaires?

Students. The method of administration varies by the group being surveyed. Most schools have administered the questionnaire to students, whether all students or a sample, while they are in school. This can be done by paper and pencil during any time

designated (such as during a homeroom for secondary students), or by cycling students through a computer lab for the web based survey.

Staff. Teachers and other staff members have completed the questionnaires during staff meetings, but also anytime during a designated day or week. If web entry is used this can also be done in the school at a convenient time for teachers.

Parents. There are at least three typical options for distributing questionnaires to parents, including mailing them to parents, sending them home with students or distributing them for completion at school events such as open house night, or parent-teacher conferences. Other options such as arranging to distribute questionnaires by setting up tables at local supermarkets or neighborhood events might also be possible. Each method has its benefits and drawbacks.

Distributing the survey to parents at school events (e.g. PTO meetings, parent-teacher conferences) has been used successfully where parent participation in these events has been high, resulting in more likelihood that the sample is representative of all parents. Unfortunately this is not always the case, and the parents attending these events may not be representative of all parents. This approach can also be much less expensive than mailing. Moreover if parents can complete the questionnaires while attending an event, it may result in a higher return rate. In order to be most successful a table to distribute these should be provided at a location where all parents must pass, and/or individual teachers may be asked to provide parents with a copy they can complete while waiting for conferences. These should all be gathered by teachers or at the table before parents leave the event.

The biggest concern in sending questionnaires home with students is whether parents will receive them. Also, whether delivered by the student or mailed, the problem of this method is getting parents to complete and return the questionnaire. Return postage (with associated costs) or student return of the questionnaire may also be difficult. During the pilot process, schools that mailed or sent questionnaires home with students to parents had a better response rates when they also incorporated contests encouraging students to assist in obtaining parents to return the completed questionnaires. For example, classes with the highest return rates received pizza parties.

Figure 30.



Safe Schools Survey Planning Worksheet

Do we want to administer to all parents, students and staff or only a sample of each group?

- If using sampling, are we going to use random sampling or stratified sampling?

Number of Individuals Being Surveyed

Population.	Sample (if applicable).
Total # of Students: _____	# To be sampled: _____
Approx. Total # of Parents: _____	# To be sampled: _____
Total # of Staff: _____	# To be sampled: _____

<u>Survey Administration:</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Times</u>
Students: _____	_____	_____
Parents: _____	_____	_____
Staff: _____	_____	_____

Do we want to administer the web-based or pencil and paper versions of the survey?

- **Questions to consider before administering the web-based survey**
 - Do we have the technical support to install and support the web-based version? What are those costs?
 - Do we have enough computers for the web-based version?
 - When would computers be available for student, staff or parent administration?
 - If outside web administration were used, how would the passwords and logistics be handled?
- **Questions to consider before administering the paper and pencil survey?**
 - Do we want to use scanning or hand data entry?
 - If scanning...
 - How will questionnaires be printed in a scan-able format? Allow time for ordering, printing and delivery. Costs?
 - How will paper and pencil versions be administered to each group? Costs?
 - How will scanning be completed in house or through vendor? Costs?
 - If hand data entry...
 - How will questionnaires be printed? Allow time for printing. Costs?
 - How and when will they be administered? Allow time for delivery- mailed or in person, and return via mail or in person. Costs?
 - Who will do data entry by hand, and when? Costs?

When should the *Safe Schools Survey* be administered?

The *SRS Safe Schools Survey* can be administered at any time of the school year. However, it may be desirable to administer the survey in the fall (October-November) after the school year is well underway, but early enough so that the SRS team will be able to have ample time to analyze survey results, digest the implications, communicate the findings to their school, and employ this data in developing the “Safe Schools Plan.” We recommend that students, staff, and parents be surveyed as close as possible to the same time frame, so the results will be based on a consistent time period.

How can the resulting data be displayed for analysis?

When viewing the *Safe Schools Survey* results it is often times easier to understand the results if they are represented graphically. The following instructions will help you to create a printout of the results of the *Safe Schools Survey* including the results of each item, as well as the Scales included in the *Survey*.

The instructions will assist you in creating a printout of your data using the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet program. In order to do this, it is first necessary for the survey data to be entered into a data file in a format that can be read by Excel. This will depend on the way in which the surveys were completed, and the method of data entry you choose. See the instructions for this step below.

Once the data from each of the relevant survey forms (parent, staff, and elementary or secondary student) is on its own spreadsheet, you will use the templates provided, to create a set of survey results. Finally, you will be able to print out the survey results, creating a hard copy of the results of the survey for each survey form administered.

You should also have the blank templates files provided to you from Safe and Responsive Schools Project. You should have four different templates- one each for the elementary student, secondary student, parent, & staff “Safe Schools Questionnaires”. These files will be identified as: ElemStud.xlt, Parent.xlt; SecStud.xlt; and Staff..xlt The

process will be similar for each of these templates- after completing one, you can then complete the others using the same instructions.

Helpful Hint: Although these instructions were designed for use on a PC, the files should work on a Macintosh running Microsoft Excel as well. Some steps might be slightly different than listed here.

A. Creating a data spreadsheet.

If the traditional paper and pencil and hand data entry method is used, the responses for each questionnaire can be entered directly into an Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format, or a data base template such as Microsoft Access can be used to create this data spreadsheet. If other methods or programs are employed, you should be certain that the method will permit export to a Microsoft Excel readable file in the format described below.

The spreadsheet should be set up with the columns of the spreadsheet representing items on each questionnaire. The columns should be sequenced in the same sequence of the items as they appear on the questionnaire. The very first column will always be reserved for the school code number (from 1-10). If that code number is not included by respondents, it can be added by the person doing the data entry. If labels are desired, the first row can be used to identify and label the item number of the data to be inserted in that column.

Each row of the spreadsheet will represent one person's set of responses to all items on that questionnaire. It will be essential to skip (leave blank) columns for any missing data. There should be one row for each completed questionnaire of a particular type.

This same procedure is used to set up and enter data for all four versions of the questionnaire, and for all of the completed questionnaires. Once the data file is completed and in this format, you may go to section B below, and use this data file with the chart templates.

If the questionnaires are scanned, or if a web based entry is used, the computer program used should be able to create an ASCII file, if not an Excel readable file directly. The ability to create or transform the output file into an Excel spreadsheet file should be

verified before beginning to use the approach. Sometimes the assistance of technically trained personnel may be required to accomplish this important step. At any rate, the final spreadsheet file should be in the same format as described in the preceding paragraphs, with items starting with school code number in the first column, and one row for the data from each completed questionnaire. Once this is completed, the resulting file can be used in the next steps to create a set of charts describing the results.

B. Identifying district, survey date and school codes.

- Open one of the template files that can be found on the disk provided.
- You should see near the bottom left of your screen four tabs: charts, stats, data & schools.
- Click the tab for “schools”, if it is not already highlighted.
- Now in the cell identified as “b2” type the name of your school system or city using up to 25 characters.
- Next in cell “b5” type the Month and Year closest to the date when this set of questionnaires were completed. The month should be typed out in words, with a comma between it and the year.
- Next in cells “b9” to “b18” type the name of the school or schools from which the data were gathered.
 - a. The code numbers are the numbers assigned to these schools are 1-10, and should correspond to the code numbers assigned to schools earlier. The data from any one school should always have this same code number in the first column of the data set. Multiple schools (up to ten) can be included in the data analysis, so long as these school numbers appear in the first column of the data file.
 - b. You may, if you wish, include only data from one school. In this case the first column of data can either be empty, or can have all of the same code number in that column.
 - c. If in doubt, open your data file, and determine whether the school column is filled in, and if so, what numbers have been used.

C. Copying data to a template file.

- Now with the same template open, click on the tab labeled “data” in the lower left corner of your spreadsheet. This opens the sheet in which you will paste your data.
- Do not close this file- leave it open on your computer’s desktop, but go to the next step.
- Open the corresponding excel data file (elementary, secondary, parent, or staff) to the template you opened. This will be the excel file with all your survey results in it which was created earlier under “A” above. Go to File in the menu at the top of your screen, select Open to find & open your data file. Verify that the data file matches the template file.
- You now should have both the template file & your data file open, and should be currently viewing your data set.
- In the data set, place your cursor in the first cell with data entered into it on the spreadsheet. It will probably be the second row of the spreadsheet. This needs to be a cell that has data (numbers) in it, not labels or computer identification numbers.
- You will now need to copy the entire data base. There are two ways to do this.
 - a. First Option:
 - * Press F8 once. You will see an EXT box on the bottom right side of your screen.
 - * Shade the entire area of data. Use your right arrow button to get to the end of the columns and the down arrow button to get to the bottom of your data.
 - * Click on EDIT on your menu bar. Go to COPY and release your finger.
 - * After you hit COPY, you should see dotted lines around the entire area that has been highlighted.
 - b. Second Option:
 - *Drag your mouse until the entire data base is highlighted.
 - *Click on EDIT on your menu bar. Go to COPY and release your finger.

*You can also copy by right clicking on your mouse and releasing when you get to copy.

*After you hit copy you should see dotted lines around the entire area that has been highlighted.

- Now, click on the empty template file tab that should still be open on your desktop. The tab is usually found at the bottom of your windows screen. It should be an excel file with the ending .xlt on it. This should open the empty template, again making sure that you are in the data sheet.
- Inserting the data.
 - a. If you have **multiple schools** and are using a code to identify each school, position your cursor on the B2 cell (or label D1, corresponding to demographic question #1). The B2 cell should be outlined in black. The cell name should be in the upper left corner of your spreadsheet.
 - b. If you have **one school**, position your cursor on the C2 cell (or label D2, corresponding to demographic question #2). The C2 cell should be outlined in black. The cell name should be in the upper left corner of your spreadsheet.
- Click on the word EDIT on your menu bar. Go down to PASTE and release your mouse. You can also paste, by right clicking on your mouse and releasing on paste. Your data should now be entered into the blank template.

Helpful Hint: *If there are cells with pounds signs in them instead of numbers, that usually means that one or more columns are not wide enough to display the numbers in that column of cells. You will need to remedy that. Do this by placing your cursor or arrow in between the column that has the # signs on it and the column to the right of it. More than likely you will place the cursor between A and B on the spreadsheet. Drag your cursor to the right until you see numbers instead of # signs.*

Figure 34. Sample of a portion of data from the Parent form of the SRS Safe Schools Survey.

(Note: actual data continues across to column #27 and down for the number of completed questionnaires entered; only a small portion is illustrated here.)

dent #	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	D13	D14	D15
1	1	1	5	1	1	1	5	5	5	4	5	5	3	4	
2	1	1	6	1	2	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4
3	1	1	7	2	3	1	1	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	1	1	8	2	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3
5	1	1	7	2	3	1	1	1	5	4	4	4	5	5	4
6	1	1	8	3	4	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	3
7	1	2	9	3	3	1	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
8	1	2	8	3	4	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
9	1	2	9	4	4	1	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
10	1	2	10	4	4	1	1	1	5	5	5	4	4	5	4
11	1	1	10	4	1	1	1	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	3
12	1	1	10	5	4	1	1	2	4	5	5	4	5	5	4
13	1	2	11	6	4	1	1	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
14	1	2	13	7	4	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	4	5	5
15	1	2	13	8	4	1	1	1	4	3	3	4	4	4	4
16	1	3	14	9	4	1	1	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
17	1	2	9	3	4	1	1	1	3	4	4	4	5	5	4
18	1	2	11	5	4	1	1	1	5	4	5	4	5	5	4
19	1	2	10	5	4	1	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
20	1	2	10	5	4	1	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

D. Saving the data in the template file.

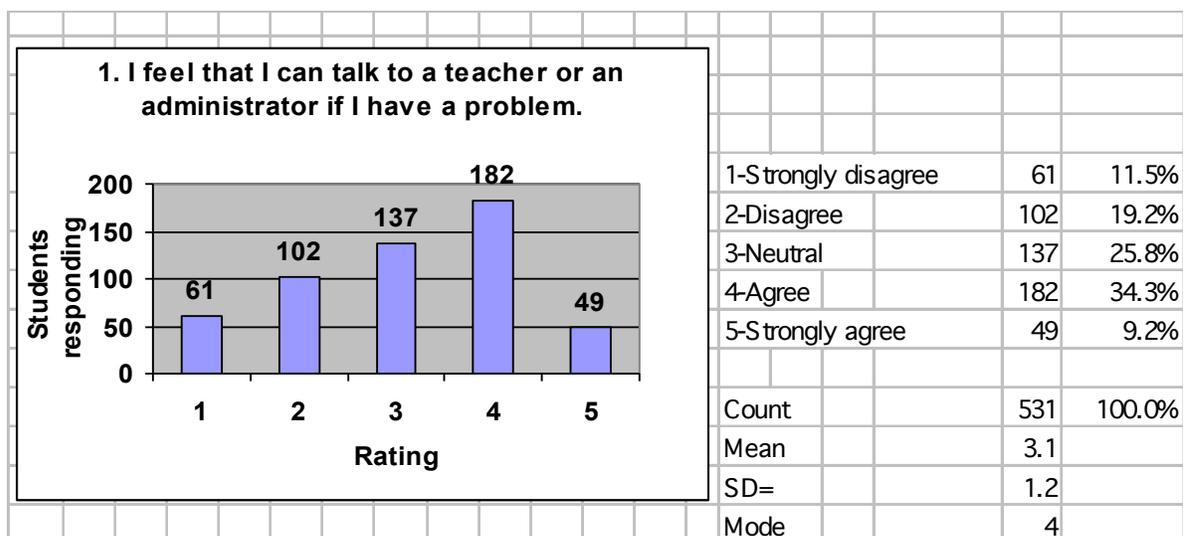
- Your information is now in the template.
- Go to “File” on the top menu bar of your screen and click it.
- Important! - Then click “SAVE AS” on the drop down menu.
- Next type a name for the file you are going to save as prompted. Save the information under a different name, perhaps a school abbreviation, in a file location so that you can keep it for future use, and find later if needed. Also that will maintain the empty template for future use.
- Once you have created a file name and folder location, click “SAVE”.

Helpful Hint: Use the school name, data source and date in the title abbreviating as necessary. For example: Jefferson Studts10-02.xlt

E. Viewing the data in chart and graph form.

- Now click the tab in the lower left of your screen identified as “charts”. If you are at the top of this sheet, you should see a title and logo followed by a list of items in each subscale, and then followed by numerous bar graphs with information in tables to the right of each. If you are not at the top, use the scroll bar at the right of your screen to move to the top, and then to scroll through the various graphs.
- You should see item-by-item bar graphs of the responses to items on this questionnaire. The questions will not be in numerical order, because the items are grouped in scales. A table and graph for scale scores for all of the scales follows the items charts and graphs, and is the last page for each printout. For a more detailed explanation of these scales please refer explanation located elsewhere in the *Guide*.
- You should also see this information: count, mean, SD (standard deviation) and mode associated with each bar graph.

Figure 32. Sample of a graph and related statistics from the data printout template for the secondary student SRS Safe Schools Survey.



F. Printing the Data in Chart Format

- Make sure you are on the sheet tab that says charts.
- The actual number of pages to print out will change depending on the type of survey you are analyzing (i.e. elementary, secondary, parent, or staff.) as well as the features of your printer. Below is a table of the approximate number of pages per type of questionnaire. If the number of pages is 40 or more, more than likely there is a problem with the formatting.

Figure 33. Printout pages, scales, & questions in the SRS Safe Schools Survey.

Questionnaire	Approximate Number of Pages for Printout	Number of Scales	Number of Questions plus # of Demographic Questions
Elementary Student	14 pages	5 scales	25 + 7 demographics
Parents	15 pages	7 scales	27 + 9 demographics
Secondary Student	22 pages	8 scales	45 + 7 demographics
Staff	20 pages	6 scales	40 + 5 demographics

- By looking at the dotted lines on the spreadsheet you will see where the pages are broken up. You can also see this by pushing PRINT PREVIEW under the FILE column of your menu bar. Before printing it is a good idea to make sure that the percentage information is on the same page as the graph. If it isn't, you will end up printing many excess pages. You may need to adjust the size of the graphs, or insert page breaks to have all the information on one page. Find someone familiar with Microsoft Excel to assist you with adjusting page breaks and margins if that is necessary. Each page, excluding the first and last pages, should typically have 3 graphs, except at the end of each scale where that may vary.
- Now go to the "File" menu and click on "Print" or use a shortcut to "Print". On the pop up menu, verify your choice of printer and other settings by hitting "Print". The graphs are set up to print in "Portrait" style.

- Once printed, hard copies can be copied for other team or committee members, administrators and others.

What should we look for in the resulting data printout?

Once the printouts of the data are available there are a variety of ways that the team might examine this data. First, the team individually or in a group might go through all of the individual items charts for each survey group looking for items that seem particularly salient for one reason or another. These could be identified for later group discussion.

Additionally, the scale scores could be examined to determine which of the scales represented either strengths or areas of concern for this school for each survey group. Then the survey groups (parents, students and staff) could be compared for similarities and differences in their perceptions about the scales as well as similar items. Both strengths and weaknesses might be identified, and employed in the development of a Safe and Responsive Schools Plan.

SUMMARY – SRS SAFE SCHOOLS SURVEY

DATA INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

MEETINGS 3-7 AND BEYOND

Summary Box 6E.

Purpose

- To survey students, staff and parents about their perceptions of school safety and school climate variables.
- To obtain data useful in the development of the SRS Plan.
- To obtain data as a benchmark for long term changes through time (2 or more years).

Materials

- Copies of the Safe Schools Survey Planning Worksheet.
- Copies of the Parent, Elementary Or Secondary Student, and Staff SRS Safe Schools Questionnaires.
- Copies of the data analysis instructions.

Procedure

- Survey Administration.
 - Finalize survey logistics in October.
 - Decide whether the web-based or pencil and paper version of the survey will be administered.
 - Decide whether team will survey all parents, students, and staff or a sample.
 - Determine how and when survey will be distributed to parents and staff.
 - Determine most appropriate date and time to administer the survey to students and specify logistics for survey administration.
- Administer surveys as soon as practicable.
 - Specify person to collect surveys as they are returned if administering paper and pencil version of the survey.
 - Survey Analysis.
 - Analyze surveys using enclosed Excel SRS Survey Analysis Program.

Time

- Teams can expect to spend 2-3 hours discussing logistical issues regarding survey distribution, data analysis and communicating survey results.
- Respondents can expect to spend 20-30 minutes completing the survey.
- Data entry time will depend on the quantity of questionnaires, and the method used.
- Once the data is in an Excel spreadsheet, a team member can expect to spend about 1-2 hours in running the Excel analysis program and making copies of the results for the team.

INTERPRETING & USING DATA



During the needs assessment process, your team spent a considerable amount of time gathering information about your school's most critical needs, and strengths, as perceived by the school's faculty, students, and parents. As the process of information

Steps in the Strategic Planning Process

There are five steps in strategic planning process leading to the development of the SRS Plan:

1. *Identifying the Focus.*
2. *Brainstorming Strategies.*
3. *Selecting Plan Components.*
4. *Developing Details of Implementation.*
5. *Documenting Plan Effects.*

In between steps one and two, the team uses the results of the needs assessment to clarify the school's areas of strengths and weaknesses. This section leads you through the processes of considering all of the needs assessment results and beginning to use those

SUMMARY CHAPTER 7 - INTERPRETING AND USING DATA

Chapter 8 - Scanning for Effective Practices

Purpose

Summary Box 7.

- To develop a focus statement that identifies and responds to the school's most critical needs.

- .

Materials

- SRS Mission Statement.

Procedure

- Review of Data.
 - > Looking for important themes.
 - > Noting discrepancies between student, staff, and parent perceptions.
 - > Identifying school's strengths.
 - > Identifying school's needs.

Time

- Teams can expect to spend 1 ½ hours working on this activity.

CHAPTER 8

SCANNING FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICES



Overview

As noted in the manual, *Preventing School Violence*, the most widely used responses to problems of school discipline and school violence have not always been



The team is now ready to develop its SRS Plan! At this point, the team will use the information gathered [from the needs assessment and best practices review](#) to create a



Now that the team has selected components for the SRS plan, the next step is to put the plan into action. This Chapter will detail considerations with regard to plan implementation. In order for a plan to be put into action and to work effectively and efficiently, the “nuts and bolts” need to be ironed out. It is necessary to clearly map out

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RESOURCE GUIDE

SECTION 3

CHAPTERS 11-14