



Elementary Safe School Ambassadors[®] Program

A whole-school strategy

Harnessing the power of students to prevent and stop bullying and improve school climate

The Need

Bullying, intolerance, put-downs, and exclusion are far too common and costly, even at the elementary level. This mistreatment is getting younger, meaner, harder for adults to notice, and more acceptable among children. It undermines student attendance and achievement, is harmful to young people's social and emotional development, and erodes staff morale.

Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort by all stakeholders – students, staff, administrators, parents and community – and the Elementary Safe School Ambassadors program helps to engage all these groups in reducing mistreatment and building a positive climate, in the classrooms and throughout the school.

The Program

Elementary Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) is a whole-school model that equips students with the language, tools and motivation to treat each other with kindness and respect, and to speak up when their friends and classmates don't. Delivered in two powerful days, it includes components for students, staff, administrators, parents and community.

For schools with students in grades K-6, the Elementary Safe School Ambassadors program provides a customizable plan and proven tools for:

- reducing the hurtful behaviors that impede learning, reduce attendance and erode staff morale;
- building positive and supportive relationships between and among students, staff members and parents.

Outcomes: students gain

- skills, in 4 domains:
 - self management: understanding my thoughts, naming my feelings, and making responsible choices;
 - empathy: identifying and understanding the feelings of others;
 - communication & friendship: getting along, resolving disagreements and conflicts peacefully;
 - intervention: speaking up to help others treat people right and make good choices.
- knowledge:
 - common language and understanding of the problem of mistreatment,
 - consequences and costs of mistreatment, which is the root of empathy and motivation to act
- connection: to/with each other and staff. "It's hard to hate someone when you know their story." The program creates many opportunities to build and strengthen relationships
- motivation to use what they know: over time, this concern for others becomes "real" and "important" for them so they stand up and speak out for justice...

Program Design

Elementary SSA includes components for students, staff, administrators, parents and community.

- students: a core group of 30 socially-influential upper-grade student Ambassadors is trained to:
 - notice mistreatment amongst their peers and intervene to prevent or stop it, and
 - lead a series of classroom activities at all grade levels to build a foundation of social skills and relationships that support positive classroom and school climate.Ambassadors meet with trained adults throughout the year for lesson planning and practice, supervision, skill development, and support.
- staff: a core group of 4-6 staff or other adults is trained to work with the Ambassadors throughout the school year. In addition, the entire staff is introduced to the “whole school climate” framework and the roles of staff and students in building a positive climate; they are also briefed on the structure of the Elementary SSA program and how they can support it.
- administrators: the principal and any other administrative staff are briefed on keys to successful implementation of the SSA program and leadership of school climate improvement efforts.
- parents and community members are invited to participate in a 2-hour workshop that introduces them to the same language the school is using, and introduces skills they can use to improve their communication and relationships with children.

Time Required

	During the 2 days of training	Ongoing follow-up
Student Ambassadors	10-11 hours	30-minute mtgs every 1-2 weeks
Core team of adults	Above plus 3 hours	Above plus planning meetings every 1-2 months
All staff	45-60 minute briefing	Recommend periodic updates
Administrators	Add'l 30-45 minute briefing	Periodic check-in with advisor
Parents & Community	2-hour workshop	Recommend periodic updates

Benefits Include:

- True and sustainable improvement in school climate, with all the resulting benefits of:
 - increased attendance and achievement,
 - reduced disciplinary incidents, and
 - improved staff morale and retention.
- Engages all stakeholder groups – students, staff, administrators, parents and broader community – which increases support for school initiatives.
- Taps the power of students to educate their peers, to intervene when and where adults aren't, and to establish positive social norms that guide student behavior.
- Reduces incidents of bullying and other forms of mistreatment, and associated costs.

The Cost:

\$4900 includes 2 days of training for student Ambassadors and core staff, all-staff briefing, administrator briefing, and parent workshop.*

Includes all materials, and rights to reproduce consumables.

Expenses for trainer travel and shipping are additional.

*Without parent workshop, cost is \$4500.

For more information or to begin your Elementary Safe School Ambassadors program, please contact Community Matters at 707-823-6159, or email outreach@community-matters.org