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Best Practices Among School Districts

June Jenkins, Project Director
Safe Schools/Healthy Students
Albemarle/Charlottesville Project

March 11, 2011

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Show Me How

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Five Core Elements

- School Safety & Violence Prevention
- Substance Abuse Prevention
- Social-Emotional Supports
- Mental Health Services
- Early Childhood Learning

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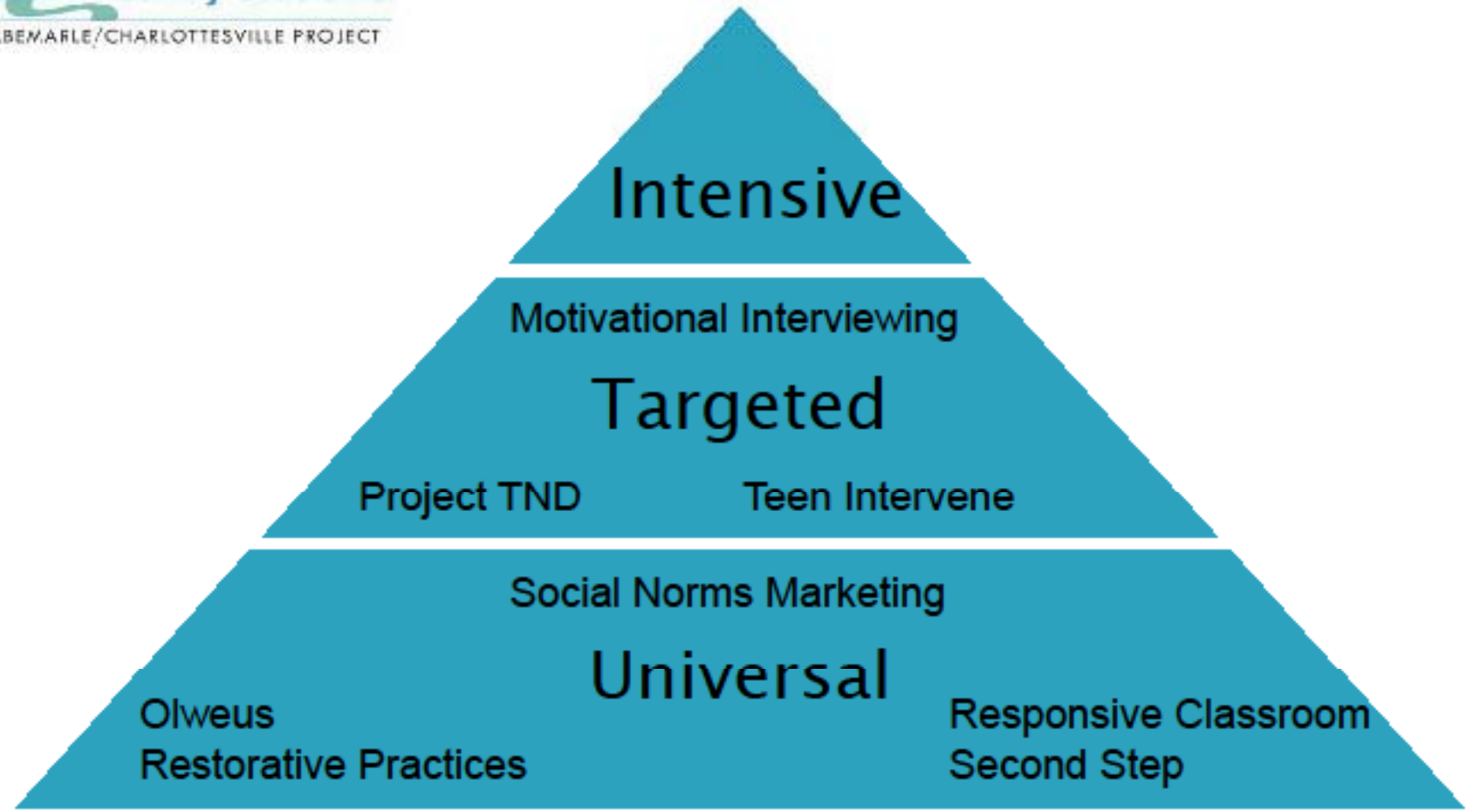

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School Safety and Violence Prevention

- Olweus Bullying Prevention
  - K–12 School–wide Model
  - Prevention and Intervention
- Restorative Practices
  - Strengthens Individual Relationships

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Substance Use Prevention

- Project TND
  - Alternative Education Settings
- Social Norms Marketing
  - Student Perceptions vs. the Reality

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Monticello High
Social Norms
2010-11

The only thing easy about going to states was staying Sober.

75% of MHS students do not drink.

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Social/Emotional Supports

- Responsive Classroom
  - Elementary Model
- Second Step
  - Middle School Model

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Responsive Classroom®

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Lessons Learned

- Training Fidelity Measures
- Implementation Fidelity Measures
- Outcome Measures

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Our Community, Our Kids

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Contact Information

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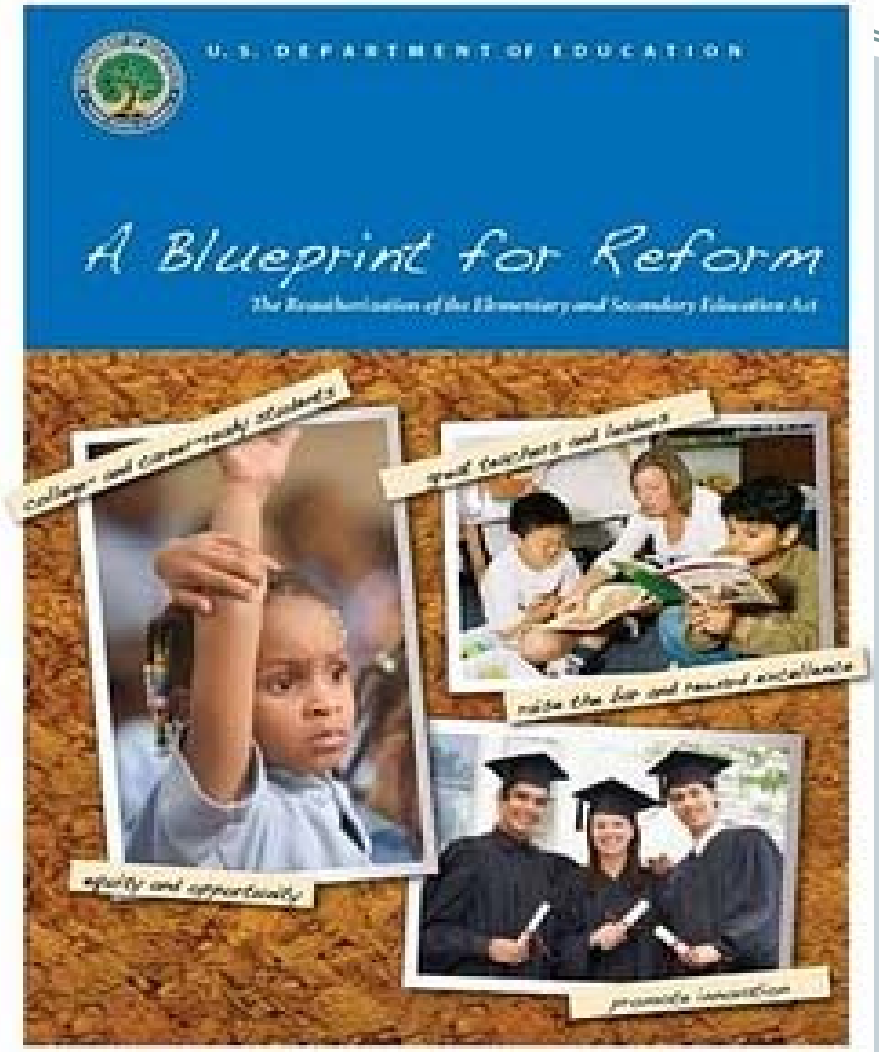
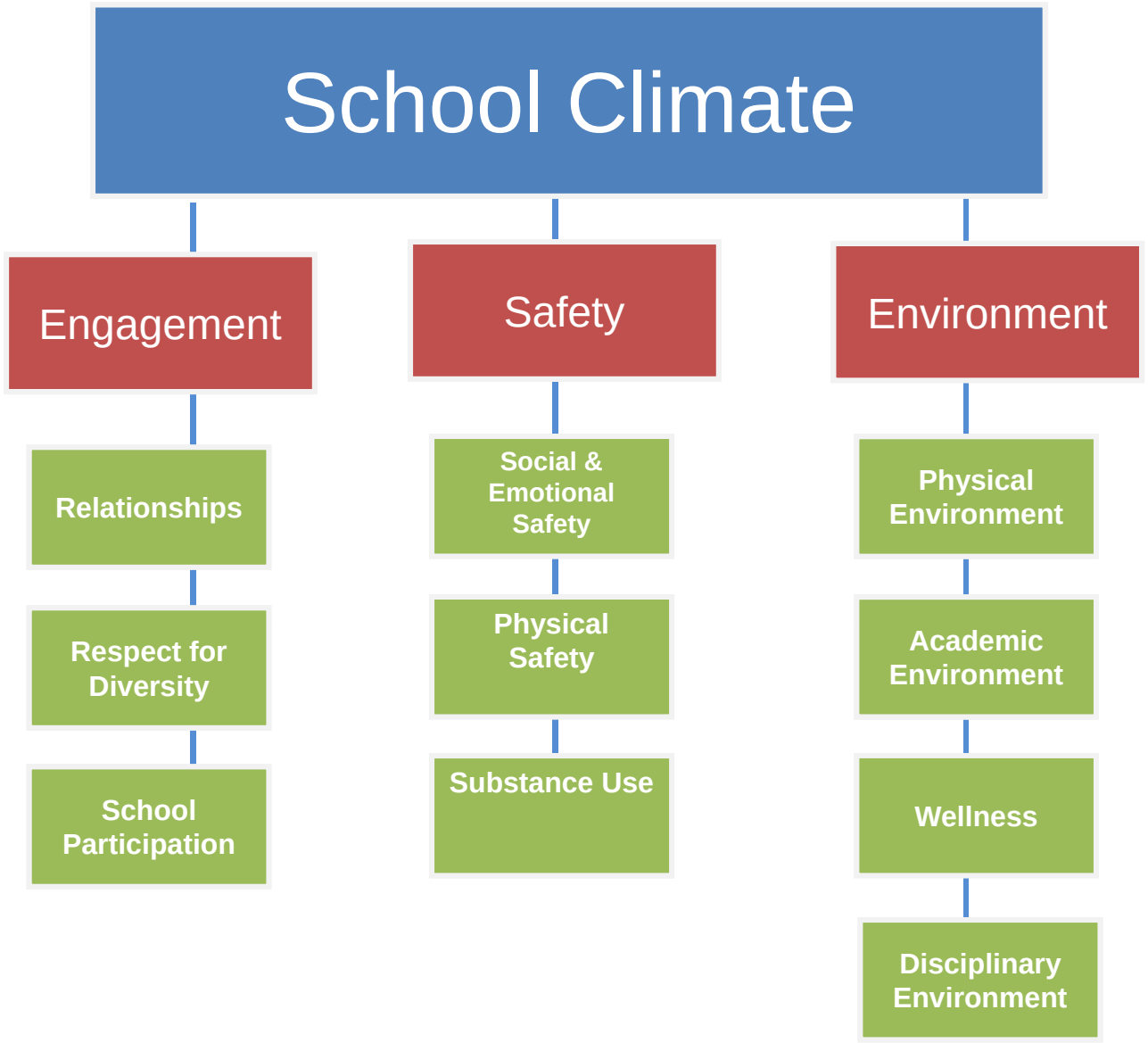
The Tennessee Story

Nicole Cobb, Ed.S
Director of the Center for School Climate
Tennessee Department of Education

Successful, Safe, and Healthy Schools



A positive and sustained school climate promotes students' academic achievement and healthy development (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004)


School Climate
Engagement
Relationships
Respect for Diversity
School Participation
Safety
Social & Emotional Safety
Physical Safety
Substance Use
Environment
Physical Environment
Academic Environment
Wellness
Disciplinary Environment

Tennessee's Cutting Edge Initiatives

- Strong and supportive leadership
- SAVE Act
- University of Memphis
- Vanderbilt University
- Early warning data system
- Olweus
- Drop-out prevention toolkit
- CSH
- TELL Tennessee
- Memphis City Schools
- Sullivan County

Tennessee's Grant Application

- School Climate Advisory Committee
- Creation of Center for School Climate
- Formal measurement of school climate
- Expansion of Tennessee's longitudinal data system
- Creation of a web portal and data dashboard
- Creation of an online registry for evidence based interventions
- Direct support provided to schools with the most fragile climates
- School climate academies producing School Climate Specialists

Challenges

- Development of a valid and reliable survey instrument for students, educators, and parents
- Clear and concise definition of school climate
- Obtaining buy-in from across our state
- Development of a formula to assign a “school safety score”
- Comparability of data across states
- Data for research use vs data for use at school level
- Large scale implementation and sustainability

Solutions to Help States Move Forward

- National core of items to use as foundation for survey instruments
- Psychometric expertise and direction in structuring a school safety score formula
- Establishing a community of practice

Questions

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The Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools Technical Assistance Symposium New Orleans, LA March 9-11, 2011

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

TOM TORLAKSON
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

Improving School Climate – the California Challenge

Our Needs:

- Data rich, but inconsistent data use among districts
- Marginalization of learning supports
- Lack of funding

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S3 Goals

- Improve school safety and conditions for learning (i.e., school climate) in most needy high schools as identified by data
- Build local capacity to implement data-driven school improvements
- Integrate school climate reform into school-wide improvements
- Establish a comprehensive intervention model that is sustainable

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The Engagement Challenge

- Estimated 40-50% of high school students disengaged.
  - Major cause of student dropout.
  - Often overlooked in school reform efforts
- "The fundamental challenge [of school reform] is creating a set of circumstances in which students take pleasure in learning…and that they can be reasonably expect to be able to learn the material." — National Research Council, *Engaging Schools* (2004:14)

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The Teacher Challenge

- 22% of new teachers in California quit within four years. School climate among most important factors in whether teachers stay or leave.
    - May be as important or even more important than salary.

- Workplace conditions, relationships and collegiality, performance expectations, participation and decision making
    - Align with the three developmental supports that promote resilience among youth: Relationships, Expectations, & Participation
- If teachers don't feel these supports, they can't provide them to students and teaching quality is undermined.

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Latest Results: California Healthy Kids Survey

- Aggregated weighted statewide secondary school dataset 2007-09
- 250K students in grades 7 & 9;
  210K in 11th;
  30K in continuation schools
- 782 districts
- 3,143 schools

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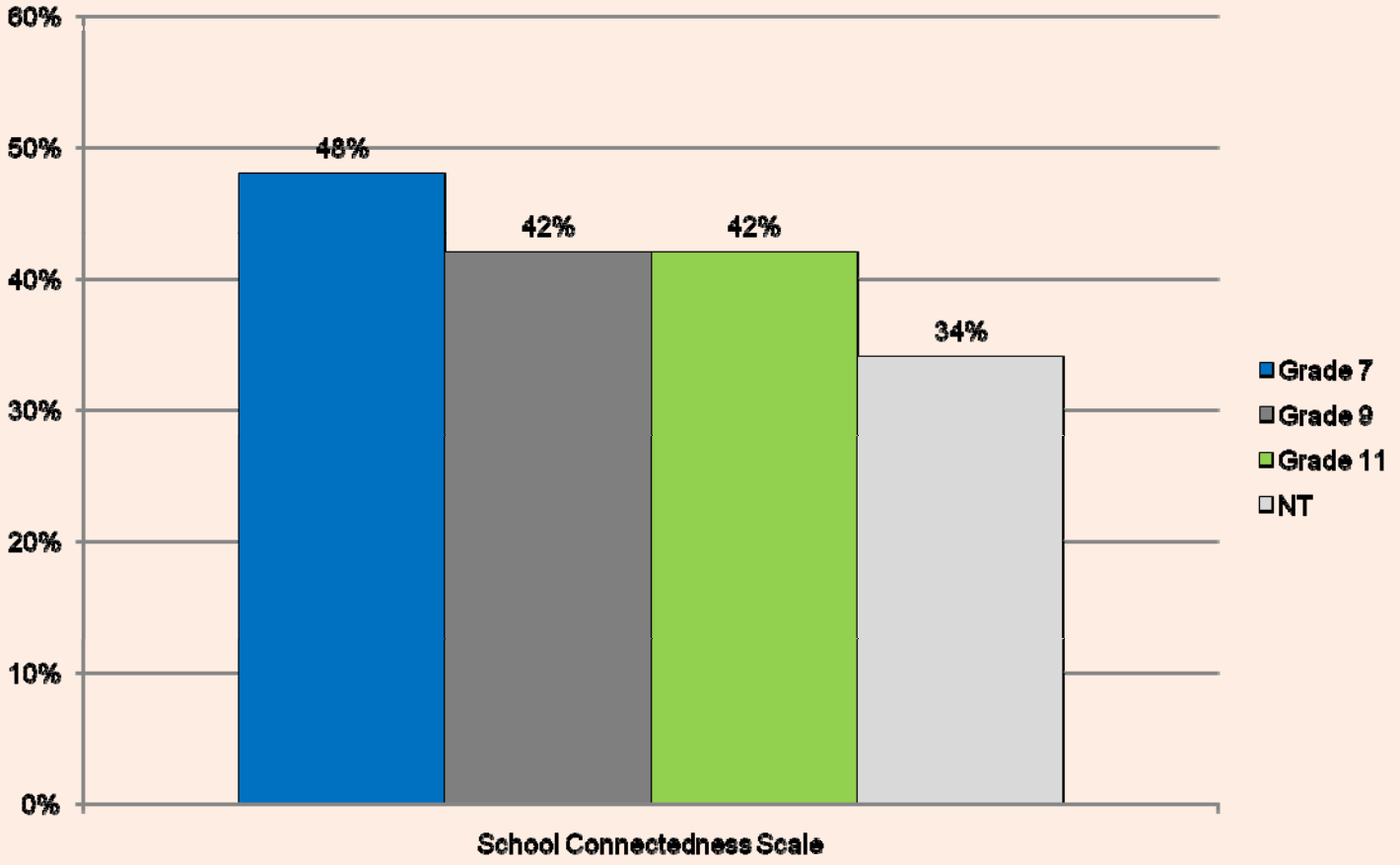
% High in School Connectedness



2007-09 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS);
5-item scale derived from Add Health Survey

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School Connectedness

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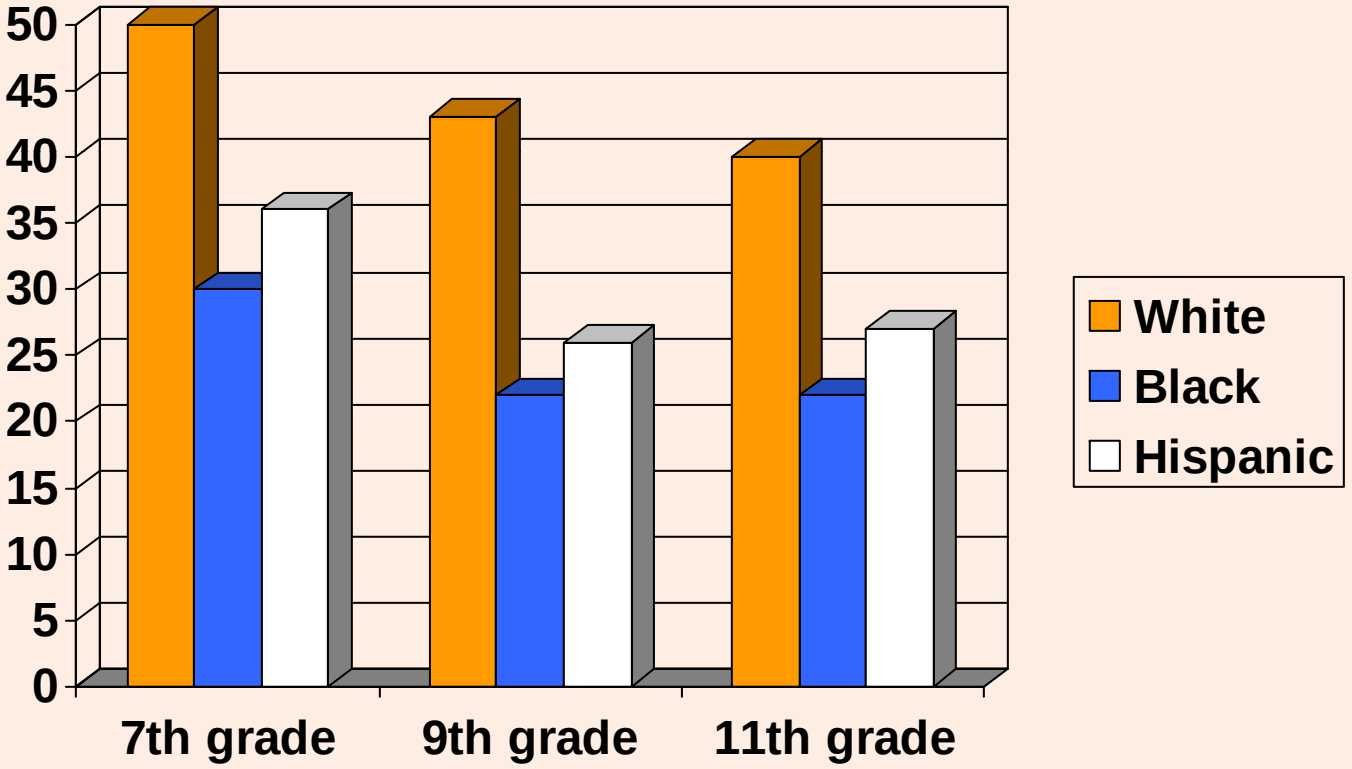
How *strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?*

Feel close to people at this school.
I am happy to be at this school.
I feel like I am part of this school.
The teachers at this school treat students fairly.
I feel close to people at this school.



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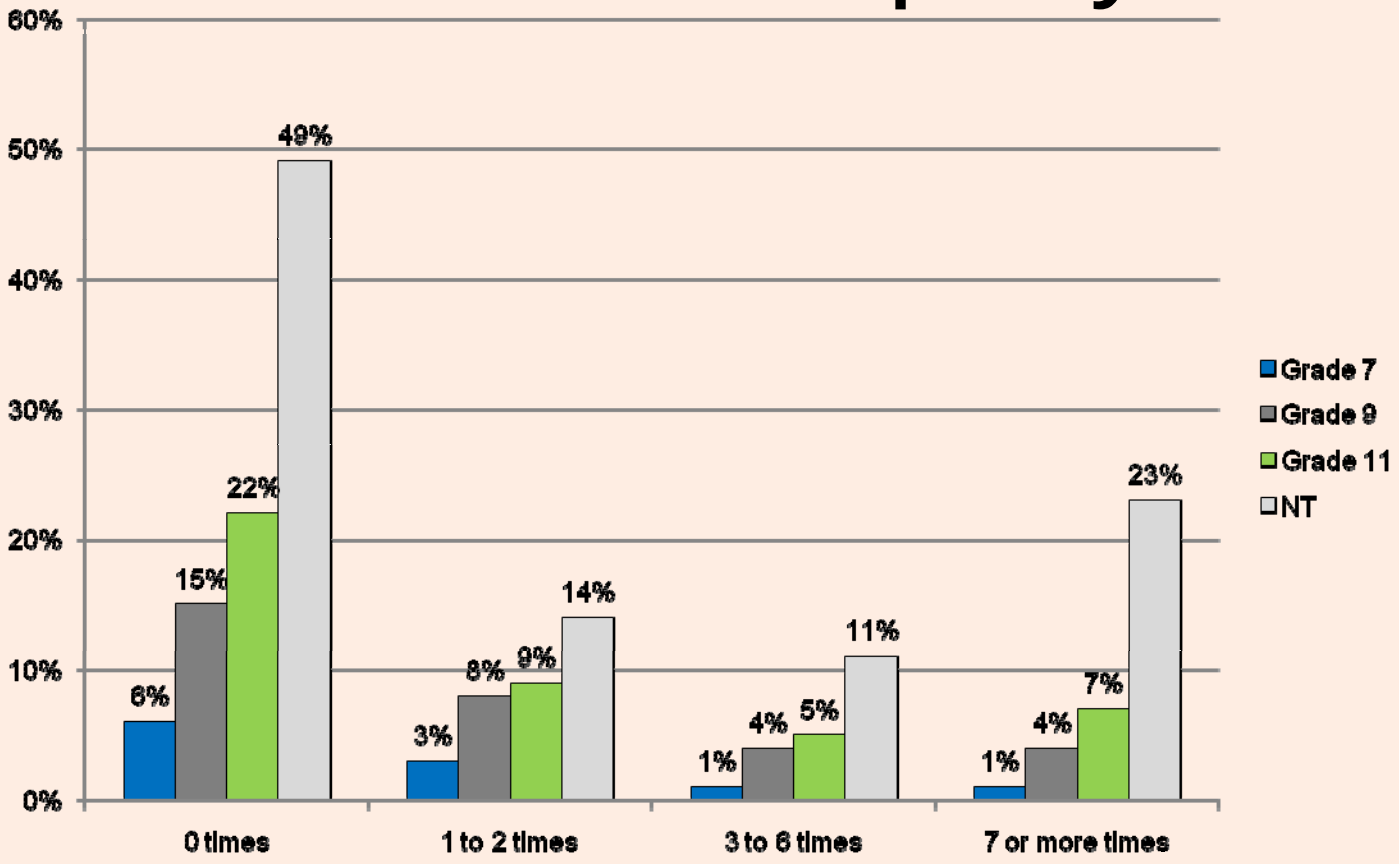
Ever Drunk or High on School Property



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2007-09 CHKS

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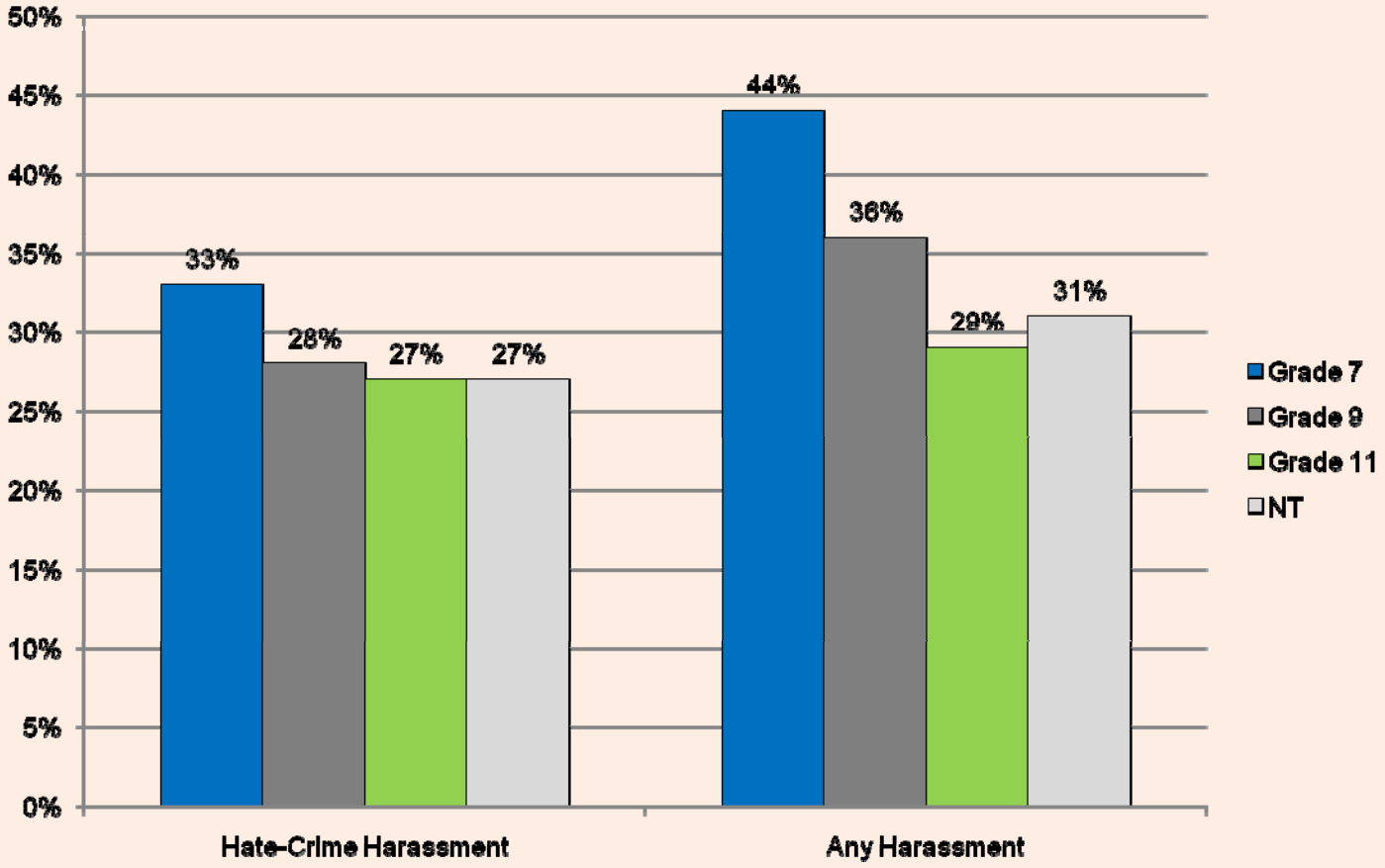
Harassed at School in the Past Year



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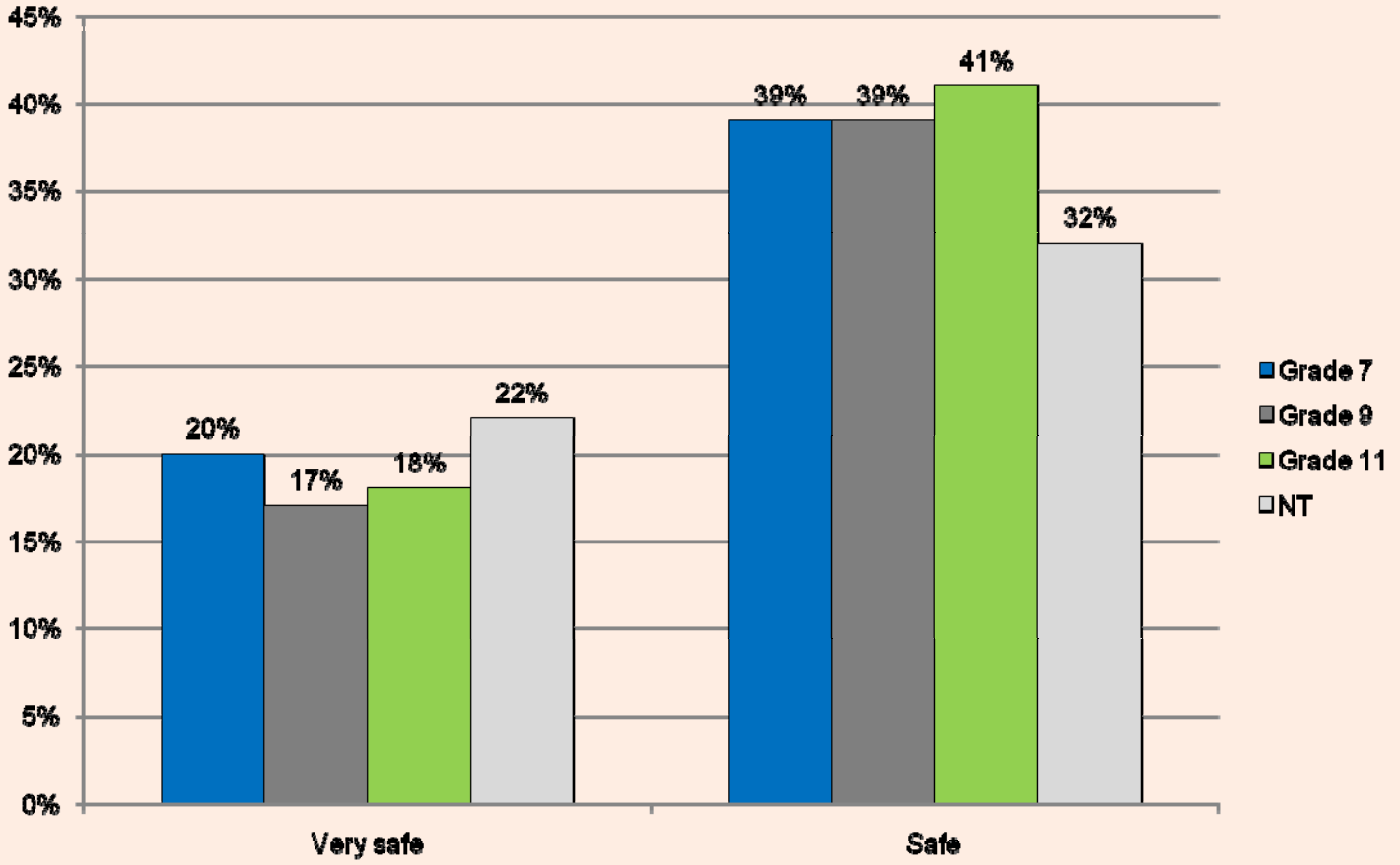
% Feeling Safe or Very Safe at School



2007-09 CHKS

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Three Critical Developmental Supports or Protective Factors

- Caring Relationships – supportive connections with others who serve as models for prosocial behavior and healthy development.
- High Expectations– direct and indirect, *supportive* messages that youth can and will succeed.
- Opportunities for Meaningful Participation – relevant, engaging, and interesting activities. including opportunities for responsibility and contribution.
- This is a natural alignment with the three R's: Rigor, Relevance and Relationships

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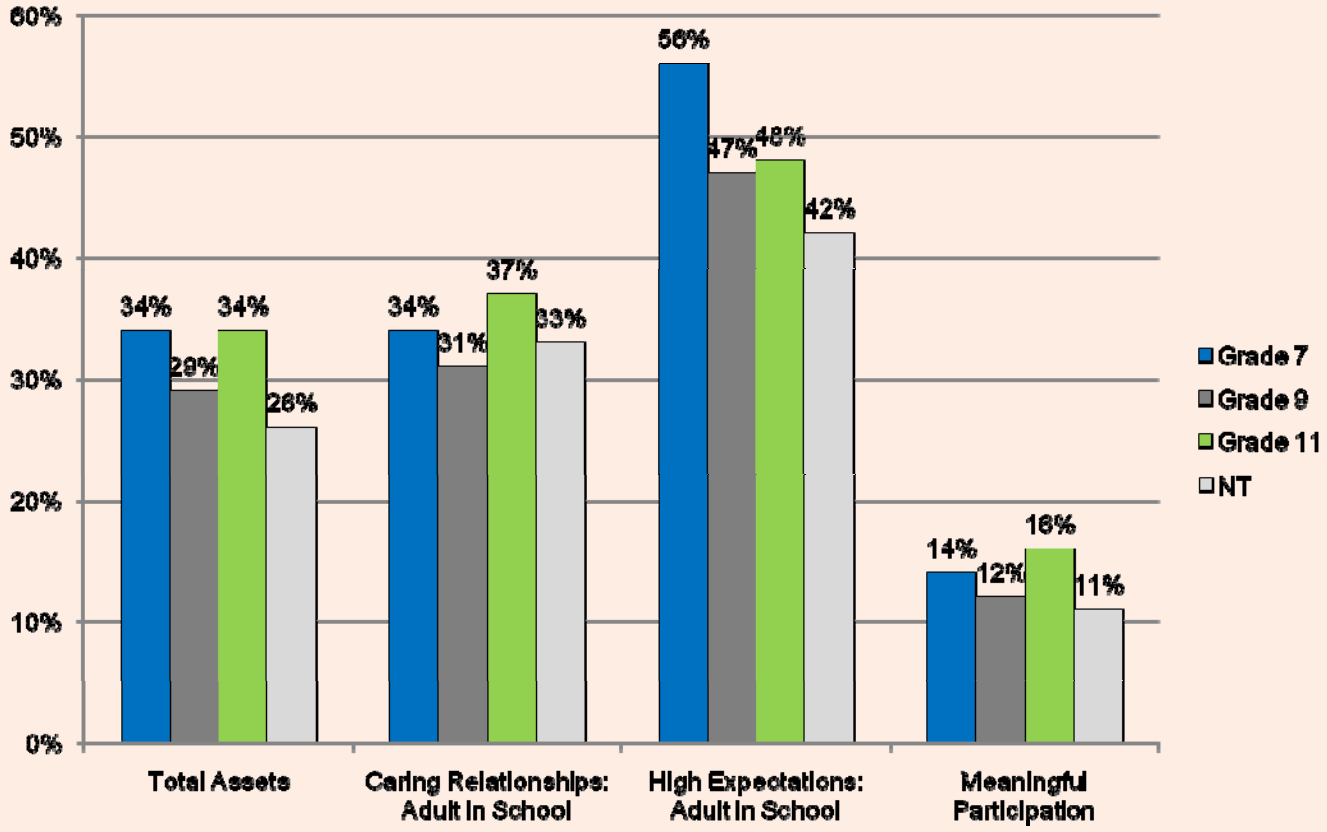
% High in School Developmental Supports



2007-09 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS); 3-item scales

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Conclusions

- Efforts to improve schools — and especially high schools — need to address not only issues of curriculum, instruction, and governance, but also to foster positive environments that support and engage students in learning (and teachers in teaching).
- Schools need environments that are:
  - Safe;
  - Caring, participatory, and challenging;
  - Addressing health and behavioral impediments to learning readiness and capacity
  - Engaging of students, staff, and parents.
- The first step is assessment

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Application Process

- Non-competitive
- Needs + district and school commitment
- Initial application (mid Aug)
- Work plan (end of Dec)

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Technical Assistance

Fall

- Onsite Data Use Action Planning workshops
- Listening to Students fishbowls
- Webinars

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