



**Safe School Ambassadors® Program
Benchmarks for Success
Middle and High School**

At first glance, Safe School Ambassadors is a program to prevent bullying and other forms of student mistreatment at school. A deeper exploration reveals that the overarching goals of the program are building and maintaining a *positive school climate*, which allows teachers to teach more effectively and students to learn and grow more successfully.

The core element of the program's approach is empowering a diverse group of socially influential students to *shift the social norms* on a campus (and over time, in a community) by changing their behavior and coaching their friends to follow suit.

School climate and social norms do not change overnight; they change over time. Therefore, the success of the Safe School Ambassadors program needs to be assessed over time as well.

Our experiences in more than 1000 schools have shown that positive results are often evident in the first few months. With support from school administrators and commitment from the SSA Program Advisor and Family Group Facilitators, these benefits can be continued through the first year of the program.

To sustain lasting climate and norms change, the SSA program typically requires a consistent effort over 3 years to develop the strong roots that anchor it firmly in school culture and practice.

Why do we include measurable benchmarks? The following benchmarks are designed to help district coordinators, school principals, Program Advisors and others:

- understand what outcomes are reasonable to expect as the program matures;
- assess progress toward goals year by year;
- make mid-course corrections to stay on track to success;
- plan for long-term sustainability of the program.

We recognize that each school's culture, needs, and resources are unique – which means that a “successful program” will look and feel slightly different at each school. So if your program shows signs of success that are meaningful to you and your school – perhaps your Ambassadors are motivated and have many examples of successful interventions, the staff knows about the program and likes it, whatever they are – acknowledge and savor those signs ... whether or not your program meets the specific benchmarks for any given year.

Then, from that foundation of “what is,” take appropriate and steady steps toward the benchmarks, knowing that they represent our best recommendations for making your Safe School Ambassadors program successful and sustainable.

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What constitutes a successful and sustainable SSA program?

| Year 1 Launch | Year 2 Integration / Expansion | Year 3 Sustainability |
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| Ambassadors | | |
| <p>1. Trained 40* socially-influential students representing major cliques/groups on campus.</p> <p>2. At year's end, 30 active (attend Family Groups); 75% retention.</p> <p>3. Ambassador awareness of mistreatment and frequency of interventions assessed twice via two 2-week Action Log "snapshots"</p> <p>4. Ambassadors can describe three successful interventions they did during the year.</p> <p>5. Ambassadors attend 75% of Family Group meetings.</p> <p>6. Two All-Ambassador meetings, including year-end recognition event/activity.</p> | <p>1. 25 returned out of 30 active; less than 20% lost to graduation and attrition over summer.</p> <p>2. Trained 40* new Ambassadors, broadening reach of programs into un- and under-represented groups and grade levels; total = 65 active.</p> <p>3. At year's end, 60 active (attend Family Groups); 80% retention.</p> <p>4. Ambassador activity level assessed twice via two 2-week Action Log "snapshots."</p> <p>5. Ambassadors attend 80% of Family Group meetings.</p> <p>6. Veteran Ambassadors increased frequency, type, maturity and effectiveness of interventions.</p> <p>7. Ambassadors demonstrated improved behavior on campus.</p> <p>8. Ambassadors played a role in running program (e.g., Family Group reports, Action Log tabulation, planning events, etc.).</p> <p>9. Three All-Ambassador meetings, including kick-off and year-end recognition activities.</p> | <p>1. 40 returned out of 60 active; less than 33% lost to graduation and attrition over summer.</p> <p>2. Trained 40* new Ambassadors, broadening reach of programs into un- and under-represented groups and grade levels; total = 80 active.</p> <p>3. At year's end, 75 active (attend Family Groups); 85% retention.</p> <p>4. Ambassador activity level assessed twice via two 2-week Action Log "snapshots."</p> <p>5. Ambassadors attend 85% of Family Group meetings.</p> <p>6. Veteran Ambassadors contribute to training & mentoring of new Ambassadors.</p> <p>7. Ambassadors played a <i>greater</i> role in running program (e.g., community outreach & fund-raising).</p> <p>8. Three All-Ambassador meetings, including kick-off and year-end recognition activities.</p> |
| Program Adults | | |
| <p>1. Six trained; 5 active.</p> <p>2. Family Groups meet at least once per month between initial training and year's end.</p> <p>3. Program Management Team meets monthly (avg 75% attend).</p> <p>4. Assessed program</p> | <p>1. Eight active.</p> <p>2. Family Groups meet 2x/month.</p> <p>3. Program Management Team meets monthly (avg 80% attend).</p> <p>4. Assessed program strengths & weaknesses at</p> | <p>1. Ten active.</p> <p>2. Family Groups meet 2x/month.</p> <p>3. Program Management Team meets monthly (avg 85% attend).</p> <p>4. Assessed program strengths & weaknesses at</p> |

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| <p>strengths & weaknesses at year's end.</p> <p>5. Deeper understanding of program model and how to run it effectively at this school site.</p> <p>6. Secured funding and support from Administrators and/or other funders for future trainings and program activities.</p> | <p>year's end.</p> <p>5. Increased knowledge, skills and confidence in their roles; increased ownership of and commitment to program.</p> <p>6. Secured funding and support from Administrators and/or other funders for future trainings and program activities.</p> <p>7. Initiated discussion with administrative team and other local SSA schools about having a Training of Trainers (TOT) in the next two years.</p> | <p>year's end.</p> <p>5. Mentoring colleagues to serve as Family Group Facilitators and Program Advisors.</p> <p>6. Secured funding and support from Administrators and/or other funders for future trainings and program activities.</p> <p>7. Willing and able to conduct training of new and returning Ambassadors (participated in Training-of-Trainers and/or feel confident to conduct school's own future trainings).</p> |
| School Staff | | |
| <p>1. Principal attends two SSA FG meetings, program management team meeting or all-Ambassador events.</p> <p>2. Three presentations to staff (one about the need for the SSA program, one that is the training summary, one for the year-end program summary); two of these presentations include Ambassadors.</p> <p>3. Discussion of school climate at one staff meeting.</p> | <p>1. Principal and leadership team actively support SSA program (Continued responsiveness to requests from PAs and FGFs for time out of class and/or duties for SSA activities).</p> <p>2. Four presentations to staff (one about the need for the SSA program, two for updates, one year-end program summary); all presentations include Ambassadors.</p> <p>3. Workshop/training on how staff can build positive school climate.</p> | <p>1. Broad support for SSA program and school climate improvement (Individuals (students and adults) are supportive of Ambassadors on campus).</p> <p>2. Four presentations to staff (one about the continuing need for the SSA program, two for updates, one year-end program summary); all presentations include Ambassadors.</p> <p>3. Site-based team (admin & staff) acquires skill and knowledge to lead deeper staff development work on positive school climate.</p> <p>4. Youth development and youth empowerment are core values.</p> |
| Impact on School Climate | | |
| <p>1. Established a method for assessing program impact, including decisions about what indicators to monitor, program benchmarks and goals.</p> <p>2. Program management team collects and shares stories, anecdotes, and examples as evidence of</p> | <p>1. Selected indicators show positive change.</p> <p>2. Students and staff report a noticeable improvement in climate (fewer conflicts and tensions, feeling safer, easier to teach, more positive environment).</p> | <p>1. <i>More</i> indicators show positive change.</p> <p>2. Students and staff report a <i>continued</i> improvement in climate (fewer conflicts and tensions, feeling safer, easier to teach, more positive environment).</p> |

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| <p>Ambassador successes with other staff and other adults/parents in the community.</p> <p>3. Enthusiasm for the possibilities of what climate change can mean to the school, staff and students.</p> | | |
| <p align="center">Community Outreach and Visibility</p> | | |
| <p>1. Identify one parent, community, or service group that may want to know about and support the SSA program.</p> <p>2. Discussion with district-level person about expansion into feeder schools and/or other sites in this or nearby districts.</p> <p>3. Solicit community and business support of SSA program and Ambassadors for year-end event.</p> | <p>1. Presented to two parent, community, or service groups and requested support for program (funding, field trips, PR).</p> <p>2. Three potential SSA Program sites visit training or event; 1 decides to launch program.</p> <p>3. Expand community and business support of SSA program and Ambassadors for year-end event and Ambassador awards, such as food, beverages, coupons, discounts, and tickets.</p> | <p>1. Partnership with one parent, community, or service group. Others actively sought.</p> <p>2. Continued integration of program into feeder schools and/or other local area sites/districts.</p> <p>3. Ongoing community and business support of SSA program and Ambassadors by providing food, beverages, incentives, coupons, tickets and discounts for SSA program events and Ambassadors awards.</p> |

Adapting your program to Benchmarks

These benchmarks have been developed to encompass and serve a very diverse range of schools:

- from middle schools serving 6th graders to high schools serving 12th graders
- from small schools of 100 to large schools of 3000+
- from rural to small-town to suburban to urban schools

To provide the most useful guidance, these benchmarks must be viewed through the lens of your school's demographic profile **and possibly adapted**.

*For example, regarding the size of your program (number of Ambassadors): though research is not conclusive, experience indicates that a 10% saturation rate is the maximum necessary (i.e., one Ambassador per ten students). For smaller schools, these training numbers can be reduced as the 10% saturation rate is achieved. Program impact is evident at lower rates, so larger schools might level out at a lower rate based on their ability to support and manage a limited number of Ambassadors (e.g., a school of 1600 students might stop at a 5% saturation rate because they can only run Family Groups for 80 students).

Please contact us if you have questions about what will lead to a sustainable program at your school.