

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

### National Safe Supportive Schools Learning Collaborative

Promoting Well-Being and Equity for All Students and School Staff

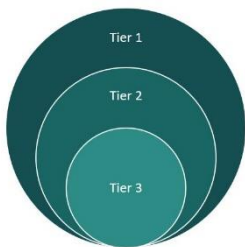
**Apply now to be part of a national learning collaborative on safe supportive schools.**

The [National Center for Safe Supportive Schools \(NCS3\)](#), a Category II Center of the [National Child Traumatic Stress Network \(NCTSN\)](#), invites school districts to **apply to participate in a 2-year national learning collaborative** that accelerates and spreads innovation and improvement in the advancement of **culturally responsive, trauma-informed, school mental health systems**. Participating districts and schools will receive training, technical assistance, implementation support, and guidance to effectively create the conditions needed for safe supportive schools. Too often, school mental health, trauma-informed schools, and cultural responsiveness and equity efforts are siloed. This learning collaborative intentionally integrates the three components to better promote equity and well-being for all students and staff.

#### WHAT ARE SAFE SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS?

Safe Supportive Schools promote well-being and equity for all students and school staff by implementing comprehensive school mental health systems with policies and practices that are trauma-informed and culturally responsive.

**Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems (CSMHS)** CSMHSs provide a full array of supports and



services that promote positive school climate, social emotional learning, mental health, and well-being, while reducing the prevalence and severity of mental illness. CSMHSs are built on a strong foundation of district and school professionals, including administrators and educators and specialized instructional support personnel in strategic partnership with students, families, and community health and mental health partners. CSMHSs assess and address the social and environmental factors that influence education and mental health.

In a **culturally responsive school**, students', families', and educators' cultural references are included in all aspects of schooling, including supports and services that promote well-being and mental health. Policies and practices promote equity and oppose racism and other forms of oppression. Equitable schools provide the climate and resources that enable *all* students and educators to perform at their highest level. Culturally responsive and equitable schools embrace cultural differences and assets, use cultural knowledge to promote wellness and academic success, mediate power imbalances based on cultural identities, and work to dismantle systems of injustice.



In a **trauma-informed school**, the school community cultivates a healing-centered environment that recognizes and responds to the individual and collective causes and impact of adversity, stress, and trauma. Adults are prepared to recognize and respond to those who have been impacted by traumatic stress. Students are provided with clear expectations and strategies to guide them through stressful situations. Trauma-informed schools leverage individual and community strengths to foster healing

**WHAT IS THE SAFE SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS LEARNING COLLABORATIVE (S3-LC)?**

The S3-LC is a national community of school districts and schools committed to assessing and improving the quality of their comprehensive school mental health systems, including the extent to which they incorporate policies and practices that are trauma-informed and culturally-responsive.

15 school district teams will be selected for participation in the S3-LC. District teams will engage 2 schools each for S3-LC participation. Leaders from the respective local education and other child-serving agencies will work together with school leaders to accelerate innovation and best practices needed to promote safe and supportive schools for all students and staff. Participating districts and schools will receive two years of training, technical assistance, implementation support, and guidance from national experts in school mental health, cultural responsiveness and equity, and trauma-informed schools.

District teams and school leaders (2 school leaders/school, including at least one mental health leader) will participate in monthly virtual learning sessions with instruction, shared learning, and strategic action planning on best policies and practices to advance safe supportive schools. Participating schools will engage in three 2-hour training and facilitated reflection and discussion sessions per year (supported by NCS3 asynchronous learning content and facilitation by NCS3, district, and school leaders).

District S3-LC Learning Content		
<i>Monthly Virtual Learning Sessions, District Teams</i>		
Foundational elements of safe, supportive schools: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), Family-Youth-School-Community Partnership, Data-Driven Decision Making, Cultural-Responsiveness and Equity, Strengths-Based, Trauma-Informed		
Comprehensive School Mental Health	Cultural Responsiveness and Equity	Trauma-Informed, Healing-Centered Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Defining school mental health</li> <li>✓ Teaming</li> <li>✓ Needs Assessment and Resource Mapping</li> <li>✓ Mental Health Screening</li> <li>✓ Universal Mental Health Promotion (Tier 1)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School climate</li> <li>- Mental health literacy</li> <li>- Adult and student SEL</li> <li>- Positive behavior supports</li> <li>- Staff well-being</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Early Intervention and Treatment (Tiers 2/3)</li> <li>✓ Impact (changes resulting from policies and practices)</li> <li>✓ Funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Defining cultural responsiveness, equity, bias, and anti-racism</li> <li>✓ Cultural humility and awareness</li> <li>✓ Impact of oppression, racism, and inequity on students</li> <li>✓ Culturally responsiveness school and classroom policies, structures, and strategies to support student mental health</li> <li>✓ Family and community engagement in cultural awareness and responsiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Defining trauma and adversity</li> <li>✓ Impact of adversity and trauma on brain development and learning</li> <li>✓ Understanding what it means to be a trauma-informed, healing-centered school</li> <li>✓ Whole school approaches to trauma (Safety, Prevention)</li> <li>✓ Signs of trauma in classroom/school setting</li> <li>✓ Classroom strategies to support students experiencing trauma and adversity</li> <li>✓ School-based early intervention and treatment for trauma</li> <li>✓ Secondary traumatic stress among educators</li> </ul>
School Learning Content		
<i>Three Asynchronous Learning and Facilitated Reflection and Discussion Sessions/Year (3 hours each)</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Promoting mental health and well-being of all students</li> <li>✓ Identifying, understanding and supporting students experiencing distress, adversity, and trauma</li> <li>✓ Defining cultural responsiveness, equity, anti-racism, and bias</li> <li>✓ Implicit bias and impact on perceptions of students and response to mental health needs</li> <li>✓ Promotion and implementation of policies, structures, and strategies that foster safe supportive schools</li> </ul>		



## WHY PARTICIPATE IN THE S3 LEARNING COLLABORATIVE (S3-LC)?



- Receive **two years** of training, technical assistance, and coaching from national experts
- Be on the **cutting edge** of trauma-informed, culturally responsive policy and practice for schools
- Improve the **quality** of trauma-informed, culturally responsive school mental health supports and services in your district and state
- Receive **training and implementation support** for school mental health clinicians in:
  - ✓ Culturally Responsive, Anti-Racist, and Equitable (CARE) School Mental Health
  - ✓ Tier 2/3 school-based intervention for adversity or trauma
    - Supporting Transition Resilience of Newcomer Groups (STRONG)
    - Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS)
    - Bounce Back
- Join and learn together with a **network of peers** from across the nation
- Advance **state and district policies** to foster safe supportive schools
- Improve **visibility** for your work and receive **national recognition** from the NCS3



**S3-LC DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS WILL RECEIVE:**

Training, Technical Assistance, Implementation Support, Resources:	District S3-LC Teams (including S3-LC School Leaders)	S3-LC School Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive, <b>professional development, expert training, coaching, and technical assistance</b> provided at <b>no cost</b> by national experts, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An S3-LC <b>welcome orientation and learning session</b></li> <li>○ A virtual Kick-Off learning session for district team members, school leaders, and state leaders</li> <li>○ Monthly learning and consultation sessions</li> <li>○ Training and technical assistance to support safe supportive schools improvement planning</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to a <b>national peer network of district and school leaders</b> who will share lessons learned, address challenges, and identify new strategies for safe supportive schools</li> </ul>	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to <b>quality improvement platforms, tools, and resources</b> for use in the S3LC and other efforts</li> </ul>	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and implementation support <i>for up to 4 school mental health clinicians/school each year</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Culturally Responsive, Anti-Racist, and Equitable (CARE) School Mental Health</li> <li>✓ Tier 2/3 school-based intervention for adversity or trauma               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Supporting Transition Resilience of Newcomer Groups (STRONG)</li> <li>○ Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS)</li> <li>○ Bounce Back</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly pre-recorded <b>learning modules supplemented with facilitated reflection and discussion</b> on safe supportive schools for all school staff</li> </ul>		✓

**WHO IS ON THE S3-LC DISTRICT TEAM?**

Successful applicants will form a District team (approximately 8-12 individuals\*), with the **local education agency as the lead or co-lead**, with representation from each of the following:

- Local children’s mental/behavioral health authority/agency
- At least two leaders from other local agencies and/or organizations (e.g., youth/family advocacy, community behavioral health partner, public health, Medicaid/insurer, after-school provider)
- Four school leaders from **two identified schools** (2 leaders/school) that will participate in the S3-LC.
  - *Examples of school leaders include School Psychologist, School Social Worker, School Counselor, Principal, Assistant Principal, Director of Special Education, PBIS Lead, Family Engagement Lead, Cultural Liaison, School Nurse, Educator. It is recommended that at least one of the school leaders have some expertise and comfort facilitating safe supportive schools content.*

*\* We request that at least one District team member has expertise and/or interest in leading cultural responsiveness, anti-racist, and equity (CARE) efforts and one has expertise and/or interest in leading youth/family engagement and leadership efforts. These individuals will work in collaboration with the NCS3 faculty to identify district and school level strengths and needs and will be offered additional training/leadership opportunities related to these areas.*

The S3-LC Team will assess and support school mental health quality and trauma responsiveness (using The SHAPE System; a free online portal). The team will integrate a cultural responsiveness, anti-racist, and equity (CARE) lens in their work as they engage in policy and practice improvement. Focus areas and action planning that are most relevant can be prioritized. Improvements and innovation demonstrated in each of the sites are intended to inform best practices and strategies for other sites in the state and throughout the nation after the 24-month S3-LC.

We are seeking teams that are motivated to make quality improvements in specific target areas of safe supportive schools during the S3-LC. We will meet teams where they are (beginning, intermediate, advanced), offering extensive training, consultation, technical assistance, and implementation support.

## EXPECTED RESPONSIBILITIES

### District Team Responsibilities

- Participate in S3 orientation webinar (60 min) and Kick-Off Learning Session (3 hours)
- Register on the School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation System (the SHAPE system, [www.theSHAPESystem.com](http://www.theSHAPESystem.com))
- Complete the district profile, School Mental Health Quality Assessment, and the Trauma Responsive Schools Implementation Assessment at the start of each year and end of the Learning Community
- Develop S3 Improvement Plan and submit S3 Improvement Updates monthly
- Participate in monthly, virtual S3 learning and consultation calls to discuss and share best practices, progress, and lessons learned with other district teams
- Provide at least quarterly progress updates to state leader(s) to discuss S3-LC progress, challenges, opportunities, ideas for dissemination, and sustainability

### Participating School Responsibilities

- Identify 2 Leaders/school (including at least one mental health leader) to be on the District Team
- Participating schools will engage in three 2-hour training and facilitated reflection and discussion sessions using NCS3 asynchronous learning content and leadership tools. S3 School Leaders with District Leader and National Trainer to co-facilitate these sessions
- School staff to engage in the following learning content
  - Promoting and Addressing Student Mental Health and Well-being
  - Culturally Responsive, Anti-Racist, and Equitable (CARE) School Mental Health
  - Addressing Trauma and Adversity: Promoting Healing Centered Schools
- Register on the School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation System (the SHAPE system; no cost, [www.theSHAPESystem.com](http://www.theSHAPESystem.com)).
- Complete the school profile, the School Mental Health Quality Assessment, and the Trauma Responsive Schools Implementation Assessment update quality measures at the start of each school year and at the end of the learning community
- Create S3 Improvement Plan and submit S3 Improvement Updates monthly
- Invite, engage, and support clinician attendance, in the following trainings:
  - **Selected Intervention Training and Implementation Support**
    - Training in Culturally Responsive, Anti-Racist, and Equitable School Mental Health and an intervention(s) selected by participating schools, including Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS), Bounce Back, Supporting Transition Resilience of Newcomer Groups (STRONG)
    - **How long?** 9-12 hours, depending on selected training plus monthly 1-hour implementation support calls
    - **Who?** School Mental Health Staff (up to 4 school mental health clinicians per school per year), e.g., school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, school-based community mental health clinician

## APPLICATION SUBMISSION

All applications must be submitted online **by 11:59 PM EDT on April 30, 2021**. Faxed, mailed, or emailed submissions will not be accepted. Applicants will receive an email confirmation of receipt of the application. [CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE APPLICATION PORTAL](#)

## NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE

Fifteen districts will be selected to participate in the National Learning Collaborative on Safe Supportive Schools. Notification of acceptance will be sent by **May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021**.

## TIMELINE OF S3 LC ACTIVITIES

2021-23 SCHEDULE OF S3 LC Activities (Dates subject to change)	
Mar 8, 2021	Request for Applications released
Mar 17, 2021	RFA Webinar
April 30, 2021	Applications due
May 10, 2021	Selected districts announced
Leadership Training, Technical Assistance, and Cross-Site Learning for District Teams (including school team leaders)	
May 26, 2021	Welcome Webinar (60 minutes)
Aug 25, 2021	Orientation Webinar (60 minutes)
Sept 29, 2021	S3-LC Kick-off (3 hours)
Oct 2021 – Jun 2023	Monthly S3-LC Learning Sessions* (90 minutes each)
Training and Implementation Support for School Staff	
Sept 2021 – June 2023	Six learning sessions including NCS3 asynchronous learning and facilitation of discussion (all school staff; 2 hours/session)
Oct 2021 - June 2023	Training and implementation support for school mental health clinicians in Tier 2/3 interventions (up to 4 school mental health clinicians per school)

*\*Learning sessions will focus on specific quality improvement methods and best practices in trauma-informed, culturally responsive school mental health. Calls will include discussion of S3-LC district improvement plans and progress within and across teams. Virtual learning session calls are tentatively scheduled for the third Wednesday of each month, September 2021-June 2023, 1-2:30pm Eastern.*

## QUESTIONS

Please contact the NCS3 ([connect@ncs3.org](mailto:connect@ncs3.org)) with any questions.

## NCS3 Safe Supportive Schools Learning Collaborative Application

**S3-LC District Leadership** <sup>1</sup> (must be leader from district local education agency). If there will be a co-lead, please include information for both individuals.

Leader name:

Title:

Department/Agency:

**S3-LC District Team Information:**<sup>1</sup>

School District Name:

City/State:

# of schools in district:

#of students enrolled in district:

List at least 3 district team members (in addition to team leader)

District Team Member Name, Title, Dept/Agency:

District Team Member Name, Title, Dept/Agency:

District Team Member Name, Title, Dept/Agency:

**S3-LC School information:** <sup>1</sup> For the two schools participating in the S3-LC please list:

School Name:

# Enrolled Students:

Grades Served:

Name and title of 2 school leads for S3-LC:

School Name:

# Enrolled Students:

Grades Served:

Name and title of 2 school leads for S3-LC:

**State Leadership:** (identify a state education leader who will receive quarterly updates from district team on S3-LC progress, challenges, opportunities, ideas for dissemination, sustainability). Additional state mental health/behavioral health/health leaders can also receive updates and can be included below:

Leader name:

Title:

Department/Agency:

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<sup>1</sup> Placing a name in the application assumes individuals have agreed to the NCS3 objectives and S3LC requirements for participation.

**Essay Questions: (Limit 250 words per question)**

1. Please describe the current state of safe supportive schools, including strengths and challenges, in your district. *Please consider school mental health, cultural-responsiveness, anti-racism, equity (CARE), and trauma-informed schools efforts.*
2. What would participation in this S3-LC make possible for the advancement of safe supportive schools in your district?
3. What strategies or mechanisms could you use to disseminate best practices and lessons learned from participation in the learning collaborative to more schools within your district?
4. Please describe (including demographic and other available data) the district and the two school sites that you have selected for participation in the S3-LC, and why you selected these schools to participate. If you have not selected the schools yet, please describe how you will select schools for participation.