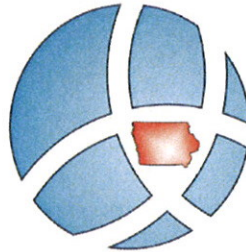


Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools

October 2011



Waterloo Community Schools East & West High Schools
with support from our local AEA



WATERLOO
Community School District

Engaged in Learning • Prepared for Success



*The Waterloo Community
School District is the 6th
largest district in the state.*

Enrollment	
Elementary	4844
Middle	2185
High	3072
Total Enrollment	10,101



Our students are housed at 20 different locations.



Buildings	
Stand alone	1
Pre-K site	
Elementary	11
Middle	4
High	3
Total Sites	20

Pre-K Sites
7 elementary schools have Pre-K

Waterloo-At a glance



59% Caucasian (8% of which are Bosnian)
28.5% African American
5% Hispanic
2% Asian
3% Indian
2.5% Two or more
41% Student Minority

16.2% Special Education

Mobility Rates
13.58% Elementary
15.15% Middle
27.95% High

Teaching Staff
92% Caucasian
6% AA
1% Hispanic
1% Asian/Pacific

Administrators
71% Caucasian
29% AA

65.66% Free/Reduced Lunch

Overview

In October 2010, Iowa was one of 11 states to be awarded funding by the U.S. Department of Education to measure and improve statewide conditions for learning, which include school safety, student engagement in school, and the overall school environment. The Iowa program is called Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools.

When it comes to education, students, parents and teachers are the experts, so the time has come to hear directly from them how we can accelerate student learning by making our Iowa schools stronger and more competitive. Of the 60 schools randomly selected to take the Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools survey to measure conditions for learning and potentially receive grant funding, 47 schools voluntarily agreed to participate in the program.

The confidential survey focused on issues ranging from student safety, to student relationships with other students and adults and to whether students have the supports they need in their schools. For the first time in Iowa's history, survey results regarding school culture and climate will be made directly available for schools to use to strengthen classrooms and improve education.

Improving conditions for learning can lead to impressive results, and each of the participating schools should be commended for their willingness to take the survey and address these challenging issues. Studies show strengthening skills such as problem solving, conflict resolution and teamwork (known as "social emotional learning") in the classroom led to an 11 percent increase on standardized achievement test scores, improved classroom conduct and improved student attitudes.

Following the federal guidelines for the grant, 80% of the nearly \$14 million in federal grant funding will be used for direct support of the schools that show the greatest opportunity for improvement. For the next four years the Iowa Department of Education and Area Education Agencies will provide resources and work with participating schools to implement activities that improve conditions for learning.

- OCTOBER 2010.** Announcement of the nearly \$14 million Iowa Safe & Supportive Schools grant by the U.S. Department of Education.
- MARCH 2011.** Selected schools were notified of their opportunity to participate in the Iowa Safe & Supportive Schools survey. Forty-seven schools agreed to be partners in this groundbreaking work.
- MAY 2011.** Confidential survey was completed by students, parents and teachers at participating schools.
- SEPTEMBER 2011.** Media announcement of survey results and overview of program. Following the announcement, schools will have regular contact with their assigned Area Education Agency (AEA) Learning Supports Consultant who will partner with school teams to begin to review survey and other data to improve conditions for learning.
- OCTOBER 2011.** Participating schools attend a statewide workshop to begin to analyze data and school leadership teams begin to work on plans to improve conditions for learning.

COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR THE SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS GRANT

Overview

Effectively communicating the Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools program to key partners, the community and the media, is critically important for the program to succeed. As you know, topics such as school safety, bullying and substance abuse are sensitive and can be misinterpreted, so it is important to highlight a few key points as we move forward:

What Exactly is Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools? Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools is aimed at measuring and strengthening conditions for learning. This is not simply a school safety program. Measuring and improving school safety is certainly a part of the program, but we are also focused on improving relationships with students and adults, promoting teamwork inside and outside the classroom, and strengthening ties between students and their respective communities. The results speak for themselves. Improving conditions for learning can lead to an 11 percent increase on standardized achievement test scores, improved classroom conduct and improved student attitudes.

Each Participating School Should be Commended. Each of the 47 participating schools should be commended for participating in the survey. Simply by taking the initial Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools survey, each student, parent and teacher who took the survey showed a willingness to volunteer their time and insight to improve education for all Iowa students.

Interpreting the Safe and Supportive Schools Index. Any time there is an "index" as a result of a survey, many people, understandably so, categorize participants as winners and losers. This is not the case for Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools; the schools that scored toward the bottom of the Index showed the greatest opportunity for improvement and will get funding to strengthen conditions for learning. The schools that scored at the top of the Index showed less need for the funding but will continue to have access to all the activities and workshops that are available to schools that receive funding. Everybody wins simply by participating!

Frequently Asked Questions

- Q:** *Why was my school selected to receive funding?*
A: The confidential survey was taken and the survey results plus data on graduation, dropout, attendance and suspensions/expulsions were used to develop the "Safe and Supportive Schools Index." There was no single reason a school was selected, but rather each selected school showed the greatest opportunity for improvement based on multiple factors.
- Q:** *Since my school was selected, does that mean my school is "unsafe?"*
A: Absolutely not. There are hundreds of high schools in Iowa and your school was chosen out of the 47 schools willing to participate. This simply means of the small sample of schools that agreed to take the survey, your school showed the greatest opportunity for improvement. In addition, while every school faces challenges regarding safety, there are no "unsafe" schools in Iowa as defined by federal No Child Left Behind standards.
- Q:** *Why did my school agree to take the voluntary survey?*
A: Each of the 60 schools randomly selected had the choice of whether or not to voluntarily participate in the Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools program and take the survey. Of the 60 schools, 47 agreed to take the survey. Each participating school should be commended for their willingness to dedicate the time to take the survey and have the results posted online. By taking the survey, each school has shown a commitment to make their schools stronger by improving school climate and conditions for learning.
- Q:** *When will my school see the funding and a plan of action?*
A: Schools that will receive funding will be announced on September 19th. In October, schools will review their School Profile Reports and analyze data. Schools will begin using the resources and implementing a specific plan of action in 2012.

How Waterloo Schools Plan to Communicate

It is important that members of the community and media understand that being selected to receive Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools funding is a **positive step** toward improving conditions for learning at the selected school.

Parents. Students. Teachers. A letter will be mailed to the home of all staff and students looking for creative ways to ensure support.

Social Media. Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools can be found on Facebook and Twitter at "SafeSupportIowa." Social media is invaluable when it comes to promoting a program like Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools.

Facebook, for example, has grown more than 500% in just the last three years, and users include all age-groups. "Like" or follow our page and encourage others throughout the community to do the same.

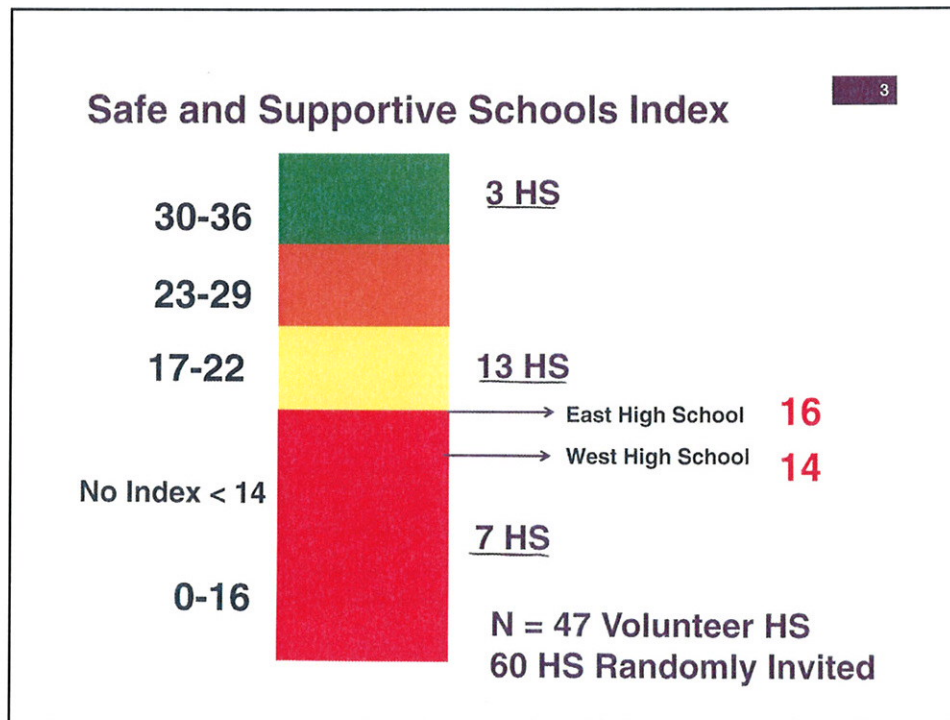
Local Paper. Plans on the way to contact our local paper and arrange a time to sit down with a reporter and discuss the goals and benefits of the Iowa Safe and Supportive schools program.

Letter to the Editor. Draft a letter to the editor in your local paper. When writing either a column or a letter to the editor, we must always assume the reader knows little about the program and include an intro paragraph summarizing the program.

Radio. Many communities have local radio shows during morning drive-time or during the noon hour. We will work with officials at the Iowa Department of Education to put together a tour of local newspapers and radio shows. During this tour we will contact local program participants to join state officials at each stop to offer a local perspective.

Local Elected Officials. We will contact local elected officials (mayor, state representatives, school board) and urge them to promote Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools in their newsletters, columns and public events. Student engagement with the community is a key part of the program, and local elected officials should be willing to promote a program investing time and resources into strengthening community ties with students. Work with city officials to get a mention of the program in the city newsletter.

Local Business Leaders. We will work with your local chamber and/or rotary club to arrange a time to speak to local members about the program. Local business leaders are very focused on improving education and are often looking for guest speakers for their monthly meetings. Also request for Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools to be featured in newsletters and emails.



Score	Safety	Engagement	Environment	Total
0	Physical <2.74 Emotional <2.74 S/E Violent =>20%	Diversity <2.74 Adult-Student <2.74 Student-Student <2.74 Attendance <80% Graduation <80% Dropout >1.75%	Physical <2.74 Expectations <2.74 Suspensions/Ex =>20%	0-16
1	Physical 2.75-2.99 Emotional 2.75-2.99 S/E Violent 12.5-19.99	Diversity 2.75-2.99 Adult-Student 2.75-2.99 Student-Student 2.5-2.99 Attendance 80.0—87.49 Graduation 80.0—87.49 Dropout 1.51-1.75	Physical 2.75-2.99 Expectations 2.75-2.99 Suspensions/Ex 12.5-19.99	17-22
2	Physical 3.0-3.24 Emotional 3.0-3.24 S/E Violent 5.0-12.49	Diversity 3.0-3.24 Adult-Student 3.0-3.24 Student-Student 3.0-3.24 Attendance 87.5-94.99 Graduation 87.5-94.99 Dropout 1.24-1.5	Physical 3.0-3.24 Expectations 3.0-3.24 Suspensions/Ex 5.0-12.49	23-29
3	Physical =>3.25 Emotional =>3.25 S/E Violent <5%	Diversity =>3.25 Adult-Student =>3.25 Student-Student =>3.25 Attendance =>95% Graduation =>95% Dropout <1.25	Physical =>3.25 Expectations =>3.25 Suspensions/Ex <5%	30-36

Waterloo Community Schools District Goal

S³ Goal

To support statewide measurement of, and targeted programmatic interventions, to improve, conditions for learning in order to help schools improve safety and reduce substance use.

Valid and reliable measures of school safety, engagement and environment are required and high school students, staff, and parents must be surveyed.

S³ Performance Measures

- 1) Decrease the % of students who report current (30-day) alcohol use
- 2) Decrease the % of students who report personal harassment or bullying
- 3) Increase the Safe and Supportive Schools Index*
- 4) Decrease the number of suspension for violent incidents without physical injury



*In order to increase the index, each high school must also decrease the % of students who drop out and increase the % of students who graduate as well as increase attendance rates.

