MICHIGAN Department of Education

think. respect.

Safe and
Supportive Schools

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

BRIAN J. WHISTON
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Colleague:

On behalf of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), I would like to share the final report for the United States Department of Education Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) grant.

From 2010-2015, staff from the Coordinated School Health and Safety Programs unit at MDE, worked closely with 22 of our lowest achieving high schools. The S3 grant enabled the schools to improve the conditions for learning to ensure students are safe, healthy, and ready to learn. Collecting and interpreting baseline data, identifying and addressing the needs of staff, students, and families in the school communities, and implementing and evaluating evidenced-based programing enabled many of the schools to realize significant improvements in their school climate, culture and academic achievement.

A few of the highlights include: 65% of S3 schools increased their graduation rates (from 2010/11 to 2013/14) and 52% of schools reported a decrease in bullying on school grounds. Additionally, 30% of the schools received Reward status as opposed to 12% of non-S3 Persistently Lowest Achieving (PLA) 2010 schools.

Not only has this grant influenced local level improvements, but MDE has also experienced an increase in cross-office collaboration. These enhanced partnerships will continue to help schools and districts recognize school climate as a key component of academic achievement.

MDE is grateful for the opportunity to participate in this important initiative. This grant allowed us intentional time to devote to the relationship between school climate and school success within our state department and with some of our highest needs communities. Much has been gained, not only by the students and staff in those buildings, but also by their families and local communities.

Please contact Kim Kovalchick at kovalchickk@michigan.gov if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Whiston
State Superintendent
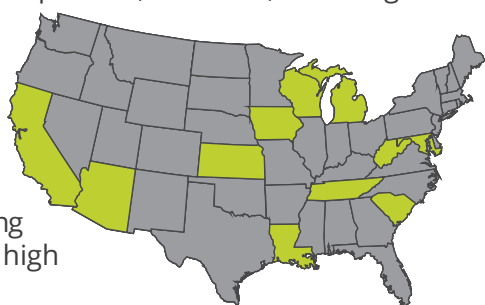
Grant Overview

think.respect.

The goal of the S3 *think.respect.* grant is to eliminate health and safety barriers in education and create safe, supportive schools that will increase the opportunity of academic success for all students.

In 2010, the United States Department of Education authorized

$155 million in grants

to states to measure school safety and implement programmatic interventions to improve conditions for learning. After a competitive grant application process, 11 states, including **Michigan**, were selected as grant recipients.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) received the largest grant award to provide programming over a four year period for high schools with predominantly underserved adolescent populations who were below their requirements

Map of the United States that highlights the grant funded states, Michigan, California, Arizona, Maryland, Wisconsin, Kansas, West Virginia, Iowa, Louisiana, Tennessee, and South Carolina

for "Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)." This grant allowed MDE to work with 22 high schools and their stakeholders (staff, students, and families) to address the conditions for learning and improve the culture and climate in their buildings.

MDE began outreach to schools in March 2011 to implement the grant, which continued through the 2014-2015 school year. At the onset, each of the participating schools chose specific initiatives focusing on areas of need in their building. (For more information on initiatives see pages 7-10.)

The schools used a Coordinated School Health (CSH) framework - a systematic approach to improving the health and well-being of all students so that they can fully participate and be successful in school - to support student learning. This approach assists schools by increasing student connectedness, helping students establish lifelong healthy behaviors, engaging parents, families and communities, and leveraging resources.

In order to communicate with internal and external audiences, the S3 *think.respect.* brand was developed with input from students. It served as the branding and outward face of the S3 project to create a familiarity with the grant and activities within the school.

> **"** *Before the grant was administered with fidelity, our school hallways were very busy with negative activity from fighting, to drug usage, sex and more. After only two years of service, a significant change had taken place. The hallways were orderly, clean, and consistently complimented by many of our vendors.* **"**
>
> **- Teacher**

Three initiatives were required for all schools:

- School Mental Health-Eliminating Barriers for Learning
- Parent Engagement
- Student Engagement

Schools were also allowed to select other initiatives, based on data-driven decision-making, from a menu of options that included:

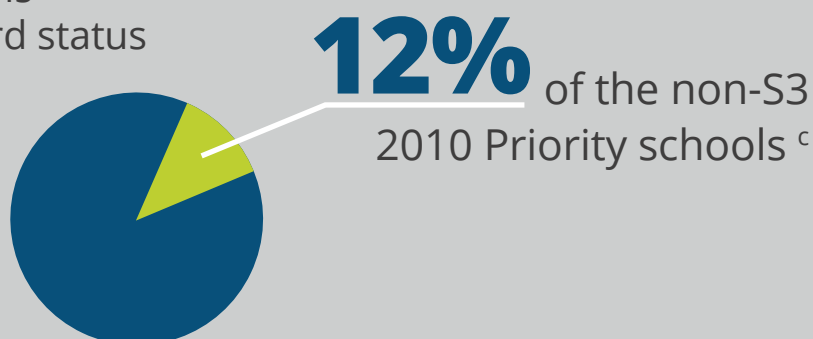- Bully-Free Schools (BFS): Circle of Support
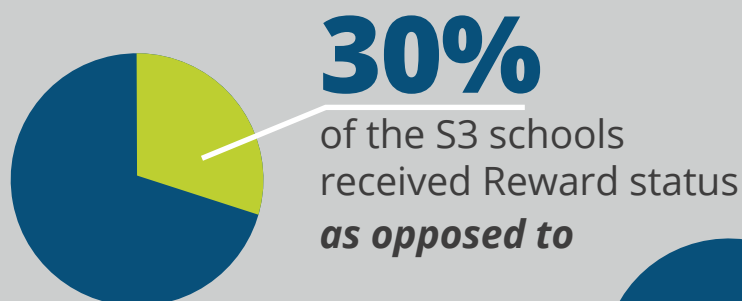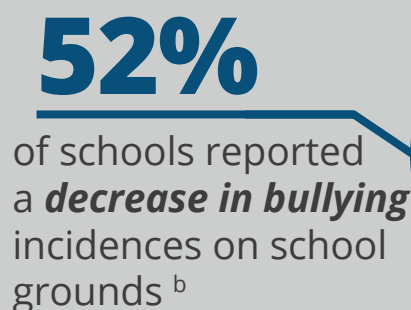- Restorative Justice
- Silent Crisis - Creating Safe Choices for Sexual Minority Youth (SMY)
- Michigan Model for Health™

Some results of note at the end of the fourth year of the grant (the 2013-2014 school year) were:

65% of schools reported *improved school safety scores* [a]

52% of schools reported a *decrease in bullying* incidences on school grounds [b]

30% of the S3 schools received Reward status *as opposed to*

12% of the non-S3 2010 Priority schools [c]

70%

37%

70% of the S3 2010 Priority schools *moved off the Priority List* as opposed to 37% of the non-S3 2010 Priority schools [c]

65% of schools *increased graduation rates* [c]
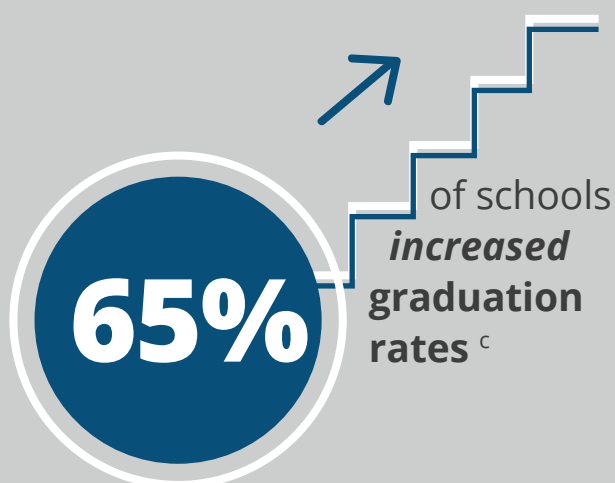
[a] MDE, Coordinated School Health and Safety Programs Unit, Michigan Safe and Supportive (MiPS3) reports.
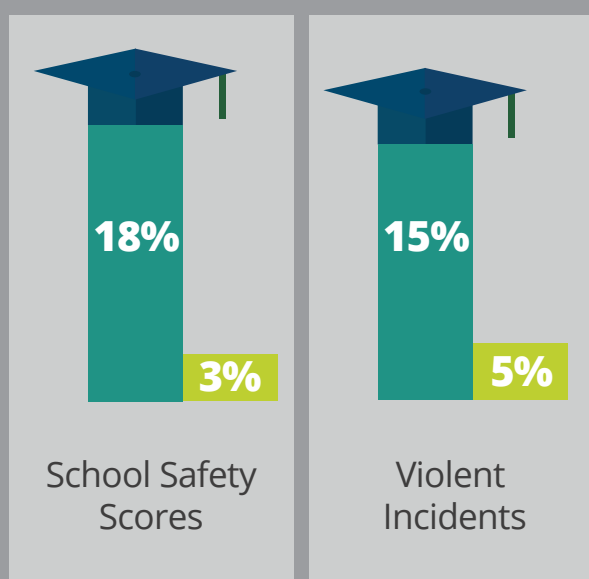[b] MDE, Coordinated School Health and Safety Programs Unit, Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth (MiPHY).
[c] MDE, School Reform Office

Michigan Department of Education;
Michigan Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) evaluation reports.

Schools with positive change in school safety scores [a] or violent incidents [c] had significantly better four-year graduation rates than schools with no change or a negative change in school safety scores or violent incidents.

Among Persistently Low Achieving (PLA) schools in the 2010 cohort, S3 schools that utilized alternatives to suspension (Restorative Justice or Bully-Free Schools: Circle of Support) had significantly higher four-year graduation rates (from 2010/11 to 2013/14) than non-S3 schools.

18%

3%

15%

5%

School Safety Scores

Violent Incidents

Graph denoting 18% increase in school safety scores and 15% decrease in violent incidents in S3 funded schools

Average Change in 4-Year Graduation Rates (2010/11 - 2013/14)

■ Schools with positive change

■ Schools with negative/no change

90.0%

85.0% — 83.7%

80.0%

75.6%

75.0%

74.8%

70.0% — 70.2%

65.0%

60.0%

2010/11   2013/14
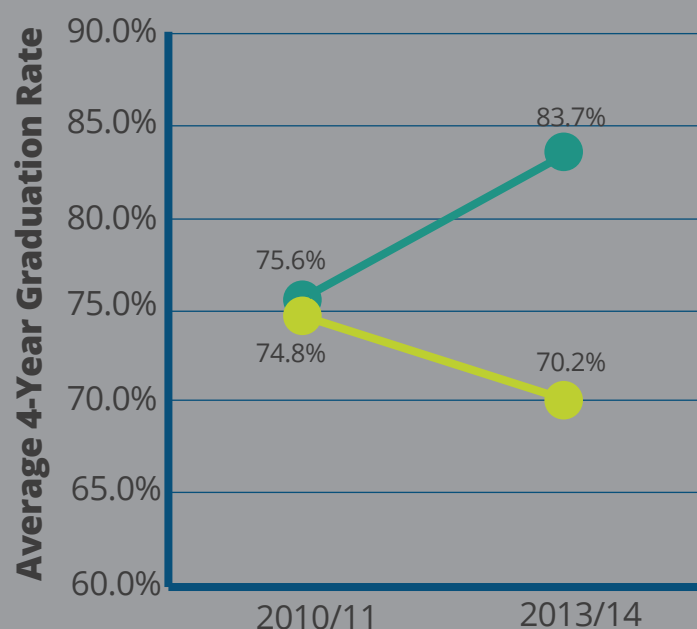
Average 4-Year Graduation Rate

Chart shows increase from 75.6% to 83.7% in graduation rates for S3 schools that used Restorative Justices practices

School Year

● S3 schools with alternatives to suspension (n=11)

● Non-S3 schools (n=14)

Grant Staff

The S3 *think.respect.* grant was supported by a dedicated team of professionals focused on meeting the needs of individual schools and ensuring that each school would achieve success. To facilitate implementation of the grant and its initiatives, the team consisted of a building liaison on-site at each school and a regional coach supported by MDE's staff. Based on research at the national level, MDE chose to utilize regional coaches and local building liaisons to develop, implement, and sustain S3 grant efforts. Additionally, each of the seven initiatives or program areas had a lead facilitator to provide guidance and expertise in their particular area of focus.

Following is the organizational structure that contributed to the overall success of the S3 *think.respect.* grant in Michigan.

MDE Management Team

MDE staff were responsible for the administrative aspects of the grant including adhering to federal guidelines, disbursement of money, overall implementation of the grant and overseeing all regional coaches, building liaisons, and initiative leads.

Regional Coaches

Each coach was responsible for overseeing S3 *think.respect.* efforts at two to four high schools. They provided continuous support and guidance to the building liaisons at each school, acted as the intermediary between MDE staff and schools, and met regularly to discuss best practices and initiative implementation at their buildings.

Building Liaisons

Each building liaison was responsible for overseeing S3 *think.respect.* activities in their school. They facilitated CSH teams meetings, managed all grant activities, evaluated the effectiveness of programming, and provided support and guidance to school staff and students. They were the on-site face of S3 *think.respect.* work.

Pictures of grant staff and students

Grant Staff Continued

Coordinated School Health Teams

The School Health teams collaborated with the building liaison to determine the needs of the students and staff in the school, selected programming to meet the needs, and assisted with the implementation and evaluation of the programming. Key stakeholders include school staff, students, parents, law enforcement, and human service providers.

Initiative Leads

Each initiative lead was an expert in their respective field chosen by MDE to interact directly with schools. They provided consultation to the schools implementing their specific initiative; provided support and guidance to building liaisons, coaches, and MDE staff; led individual sessions at grant conferences; and worked with schools to ensure their initiative was implemented with fidelity. Listed below are websites and contact information for each of the initiatives.

School Mental Health-Eliminating Barriers for Learning
www.Michigan.gov/schoolmentalhealthtoolkit

Parent Engagement
www.parentactionforhealthykids.org

Student Engagement
neutral-zone.org

Bully-Free Schools: Circle of Support
www.SAPE.us

Restorative Justice-Dispute Resolution Centers
http://1.usa.gov/1HQPGBh

Silent Crisis-Creating Safe Choices for Sexual Minority Youth
www.Michigan.gov/mde-smy

Michigan Model For Health™
www.MichiganModel.org

Pictures of grant staff and students

For more information on any of these interventions, please contact MDE, Kim Kovalchick at kovalchickk@michigan.gov.

Through the S3 *think.respect.* grant, participating schools used the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth (MiPHY) survey to determine their specific programmatic needs. Schools were then able to access training, develop activities, host events, and facilitate learning around those specific areas. This allowed schools to *address their individual needs*, while working within a framework of evidence-based programs. Following is a summary of the seven main initiatives and their impact on the schools. The first three initiatives listed were required for all schools, the rest were selected based on school level needs assessment data. In each of these initiatives, critical components of implementation fidelity were required. After selecting specific initiatives critical to their students' academic success, the schools deployed a variety of activities to address those areas of concern. Each activity was evaluated annually for effectiveness and progress toward the goals.

School Mental Health-Eliminating Barriers for Learning

Objective: Create a learning environment that promotes mental health. This initiative informed teachers about adolescent social-emotional wellness, factors, symptoms and implications of mental health concerns in a classroom setting, and provided specific skill-based techniques for classroom use.

There were *827 S3 school staff trained* [1] utilizing the Eliminating Barriers for Learning curriculum. An increase in all components measured on the pre/post surveys was realized. Teachers overwhelmingly indicated their appreciation for the topics covered in this training stating that they felt it was relevant and useful in their work with students. Many shared a wish that they could have had this training prior to their work in a classroom.

Picture of grant staff and students

Parent Engagement

Objective: The S3 parent engagement component was designed to provide schools with a deeper understanding of parent engagement and to support the schools' efforts in building full partnerships with parents for student success.

At the start of the grant, more than 800 S3 school staff received the required two-hour professional development (PD) on engaging parents. Four data collection instruments were utilized. Throughout the term of the grant, S3 schools were afforded the opportunity to participate in continued professional development, focus groups (parents, staff, student), staff boosters, and to utilize numerous parent survey instruments.

At the conclusion of the grant, all S3 schools completed two data collection instruments. Below are a few key findings:

86% of the S3 schools *participated in parent engagement* offerings beyond the initial required PD.

73% of the S3 schools *reported parent engagement* strategies were being implemented or likely to be implemented.

14% of the S3 schools showed *statistically significant progress* (formation of parent group, increase in parent/staff communication and attendance at parent/teacher conference and other events).

The S3 school staff members were surprised to find that the first step on the journey to engaging parents was to look at their attitudes and perceptions toward parents. Over time, schools realized that communicating and building relationships with parents will have a positive impact.

Because parent engagement practices improved significantly across the S3 *think.respect.* grant, it would have been ideal to investigate the influence of parent engagement on student achievement outcomes. However, there were not enough S3 schools with a sufficient level of parent engagement programming to conduct such an analysis.

> **" I am just now having this revelation. If I took 10 minutes a day to make connections with parents of students I see, this would be a huge help, but I make excuses. "**
>
> **- Teacher**

[1] Eliminating Barriers for Learning is a Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) Evidenced-Based Curriculum.

Student Engagement

Objective: Engage students in meaningful roles in their school reform efforts by creating opportunities for students to assess school needs, envision and lead improvement projects, and advise adult educators to create positive school change. This initiative focused on facilitating youth and adult partnerships, developing students' leadership, planning and participatory research skills, strengthening adult practices in positive youth development, and building the capacity of schools to include students in their efforts across school reform activities.

Students contributed considerably to school reform efforts through advisory councils that led projects around student/staff relationships, school consolidation, curricular activities, school bond issues, and building positive school climate. As an example, in one of the S3 schools, students aimed to strengthen the teacher-student relationship. They surveyed other students through video interviews and surveys and shared the data with teachers. They then created a task force of teachers and students to work on the issue further.

Pre/post surveys measured student changes in 21st century skills and socio-emotional capacities. Gains occurred over most of the items, with statistically significant increases in the following:

- Being able to lead a meeting
- Goal setting
- Ability to plan a project
- Feeling connected to peers
- Identifying school problems
- Collaboration
- Communicating their ideas
- Achieving their goals
- Feeling valued and an important part of their school

Pictures of grant staff and students

" There has been a visible boost in students' self-esteem and their willingness to take on leadership roles. Students have also learned how to work well with each other and come up with great ideas. "
- Teacher

Bully-Free Schools (BFS): Circle of Support

Objective: Create a safe, caring environment where students can learn. This initiative used an evidence-based process to teach students how to behave and function as future citizens, rather than punishing them and hoping their behavior will change.

Outcomes from this initiative included:

- Reduction in peer-to-peer aggression (resulting in reduced out of school suspension, increased instructional time, and improved student academic success): The schools implementing BFS showed *significant changes* in these areas as indicated by surveys and staff reports.

- Improved staff to student relationships (increased student voice and engagement/leadership): The schools showed improvements in these areas based upon surveys, and staff and student reports.

"I am so happy that our family is part of the [S3] School District. The manner in which my concerns regarding my daughter's educational and emotional needs have been addressed throughout the school year is a prime example of how [this school is] addressing academic achievement by putting the needs of their students first."

- Parent

Restorative Justice

Objective: Enhance student learning and development and focus on building and repairing relationships while managing student conflicts. This initiative worked to communicate a culture of care and a philosophy of justice in the school by keeping communication open and flowing and supporting mutually acceptable resolutions to school disruptions. Visit www.michigan.gov/mdealternativestoolkit to view the Restorative Justice toolkit.

11/22 S3 schools implemented *Restorative Justice* practices in their buildings

Out of *those* schools, there were

23,340 INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS **or** **3,591** DAYS

saved

due to these practices

Pictures of grant staff and students

"For Administrators, the biggest improvement they have seen is the amount of time that has been freed up for them. They are able to use this time to address teacher needs, curriculum needs and interacting with the students in a positive experience rather than a negative one (i.e., disciplining them, calling their parents or suspending them)."

- Staff

Silent Crisis - Creating Safe Choices for Sexual Minority Youth (SMY)

Objective: Help educators understand, assess, and improve school climate for all youth, including those who identify as or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ). While this initiative focuses on LGBTQ students, the whole school could feel its positive impact as systems developed to support all marginalized students. The initiative was tailored to each school's readiness and needs. Through this initiative, school staff sharpened skills they already possessed to better serve the LGBTQ population.

Schools could participate in two tiers of SMY support:

Tier 1: Schools sent teams of 5-10 staff to participate in a day-long workshop focusing on policies, programs, and practices to make schools safer for sexual minority youth. Tier 1 included email and phone follow-up support to questions and issues raised in the training.

Tier 2: Schools could request more in-depth technical assistance that could include supports such as needs assessment, team development, on-site professional development, and policy review and/or development.

Outcome highlights include:

One S3 school required that all (approximately 25) public safety officers in the district attend the day-long workshop. For many of these staff, they had a steep learning curve regarding the challenges facing LGBTQ students and ways that they could make a positive impact in their front-line roles. Several S3 schools requested more intensive technical assistance that resulted in a required training for all staff, the initiation of a gay-straight alliance student club, and the strengthening of youth development practices in an existing club.

Michigan Model for Health™

Objective: Give students the knowledge and skills to practice and maintain healthy behaviors and lifestyles. This comprehensive health education curriculum taught students age-appropriate skills that help support the overall school culture on topics including social and emotional health, nutrition and physical activity, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, sexual health and wellness, and personal safety.

All S3 schools had their health teachers trained to teach Michigan Model in their schools. Because the Michigan Model is a comprehensive health education curriculum, it should be implemented with fidelity across multiple grades over multiple years. In the S3 schools that followed this approach, there were *significant improvements* in attitudes and behaviors for the targeted content areas, such as the prevention of violence and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use. For example, one school witnessed a decrease of three percent in recent ATOD use (i.e., use in the past 30 days) and a decline of eight percent in attitudes favoring ATOD use.

Pictures of grant staff and students

Lessons Learned

think.respect.

As a result of our experience over the duration of the S3 *think.respect.* grant, valuable lessons were learned. It became evident that these efforts could be replicated in any school across the state. MDE developed a Lessons Learned document to provide guidance for schools interested in creating a safe and supportive learning environment.
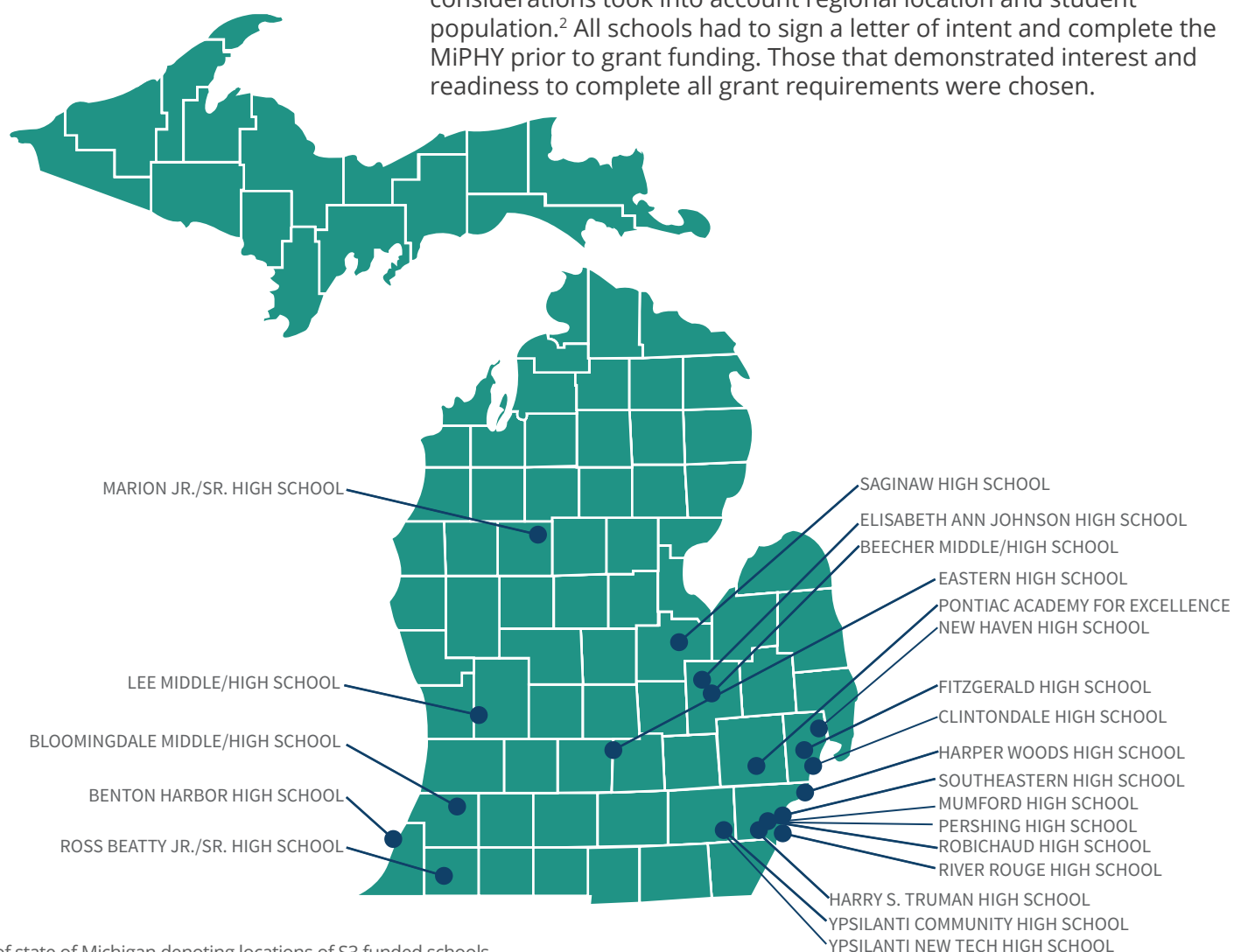
The main themes included in the document are:
• Embrace Change
• Be a Bold Leader
• Collect and Use Data
• Professional Development is Worth the Investment

Refer to the full Lessons Learned document for additional information on these topics by visiting www.Michigan.gov/Schoolclimate

Participating S3 Schools

High schools were eligible and selected based on their listing on the 2010 Persistently Low Achieving (PLA) school list.[1] Each school had to contain at least 9th, 10th, 11th, and/or 12th grades. Additional considerations took into account regional location and student population.[2] All schools had to sign a letter of intent and complete the MiPHY prior to grant funding. Those that demonstrated interest and readiness to complete all grant requirements were chosen.

MARION JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL
LEE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL
BLOOMINGDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL
BENTON HARBOR HIGH SCHOOL
ROSS BEATTY JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL

SAGINAW HIGH SCHOOL
ELISABETH ANN JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL
BEECHER MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL
EASTERN HIGH SCHOOL
PONTIAC ACADEMY FOR EXCELLENCE
NEW HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL
FITZGERALD HIGH SCHOOL
CLINTONDALE HIGH SCHOOL
HARPER WOODS HIGH SCHOOL
SOUTHEASTERN HIGH SCHOOL
MUMFORD HIGH SCHOOL
PERSHING HIGH SCHOOL
ROBICHAUD HIGH SCHOOL
RIVER ROUGE HIGH SCHOOL
HARRY S. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL
YPSILANTI COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL
YPSILANTI NEW TECH HIGH SCHOOL

Map of state of Michigan denoting locations of S3 funded schools

MICHIGAN
Department of
Education

think. respect.

Safe and
Supportive Schools