



# Fostering a Climate for Safety and Achievement:

Why school climate  
matters

# Presentation

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- Why a positive, developmentally support school climate is an essential component of a comprehensive approach to reducing violence and victimization, and improving academic performance, health, and well-being.
- Evidence from California schools.

# A Comprehensive Approach to Safety

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- Addresses the social and emotional as well as physical aspects of safety.
- Recognizes safety and achievement are intertwined.
  - Disengagement a risk factor for misbehavior
  - Share many common risk and protective factors
- Reframes prevention within broader context of school climate, which can either enhance or reduce a sense of safety and the likelihood of learning engagement.

# A Climate For Safety

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- Addresses underlying risk and protective factors.
- Provides high level of student support — developmental, social, emotional, and behavioral as well as academic.
- Fosters a sense of community and connectedness, and
- Engenders self-discipline, prosocial behavior, and learning engagement.

## Key Characteristics (1)

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- Focused on meeting the basic developmental needs of youth that motivates all positive human behavior.
  - **Safety**
  - **Autonomy, Power**
  - **Belonging, Love, Respect**
  - **Competence, Mastery**
  - **Meaning**

## Key Characteristics (2)

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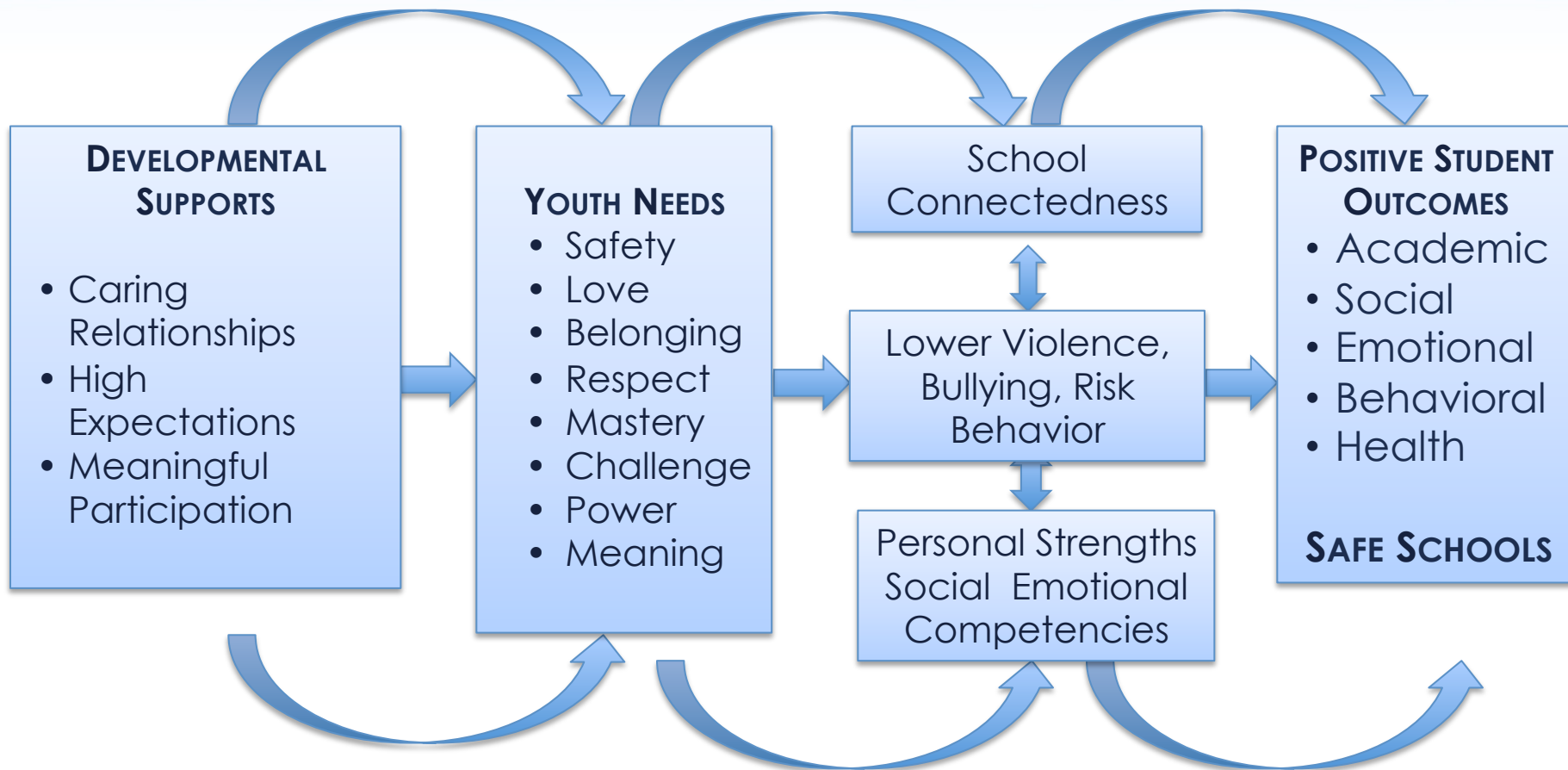
- Positive **relationships** among and between students and staff: caring, trusting, respectful
- Shared norms and high **expectations** achievement and for positive (nonviolent) behavior that clearly communicated and fairly applied.
- Opportunities for meaningful **participation and decision-making**.

## Key Characteristics (3)

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- Foster **social-emotional or personal competencies** linked to prosocial behavior, self-discipline, resilience, and positive academic outcomes.
  - **Understand and regulate emotions**
  - Set positive **goals**,
  - Feel and show **empathy** for others (social awareness),
  - Establish positive **relationships** and avoid conflict,
    - Communicate, collaborate, cooperate
  - Make responsible, healthy **decisions** & problem solving,

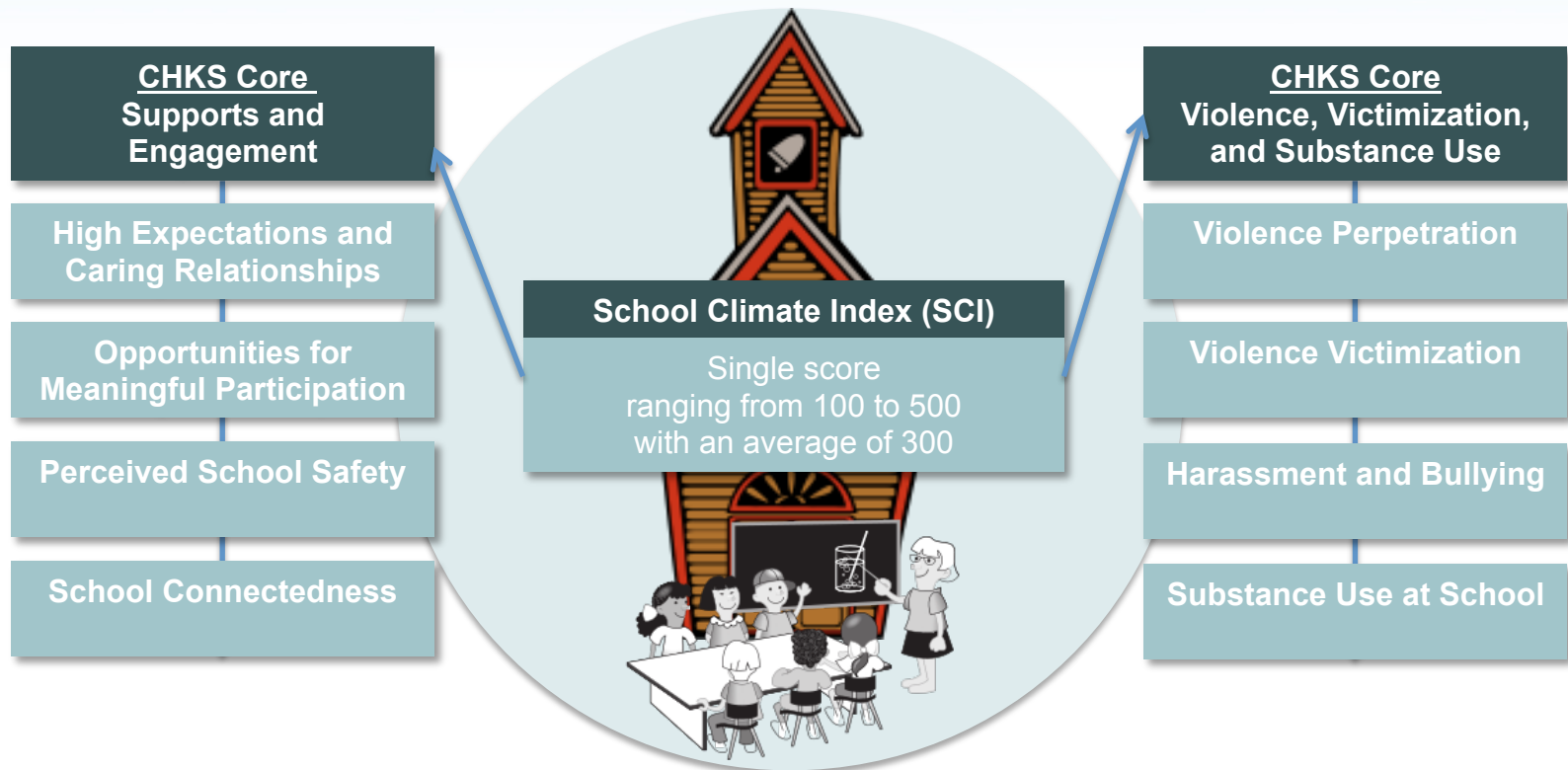
# Developmentally Supportive Schools Model





# First Step: Needs Assessment

## Healthy Kids School Climate Index



# CALIFORNIA **SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS**

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- Assess needs of students, staff, and parents using ***California School Climate, Health, and Learning Surveys (CHKS)***
- Use data to guide decision making and action planning, implementing of the Developmental School Model and a multi-tiered system of comprehensive supports.

## School Climate Index Scores - All S3 Schools (2011 to 2013)

### SCHOOL CLIMATE INDEX (SCI)

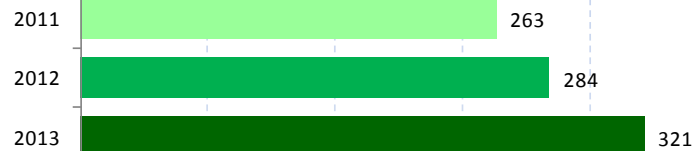


### *SCHOOL CLIMATE SUBSCALE RESULTS*

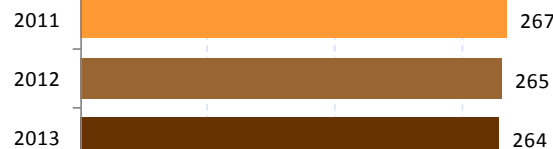
#### OVERALL SUPPORTS AND ENGAGEMENT



#### OVERALL LOW VIOLENCE, VICTIMIZATION, & SUBSTANCE USE



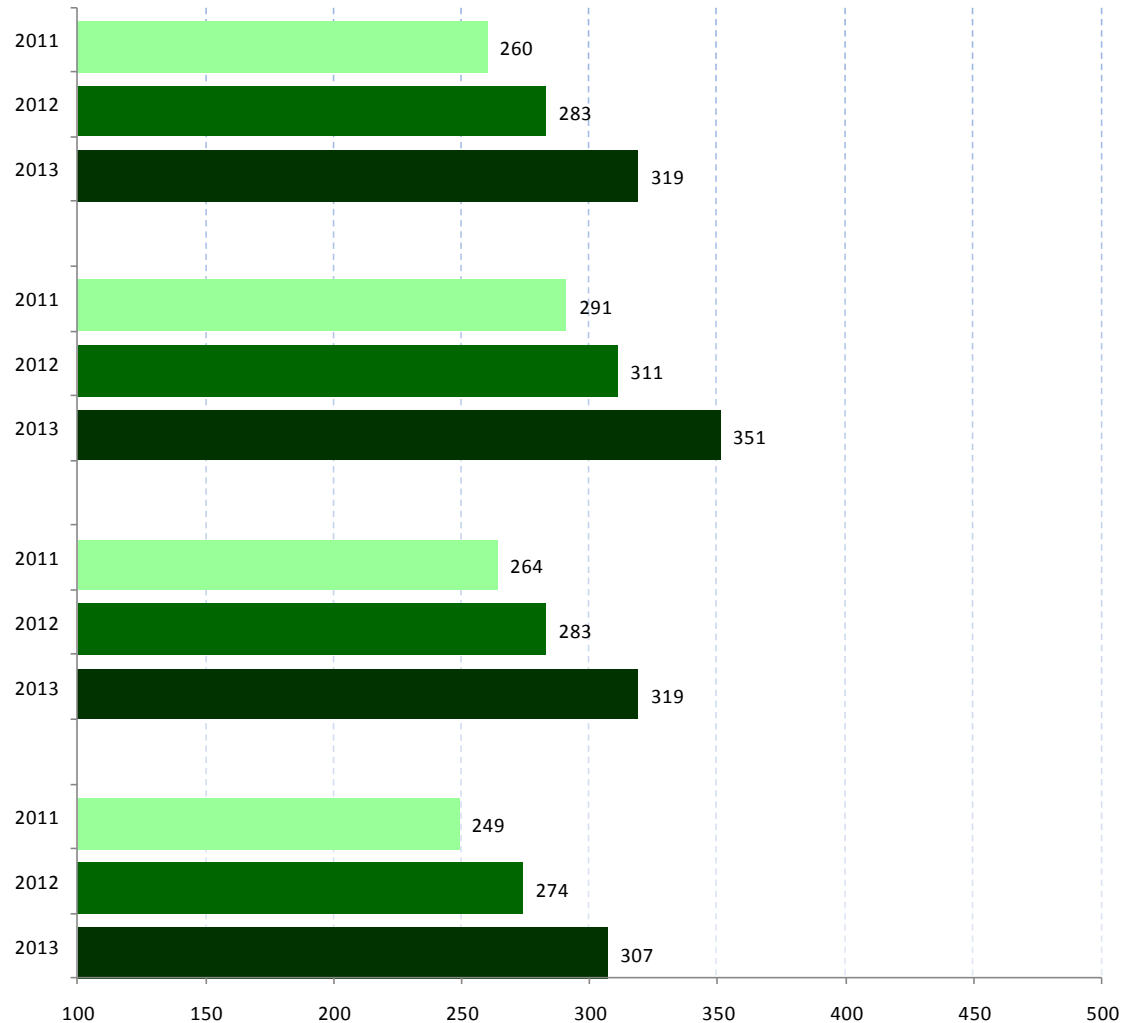
#### LOW TRUANCY INCIDENTS



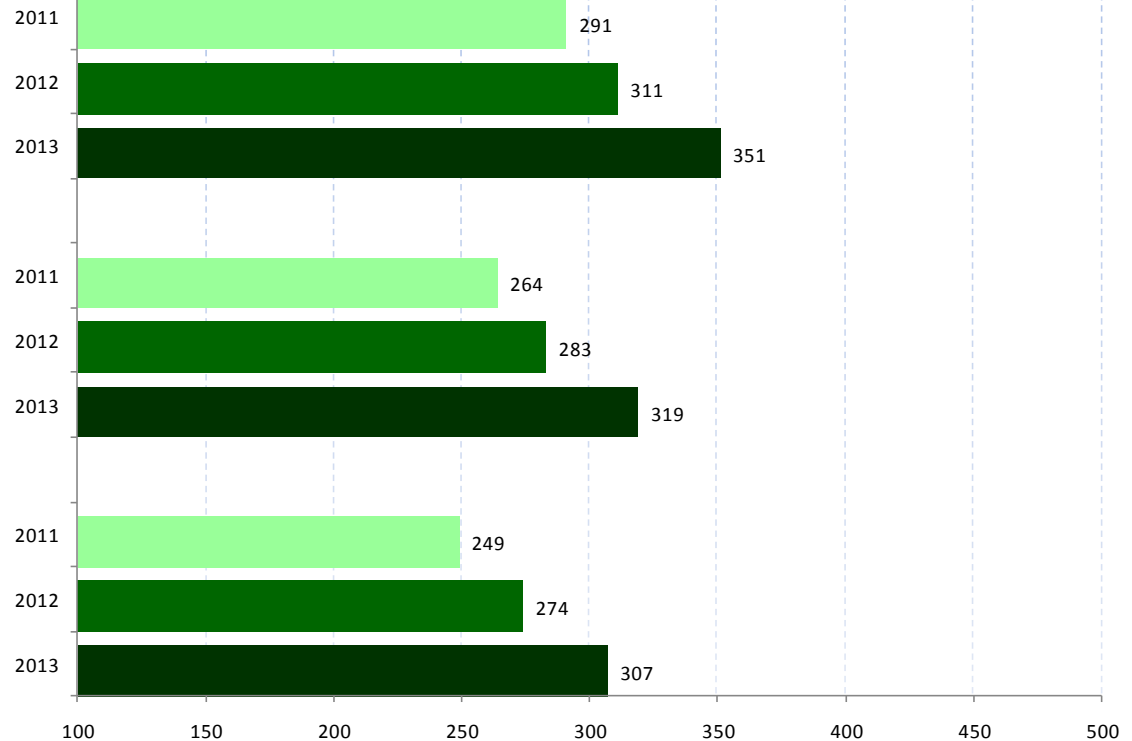
Scale Score

## Overall Low Violence, Victimization, & Substance Use - All S3 Schools (2011 to 2013)

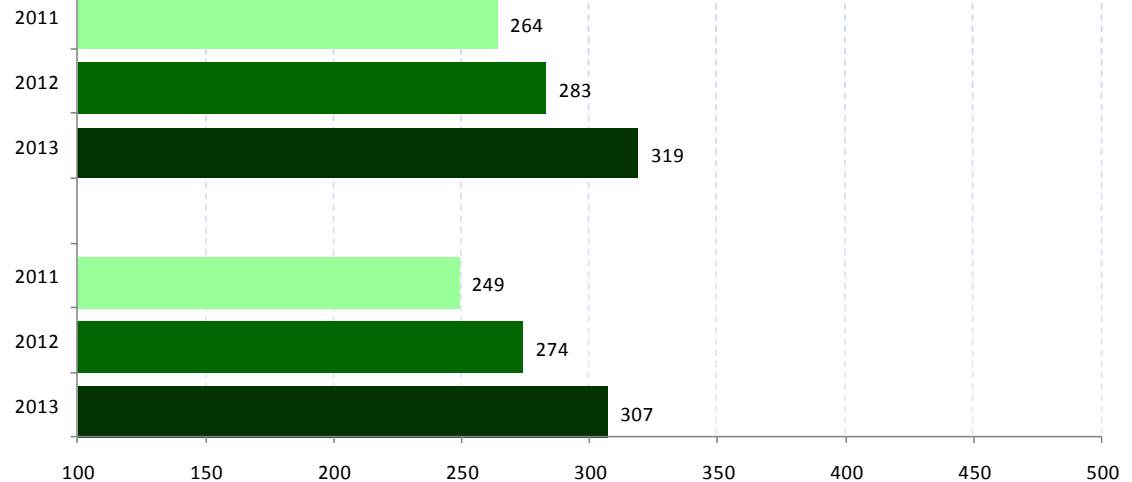
Low physical violence perpetration



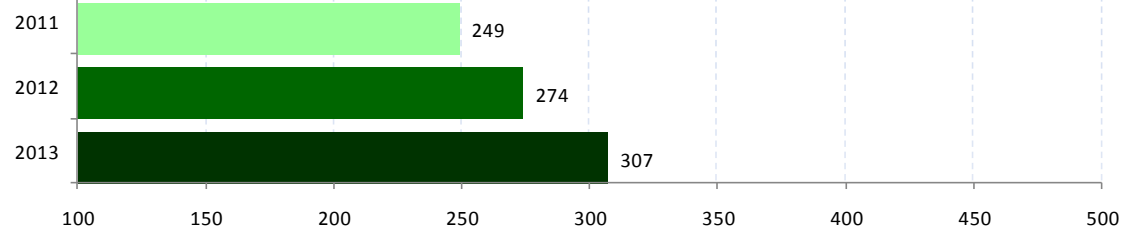
Low physical/emotional violence victimization



Low harassment and bullying

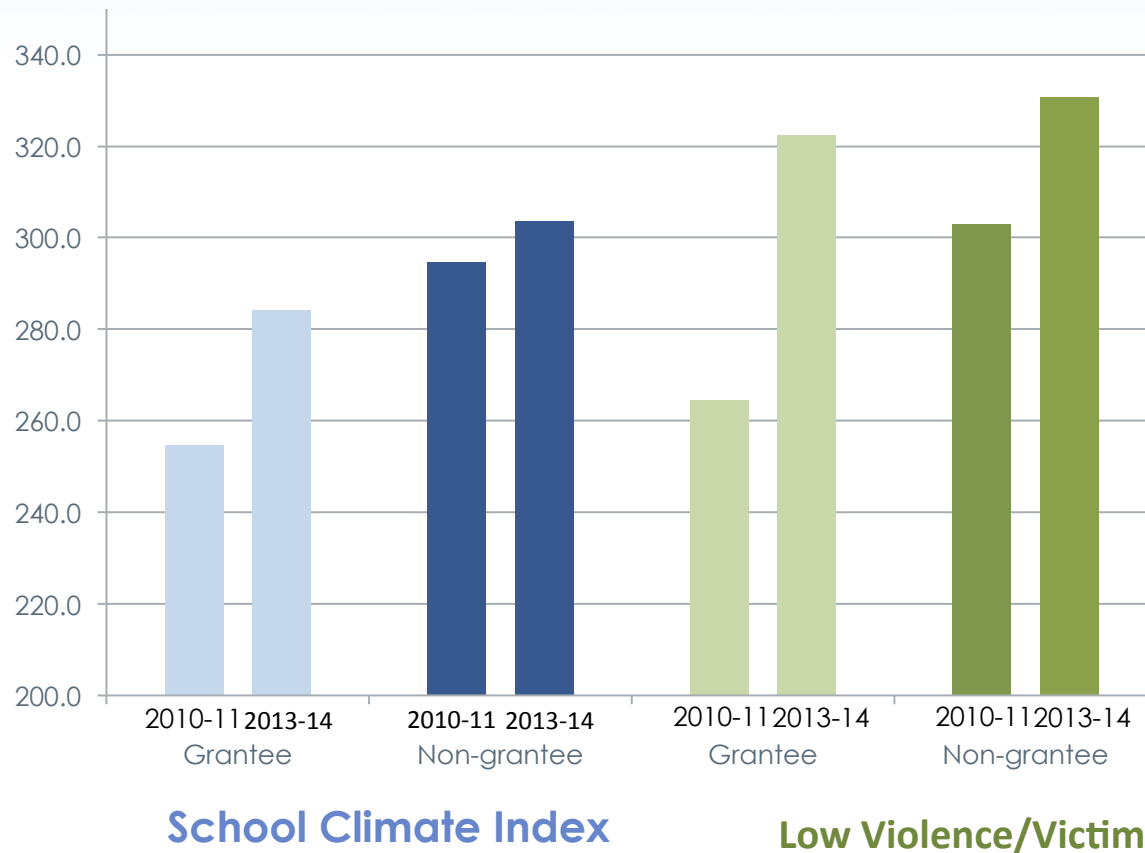


Low physical violence perpetration



Scale Score

# Comparison S3 Grantee vs. Nongrantees: SCI and School Safety Subdomains, 2010 vs. 2013



# School Climate Linked to Beating Academic Odds

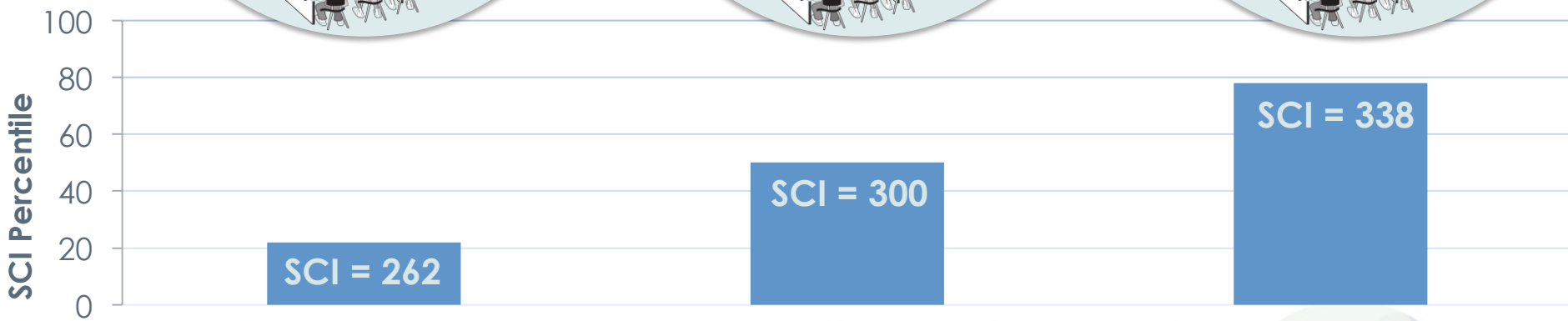
Chronically underperforming



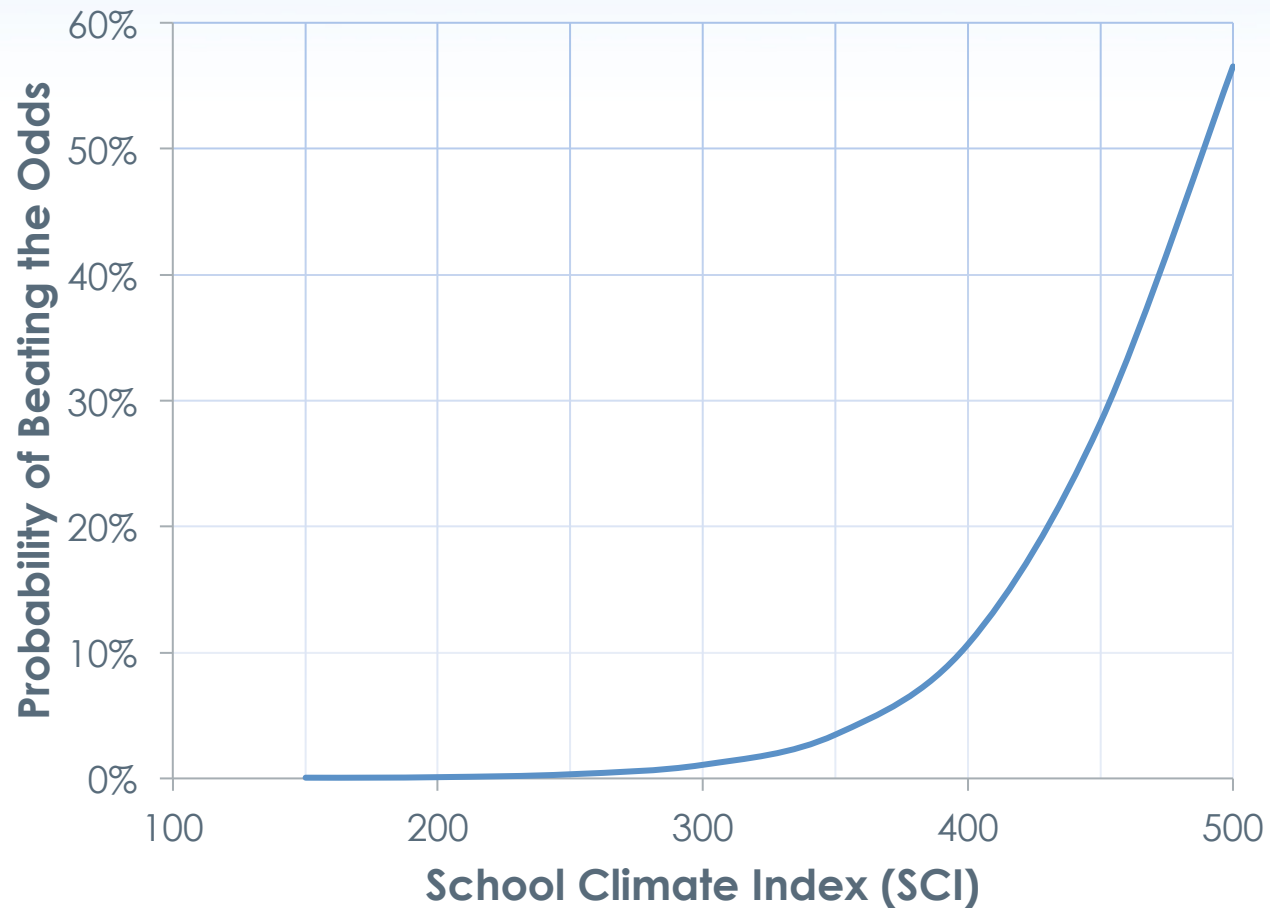
Performing as expected



Beating the odds



# Probability of Academic Success



# Conclusion

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- School climate is an overarching framework — belief system — that integrates school policies and practices for learning, safety, prevention, and health and fosters positive outcomes in all four areas.
  - Deters violence/victimization; fosters learning engagement.
- Failure to foster these conditions undermines the effectiveness of safety efforts.
- Punitive, exclusionary, compliance-oriented discipline linked to negative, counterproductive effects on climate and connectedness.
- Assessment is the first step.