Connecticut's Anti-bullying Legislation (PA 11-232):

Identifying factors that facilitate implementation

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Introduction and Evaluation Methodology:

In 2011, the Connecticut General Assembly unanimously passed Public Act 11-232, *An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws*. This law requires Connecticut school districts to adopt strategies to investigate alleged acts of bullying and intervene once they have been verified, and to prevent acts of bullying from occurring by creating safe school environments. While the enactment of these statutes is laudable, research suggests that state anti-bullying legislation does not always reach its intended objectives due to problems with implementation at the district and school levels[12]. This evaluation seeks to better understand factors that enable the implementation of PA 11-232 requirements, namely the investigation of bullying and, more broadly, schools' efforts to improve school climate.

Between June and December of 2013, an evaluation team from DePaul University conducted a series of 21 interviews with School Climate Coordinators and School Climate Specialists across Connecticut. School Climate Coordinators are responsible for the implementation of PA 11-232 requirements at the district level, whereas School Climate Specialists are responsible for implementation within their specific schools. Collectively, these individuals possess a unique understanding of factors that facilitate the implementation of these legislative requirements.

This evaluation was reviewed and approved by DePaul University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). All 22 interviews[3] (i.e., 11 School Climate Coordinators; 11 School Climate Specialists) were recorded and later transcribed. Transcriptions were reviewed by the evaluation team in order to identify common themes reflecting key factors that facilitate the implementation of anti-bullying and school climate improvement efforts.

The facilitators to implementation revealed in this evaluation are divided into three major sections, namely External Factors, School Factors, and Individual Factors. This framework takes into account the multi-tiered influences that play a role in school climate improvement efforts.

External Factors refer to influences outside of the school and school district that were perceived as helpful to the implementation of PA 11-232 requirements. School factors refer to institutional influences within the school district or within schools that were viewed as instrumental to implementation. Finally, individual factors refer to specific people or personal attributes that enable this work to be carried forward.

1 Kester, K., & Candiya, M. (2008). Bullying in Washington Schools: Updated 2008. Social and Economic Sciences Research Center. Washington State University.

2 Troy, T. M. (2010). Blocking the bullies: Has South Carolina's safe school climate act made public schools safer? Clearing House. A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas. 83, 96–100.

3 Percentages in this report are calculated out of 22 participants. However, in some cases, the total is adjusted if a question was not answered or was skipped during the data collection interview.

Section I: External Factors

External factors refer to influences or activities outside of the school or school district that were viewed as instrumental to implementing PA 11-232 requirements.

The Legislation:

The legislation (PA 11-232) was viewed as a facilitator of anti-bullying/school climate improvement efforts as it helped to promote school awareness of bullying and school climate issues. Overall, 65% of participants reported that, as a result of PA 11-232, there is more awareness and focus on bullying, school climate or social-emotional issues within schools. For example, participants stated that "the legislation promotes awareness", "administrators take it seriously", "it's not so much taboo as it used to be", "you just can't ignore it anymore", "students know how serious it is", "it's more in the forefront", "it can't get swept under the rug", and "it creates a sense of importance". Thus, increased awareness and focus on anti-bullying and school climate related issues reflects a necessary first step in guiding school climate improvement efforts.

Recommendation:

i. Continue to develop legislation that promotes schools' focus on improving school climate (e.g., bullying, climate, violence).

"I think the CALI training was outstanding."

Training:

Training was reported as instrumental to the implementation of PA 11-232 requirements and school climate improvement efforts more broadly. Trainings were referred to as being "incredibly helpful", "outstanding", and "very important". Overall, 47.6% of participants reported that

training was helpful to their work. Moreover, participants referred to various trainings, namely the CALI trainings offered by CSDE as well as PBIS trainings. Furthermore, several participants reported that the CALI trainings were particularly helpful as they clarified much of the confusion in regards to the legal definition of bullying as contained in PA 11-232. For example, one participant reports how focusing on 'mean behavior' as opposed to the legal definition of bullying was helpful in moving their work forward. She states as follows.

> "I think it's been very helpful to have JoAnn Freiberg [during the CALI training] and her emphasis on mean behavior instead of making bullying a termed legal definition of 'is this bullying?', really focusing on what does 'mean' feel like, and we've really adopted that. I think that's easier for our staff to recognize and for kids to recognize when things are just unkind."

In general, trainings also provided necessary guidance to schools regarding how to move this work forward. For example two participants, respectively, state as follows.

> "I think the CALI training was outstanding and was really, um, was really helpful. Prior to that I feel like we were just sort of muddling along, you know, getting by."

> "We left those workshops with just a whole bunch of information that we could come

back to our staff and really then share that professional development with them in how to deescalate a situation or what is restorative discipline. So just some really good concrete factors and some concrete [information] that we can then give our teachers."

It is noteworthy that training was primarily mentioned by School Climate Coordinators (80%) as compared to School Climate Specialists (20%). It is likely that schools and districts have primarily

"Emphasis on mean behavior instead of making bullying a termed legal definition ... I think that's easier to recognize when things are just unkind."

focused on training School Climate Coordinators during the beginning stages of this initiative. As Connecticut moves forward with its school climate improvement efforts, increased emphasis may need to be placed on training School Climate Specialists who are responsible for school-level implementation.

Recommendations:

i. Conduct a state-wide survey to determine if and how School Climate Coordinators and Specialists are being trained in anti-bullying and school climate improvement related efforts.

ii. Require School Climate Coordinators to attend basic and certification training, and School Climate Specialists to attend basic school climate training.

Section II: School Factors

School factors refer to influences within the school or school district that were instrumental to the implementation of anti-bullying and school climate improvement efforts.

Resources:

Resources represent the necessary programmatic inputs that allow for formalized anti-bullying and school climate improvement practices to be implemented. For purposes of this evaluation, we classified funding, staff, and time as resources. Overall, 57% of participants reported resources as being helpful to the implementation of anti-bullying and school climate improvement efforts. The theme of resources was consistent across School Climate Coordinators and Specialists. When discussing this theme, School Climate Co-ordinators (60%) as compared to School Climate Specialists (42.9%) tended to report funding as being central to carrying out these efforts. Typically, funding was discussed within the context of external grants. These participants reported that funding allowed for implementation of staff training and workshops. Participants also report-ed that funding enabled the implementation of school anti-bullying and school climate improve-ment activities and programs.

Recommendation(s):

i. Develop state funding opportunities to sup-port school climate improvement efforts.

ii. Encourage schools to develop school climate improvement strategies that do not require funding, or that are of low cost.

School Policies and Procedures:

School policies (e.g., school rules, school-wide behavioral expectations, social contracts) and procedures (e.g., manuals, checklists, flow charts, forms) were reported as helpful in guiding the implementation of PA 11-232 requirements. The majority of participants interviewed (71%) reported that policies and procedures were help-ful in guiding their work. Although many schools did not have systemized ways of carrying out some of the legislative requirements (e.g., bul-lying investigations), many schools were able to translate the PA 11-232 requirements into clear protocols and procedures. Codifying these proce-dures early in this initiative helped to eliminate confusion among Coordinators and Specialists.

Participants discussed the importance of estab-lished procedures in different ways. For exam-ple, it was reported that protocols and materials (e.g., timelines, checklists, forms, manuals, flow charts) helped to guide bullying investigations, guide interventions, and distill complicated legal language (e.g., bullying definition) into a more comprehensible form. Some of the ways that participants described the materials developed by their school or district include the following: "user friendly", "more clear", "provides infor-mation", "self-explanatory", "makes it easier", "materials are great", and "provides the basic gist". Several participants reported that hav-ing outlined procedures were helpful in better understanding the bullying definition and con-ducting bullying investigations. For example, in some instances, schools provided checklists to help School Climate Coordinators and Specialists determine if an incident should or should not be considered bullying. Further, one large urban school district developed a district-wide manual

that was distributed to all School Climate Specialists across the district (approximately 30 schools). The manual served as a reference guide for the School Climate Specialists as it contained information pertaining to the bullying definition, how to conduct a bullying investigation, and other related materials. Thus, policies and procedures help to streamline processes and allow for greater efficiency.

It is also noteworthy that clear policies and procedures helped to minimize conflict between schools and parents. When policies and procedures were not clearly established, parents tended to view actions generated by School Climate Specialists as arbitrary and biased (e.g., consequences following a bullying investigation). Therefore, having clear policies and procedures allowed for greater uniformity, predictability, and consistency, which helped parents gain greater confidence in how schools handle bullying investigations and their consequences (e.g., counseling, disciplinary action). For example one participant discusses how school protocols related to bullying investigations were helpful.

"I think being able to fall back to that document was helpful and letting parents know that this is what we determine, this is why we determined it, and reassuring that, bullying or not, the offending child was dealt with."

Recommendations:
i. CSDE should inventory materials that have been developed across school districts and identify best practices (e.g. manuals, materials, forms, charts) that can serve as a models or templates for other schools.

ii. Require school districts to develop standard policies and procedures for conducting bullying investigations.

iii. Require school districts to develop a standard manual that serves as a guide to School Climate Specialists across schools.

Institutional Communication:
Institutional communication refers to communication or interactions across various stakeholders within the school community including school administrators, teachers/staff, parents/guardians, and students. Although School Climate Coordinators and Specialists often reported that anti-bullying and school climate improvement efforts were fragmented, with many schools working in silos, some participants reported the benefits of their school/district working in a more integrated fashion. This occurred by either collaborating with immediate colleagues or interacting with individuals outside of their immediate professional network or silo.[4]

Overall these interactions helped School Climate Coordinators and Specialists in the following ways: (1) creating awareness, (2) providing task support, (3) enabling uniformity & consistency, and (4) providing emotional support.

1) Awareness: Participants reported that interacting with other colleagues allowed them to learn some of the practices and challenges occurring in other schools, which helped to inform

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4 For purposes of this evaluation we noted instances of (1) district-school interactions (e.g., school climate coordinator assists a school within the district), (2) school-school interactions (e.g., school climate specialists network with other specialists in the same school district), (3) within school interactions (e.g., school climate specialist works collaboratively with school psychologist), and (4) school-parent interactions. (e.g., school climate specialist holds workshops with parents about bullying). In addition, we coded this information only if the participant reported that it was in some way beneficial.

their own work. One participant reported the following.

"I think [the meetings] force us to have discussions district-wide about what everyone is doing. I think it's a nice opportunity for people to share; ideas are exchanged. People have gone to other schools and districts to observe other districts' variations of how they're handling it, so there's that sharing of ideas.

2) Task Support: Participants reported that collaborating with others allowed tasks to be completed more effectively or efficiently than working alone. For example, several participants reported that bullying investigations are time consuming and that splitting the caseload with a colleague (e.g., school principal) allowed the work to be completed more quickly. This differs from other participants who often reported being the only individuals within the school responsible for carrying out this work.

3) Uniformity/Consistency: Participants reported that collaborating with others allowed for greater uniformity and consistency in the implementation of anti-bullying/school climate improvement efforts. For example, collaborating with colleagues within the school can help facilitate consistency in how student behavior is handled across staff members. Similarly, routine meetings between specialists across schools can help to foster district-wide uniformity. Therefore, as students transfer between schools (e.g., elementary to middle school) there is consistency in behavioral expectations across schools.

4) Emotional Support: Participants also reported the affective benefits (e.g., venting frustrations, emotional support) of sharing their experiences with colleagues. However, this theme was not very common.

Recommendations:

i. Continue to require schools to have a School Climate Committee that meets regularly as this can serve as a mechanism that facilitates interaction among colleagues in the school.

ii. Require district-wide meetings between School Climate Specialists within the district, at least quarterly.

iii. Develop a School Climate Coordinator/Specialist Listserv and/or Blog. These mechanisms should be designed to facilitate awareness and communication across districts and schools statewide.

Communication with parents/guardians:

School Climate Coordinators and Specialists also reported the benefits of having proactive and open communication with parents/guardians. Overall, half of all participants (52%) reported the benefits of reaching out to parents/guardians in some fashion. Although many participants in this evaluation reported challenges related to working with parents/guardians; proactive and open communication helped to alleviate school-parent conflict.

Overall, 21 respective statements were generated in regards to parent involvement[5]. Of these statements, 23.8% reported distal approaches such as reaching out to parents via newsletters, parent notices, and the school website. These mechanisms were mainly used to communicate information. Although this form of interaction is not of an interpersonal manner, it is never-

5   Some participants generated multiple statements.

theless helpful in communicating with a wide-range of parents/guardians in the school community. Further, 23.8% of the statements were crisis oriented approaches suggesting that the school reaches out to parents when a crisis occurs (e.g., bullying investigation). Finally, 52.4% of the statements reflected proactive approaches in which the school reaches out to parents prior to a problem or crisis occurring. For example, some schools reported collaborating closely with parents, holding parent trainings related to bullying/school climate, requiring parent volunteerism, and requiring parental social contracts. In general, schools that engaged in proactive approaches indicated that it was helpful in minimizing school-parent conflicts when problems later occur (e.g., bullying investigation). Parents tend to be receptive when schools display a proactive, collaborative, and positive style.[6] For example, one School Climate Specialist reflects a proactive approach as she reports working collaboratively with parents and providing positive feedback to parents about their children.

"I think that the parents respect that because they know not only are we going to call them in, but we expect to work with them. And, you know, we also have positive communication because I think if the first phone calls [about their child] can be positive [before a problem occurs], it just alleviates a lot of the tension.

Another participant stated the following:

"And I think that's been great because it's become a partnership; it's collaborative. It doesn't have to reach a level where some student is clinically depressed or something like that. The parents are getting it; we're all working together and they get that."

Thus, systematically reaching out to parents and creating a school culture in which parents are engaged can help promote school climate improvement efforts by helping to solve student behavioral problems collaboratively and also reduc-

ing school-parent tension that may ensue when problems occur (e.g., bullying investigation, disciplinary action). Such a proactive and collaborative approach can facilitate more comprehensive ways of addressing student issues and enable the early detection of student behavioral problems.

Recommendations:
i. Provide training and identify best practices regarding increasing parental engagement in schools.

"It doesn't have to reach a level where some student is clinically depressed..."

Assessment

Participants reported that assessing school climate and student discipline served as important mechanisms to promote anti-bullying and school climate improvement efforts. Overall, 57% of participants generated a specific statement about the use of data or assessment in guiding school climate improvement efforts (e.g. school climate improvement plans).[7] Participants discussed an array of assessment mechanisms such as school climate surveys, student disciplinary data, and directly talking to students. Although participants reported various information-gathering mechanisms, it will be essential for schools to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of these respective approaches. For example, directly speaking to students may allow for an in depth understanding of students' experiences, but can also be anecdotal and biased.

Mechanisms such as the school climate survey allowed school climate improvement efforts to be driven by more objective information. These data often dispel anecdotal assumptions about student behavior and help to guide school interventions. For example, one participant reported the following.

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6 It is necessary to note that participants often reported a combination of distal, crisis oriented, and proactive engagement with parents. Thus, schools were not necessarily limited to one approach.

7 This does not imply that individuals who did not generate such a statement did not use data to guide their work or had unfavorable views.

"I think there were some interesting comments [in the school climate survey] made by students; things that we thought would be a problem like the bus, really wasn't that much of a problem. It was really hallways. So it was interesting to take a look at that. It forced us to really focus where we needed to improve upon."

Moreover, data derived from the school climate assessments can be helpful in identifying school strengths and weaknesses, and developing yearly school climate plans. For example, a School Climate Coordinator reported the following.

"We use that data to make decisions on how we're going to improve our school climate. I mean, that data is really important. It's really, really, key data for us. That's the data that we're using to kind of plan for our strategies for the next year."

Recommendations:

i. Conduct CALI training(s) on school climate assessments and how to use data to guide school climate improvement efforts.

ii. Develop an informational school climate assessment guide that can be distributed to schools. The guide can discuss best practices in selecting survey instruments and using the data for continuous school improvement.

iii. Select a psychometrically valid school climate instrument that can be used by schools state-wide.

Section III: Individual Factors

Individual factors refer to specific individuals or individual characteristics that were identified as instrumental to the implementation of PA 11-232 requirements.

School Staff

Throughout this report, state and school-level factors have been reported that facilitate the implementation of anti-bullying and school climate related work. However, systemic school climate improvement efforts are often contingent upon the behaviors and motivations of specific people within the school community.

Leadership: The buy-in of school leaders (e.g., principals, superintendents) was reported as a central factor in carrying out anti-bullying and school climate efforts. Overall, 33% of participants reported that support and buy-in of school leadership is critical to moving this work forward. This theme was consistent across both School Climate Coordinators and Specialists. For example, superintendents and school principals can delegate tasks and ensure that these efforts continue their momentum. In addition, school staff members are more likely to embrace anti-bullying/school climate improvement efforts when it is championed by school leadership. One School Climate Coordinator reported as follows.

"Having building administrators on board makes all the difference because they are able to spearhead it more. I can think about my school district and point out one principal who loves this and works very hard towards this and there's quite a bit of improvement, whereas an administrator who just does enough there's a little bit less improvement in those specific schools. So when the leader has that buy-in then it trickles down to the staff."

Another study participant reported the following.

"The most important thing, for me personally, was the support of my superintendent and assistant superintendent to send me to the CALI training. They allowed me to go for three days out of my building and work on what's important to our district and to our building, which is climate. That showed me that they really felt that this was important, to be out of the building. So without their support I wouldn't have gone to the training and I wouldn't be able to help out the district as I hope I'm doing now."

"Having building administrators on board makes all the difference"

Recommendations:
i. Develop trainings that are specifically tailored to school leaders (e.g., superintendents, principals).

ii. Encourage participation of school leaders in school climate trainings.

Interpersonal Skills: Interpersonal skills were also identified as conducive to implementing anti-bullying and school climate efforts. This theme was reflected across 20% of participants. In a previous report developed by the evaluation

team[8], school personnel were reported as experiencing high levels of stress due to implementing PA 11-232 requirements and preparing for the new teacher evaluations. Staff members were viewed as resistant when placed under many demands. However, strong interpersonal skills were reported as helping to bypass some of this staff resistance. In addition, although schools have reported conflict in working with parents, strong interpersonal skills helped to mitigate this tension. More specifically, participants reported the importance of "listening to parents' concerns", "listening to parents without being reactive or defensive", "being supportive of staff", "speaking calmly", "speaking to students in a casual manner [so as to not scare them]", "building trust with teachers", and "not taking things personally".

One School Climate Coordinator discussed his ability to recognize when his staff were overwhelmed and his ability to support them accordingly.

"Well I think that you have to kind of recognize that because this is a human business that as administrators you have to be supportive of staff. And I think that sometimes just recognizing that and being supportive is enough to give people [School Climate Specialists] the emotional energy to keep moving on and the motivation to keep moving on."

Another School Climate Coordinator reported the following in regards to interacting with disappointed parents.

"The more I talk to parents, and the more I try to speak to them in a calm and rational tone, sometimes that helps. They'll understand that, with what we're trying to do, the way the child is behaving is not appropriate."

Taken together, the ability to recognize one's own emotions, the emotions of others, and adapt one's interpersonal style accordingly, helps to alleviate tension, build rapport, and motivate

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8 Martinez, A., K., O'Connor, & Sanchez, B. (2014). Public Act 11-232: An act concerning the strengthening of school bullying laws - Identifying barriers to implementation. Hartford, CT.

staff. These skills are instrumental when considering that school staff members are under considerable pressure to attend to a myriad of school objectives.

Recommendations:

i. Strategically designate staff members as School Climate Coordinators and Specialists that demonstrate strong interpersonal skills.

ii. Incorporate a segment that focuses on interpersonal skills into school climate trainings.

Parents appear to be a unique and underutilized resource that can be leveraged.

Parent Buy-in

Interestingly, parents were seldom reported (14% of participants) as a factor that can facilitate anti-bullying and school climate improvement. This theme was expressed only by School Climate Specialists.

One School Climate Specialist reported that parents were instrumental to creating change in the school. Although the following is a simple example of school change (i.e., synchronizing school clocks), it nevertheless highlights how parents can serve as a resource that can be leveraged to promote anti-bullying and school climate improvement efforts. This School Climate Specialist reports as follows:

"It was a silly thing but the clocks, the clocks were not synchronized. It's a hassle and the teachers say 'Sometimes that's a problem of getting in the hallways [in order to monitor the hallways] because our clocks aren't synchronized …' So basically the parents said, 'Let's advocate for this because it's a silly little thing but it does have an impact on when the teachers are in the hallways.' So they really, they spoke up…."

Thus, parents appear to be a unique and under-utilized resource that can be leveraged. Greater parental involvement can help voice concerns, promote accountability, and promote school climate improvement efforts more broadly.

Recommendation:

i. Schools should identify proactive and grass-roots ways of involving parents in promoting anti-bullying and school climate improvement efforts.

Students

Students were also seldom reported (14% of participants) as a factor that can help promote school climate improvement efforts. This is note-worthy considering that students are the primary focus of PA 11-232. Thus, as with parents, students appear to be an underutilized resource.

When this theme was expressed, it was only reported by School Climate Specialists and not the School Climate Coordinators. Participants reported that students have become more empowered to self-advocate when mean behavior takes place either in regards to themselves or others. Students' ability to take ownership can be instrumental to promoting school climate improvement as it can help to monitor student behavior and establish positive school norms. One participant discusses the importance of students' self-advocacy as follows.

"And I think that in terms of the work that we've done with the kids, the students themselves being student self-reporters or advocates to report something wrong I think has been the most influential."

Recommendation:

i. Schools should identify proactive, grassroots ways of involving students in promoting anti-bullying and school climate improvement efforts.

Section IV: Summary of Findings

This report highlights factors at the state, school, and individual levels that were helpful to implementing anti-bullying and school climate related work across Connecticut schools. Research on school improvement efforts suggests that the most effective school interventions are those that are comprehensive and that take into account the different stakeholders within the school community (e.g., students, parents, staff) as well as contextual factors (e.g., public policy, families, neighborhoods) that influence the school setting (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007)[9].

As Connecticut continues to move forward to improve school climate, these respective factors should be considered to allow for a more comprehensive approach to school climate improvement. School climate improvement frameworks that only target policy and do not strongly address the specific nuances of school settings may be less effective. As these efforts move forward, CSDE should leverage and capitalize upon some of the factors that School Climate Coordinators and Specialists have reported as helpful to the implementation of PA 11-232 requirements and school climate improvement efforts more broadly.

State-Level:
At the state-level, CSDE should continue and possibly expand its school climate trainings. The CALI trainings provide substantial guidance to schools. In addition, additional training should target school leaders such as principals and superintendents.

School-Level:
Resources: Schools will benefit from more resources such as state funding and staff. This helps to enable school events, trainings, and interventions directed at improving school climate. Schools may also benefit from exploring ways of improving school climate that are of low or no cost.

Policies & Procedures: Schools can benefit from systemizing the manner in which they conduct bullying investigations and engaging in school climate improvement interventions. Clear polices should be established regarding student behavior. Clear protocols and informational materials should be developed across all schools to help guide the work of School Climate Coordinators and Specialists. These protocols/materials may include, but are not limited to the following: (1) step-by-step guidelines for conducting investigations, (2) a distilled breakdown of the legal definition of bullying, (3) clear polices regarding expected student, parent, and staff behavior, (4) social contracts in which staff, students, and/or parents agree to model positive behaviors, (5) step by step guides on how to implement specific school interventions (e.g., social-emotional curricula, PBIS). Systematizing these processes can help ensure that practices are sustained despite staff turnover and will help ensure uniformity, consistency, and predictability of practices across staff members and across schools.

9   Vreeman, R. C., & Carroll, A. E. (2007). A systematic review of school-based interventions to prevent bullying. Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, 161, 78-88.

Communication: Schools can also benefit from greater collaboration and networking across schools. School Climate Coordinators can benefit from networking with Coordinators in other districts and Climate Specialists can benefit from networking with Specialists in other schools within the district. Such networking will allow for ideas and best practices to be shared. However, these opportunities need to be formally established (e.g., quarterly School Climate Specialist meetings). In addition, it may be possible to develop creative ways of enhancing between-school communication such as the development of a district-wide School Climate Specialist blog or newsletter that allows Specialists to communicate their work. CSDE may also consider the development of a state-wide Listserv. In addition, schools will need to establish better practices in reaching out to and collaborating with parents.

Assessment: Schools will continue to benefit from the use of data to guide practice and should seek to use validated and reliable assessments when possible. This would also allow for cross-district and cross-school comparisons and the tracking of progress over time. In conjunction, schools can also utilize other ancillary mechanisms of collecting information such as analyzing student office disciplinary referral data.

Individual-level: Ultimately, school change is largely contingent upon people, especially key leaders within the school community. CSDE can strengthen its communication with superintendents and school principals so that this initiative becomes a stronger priority across school settings. Schools can also identify 'natural leaders' (e.g., individuals with strong interpersonal skills or emotional intelligence) within the school community who can champion these efforts.

Lastly, schools can benefit by directly and proactively engaging students and parents to help ensure that school anti-bullying and school climate improvement efforts are comprehensive and are not dominated by top-down approaches.

About the Authors

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