

Safe School Ambassadors®

MEASUREMENT AND IMPACT

We are committed to comprehensive testing and rigorous evaluation of the Safe School Ambassadors program. We are working with outside evaluators to develop valid instrumentation and effective methods, and are using them to measure the impact of the program.

Improved School Climate

Through Year-end Surveys spanning the years, 78% of adults reported that the SSA program improves school climate. All three years of data indicate that Ambassadors are able to change the prevailing student culture that says “it’s cool to be cruel.” Other research shows that improved school climate paves the way for increased attendance and academic performance.

“The Safe School Ambassadors program has made it possible to create a culture of caring and respect for our students and faculty.”

—Bill Zambelli, Principal
Kathryn Señor Elementary School, CO

Improved School Safety

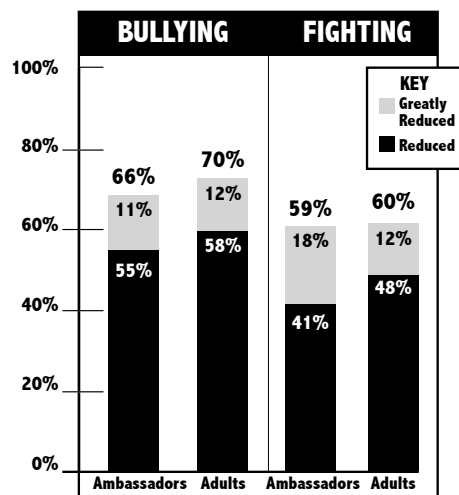
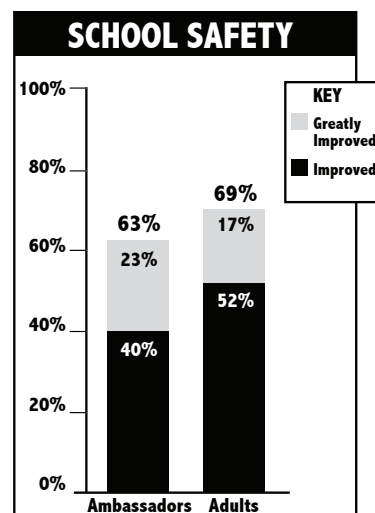
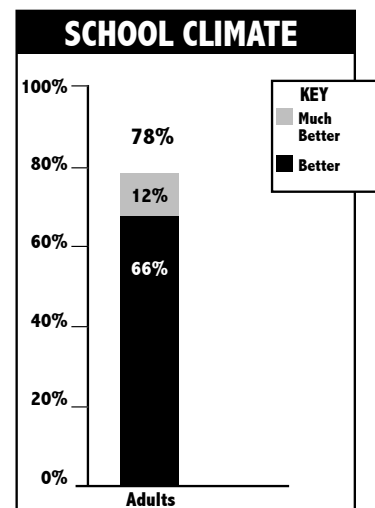
Through Year-End Surveys, 73% of Ambassadors and 90% of adults report that students have fewer concerns about their own safety once Ambassadors are on campus. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and subsequent research shows that when students feel physically and emotionally safe, they are better able to learn.

“The Ambassadors have already stopped or prevented many acts of violence on our campuses, from teasing and bullying to fights and drug deals.”

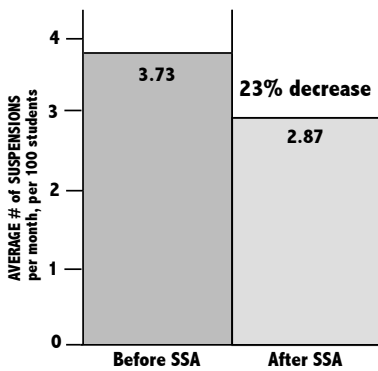
—Dave Heard, Director of Safety and Security
Perris Union High School District, CA

Reduced Bullying and Fighting

Year-End Survey data also shows that Ambassadors contribute to a reduction in the amount of bullying and fighting at their schools. This means that fewer students are distracted by their fear of being bullied or having to fight. It also means less staff time and fewer dollars spent on discipline procedures, resulting in more time on learning.



Reduced Suspension Rates



Over the 2 years prior to implementation of the Safe School Ambassadors program, the schools studied showed an average monthly suspension rate of 3.73 per 100 students. After implementing the Safe School Ambassadors program, the average rate dropped 23% to 2.87.

The most dramatic decrease was at Montgomery HS in Santa Rosa, California, where the rate dropped 56%. In numerical terms, this has meant 450 fewer suspensions over two years. In turn, this has allowed the school to receive \$36,400 in ADA funds that would have been lost had the suspensions continued at the prior rate.

Fewer Discipline Problems

Too often, when seemingly small incidents between students are left unchecked, they fester and erupt into larger ones that require formal disciplinary consequences like detentions, suspensions, and even expulsions. With their heightened awareness and knowledge of “what’s up” between fellow students, Ambassadors are able to go right to the source of the problem and use their communication and intervention skills to reduce tensions, resolve differences, and prevent escalation of problems.

Kenilworth Junior High (Petaluma, California) reported that, compared to the previous year’s figures, for the 5 months (January – June) after the program was launched:

- Harassment down 50%
- Outside Disruption down 32%
- Bus incidents down 25%
- Sexual Harassment down 55%

“In this first year of the Ambassadors program, compared to the previous year, we’ve had 50% fewer discipline incidents among our 3rd- and 4th-graders.”

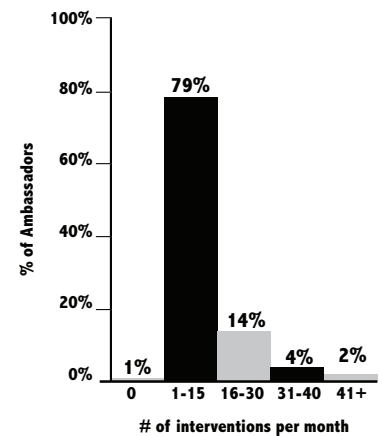
—Kristin Greenstreet, Counselor
Kathryn Señor Elementary School, CO

After implementing the Safe School Ambassadors program, the average suspension rate dropped 23% to 2.87 per 100 students.

Ambassadors Take Action

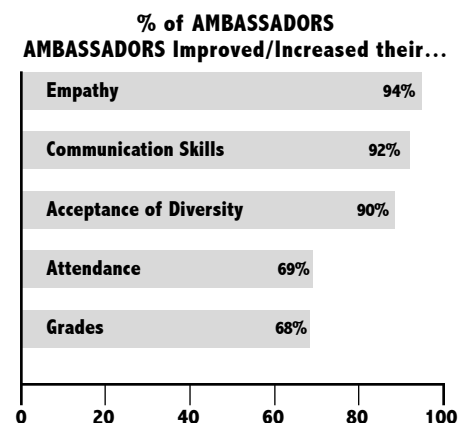
Frequency of Intervention

For any program to be effective, participants must actually use the skills they are taught through the program. Year-End Survey data shows a high percentage of Ambassadors actually using the Ambassador Actions they learn in the training: 79% intervene between 1-15 times per month; another 14% intervene between 16-30 times per month. Preliminary analysis shows that intervention frequency rises in proportion to the length of time the student has been an Ambassador; in other words, the longer the students are Ambassadors, the more they intervene (likely due to increased skill and confidence).



Impact on Ambassadors

When recruited properly, Ambassadors are the influential “opinion leaders” of a school’s diverse cliques, and thus include some who are viewed as “negative leaders” by staff and certain students. These students set the trends and social norms that others follow, so when they change, other students notice and often change, too. Year-end Survey data from Ambassadors and adults consistently show that these powerful students increase their own empathy, communication skills, and acceptance of diversity, as well as improving their own grades and attendance. Their changes ripple out and influence others to do the same.



Contact Community Matters for references.