

Community Assets Building Youth Assets: CABYA

Increasing Student Success through Positive School Climate

What is CABYA?

Community Assets Building Youth Assets (**CABYA**) combines nationally-leading violence prevention and youth development programs that shift dangerous peer pressure into positive peer support, increasing students' connection to their school and community. It's a comprehensive, research-supported and place-based model for Social-Emotional Learning, whose measurable benefits include:

- Reduced violence and disciplinary actions
- Increased attendance and achievement
- Self-sustaining, positive school climate
- Increased performance-based school funding

How is CABYA Implemented?

CABYA targets individual "feeder school clusters"—the interlinked elementary, middle and high schools of a single community—and comprehensively addresses factors that determine student safety and achievement. This self-reinforcing model reflects more than three years of successful, sustainable, evidence-based, community-supported programs. **CABYA** has been integrated with existing initiatives in Riverside, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Sacramento, Elk Grove and Petaluma schools. At each site, local stakeholders and community assets are incorporated across **CABYA**'s five components:

1. *Core Programs*— **CABYA** implements nationally-leading violence prevention and youth development programs, including *Challenge Day* and *Safe School Ambassadors*.
2. *Student Support*— **CABYA** promotes ongoing student-led violence prevention and climate change efforts to sustain core programs' impact.
3. *Community Support*— **CABYA** reaches out to parents, neighbors and local organizations to reinforce the model through community involvement.
4. *Sustainability*— **CABYA** provides evaluation and professional development for staff to maintain program outcomes.
5. *Systems Change*— **CABYA** works at the school and district level to create policy and systems changes that support positive school climate.

CABYA Case Study: Petaluma, CA

The **CABYA** model was integrated into the Petaluma School District's *Ready by 21 Initiative* to develop students' academic and career readiness. After three years, the positive impact on students and staff, especially at-risk students, has been remarkable:

- Disciplinary actions reduced by **65%**, suspensions down **34%**
More students stay in school, more students succeed.
- Increased Academic Performance Index from **718** to **800**
Meeting state goals qualifies schools for increased funding.
- **2%** increase in attendance, boosting school funding by nearly **\$1 million**
Increased resources and student engagement sustain positive school climate.

At Petaluma Junior High, Assistant Principal Emily Dunnigan reports a 50% reduction in her time spent addressing negative student behavior. At Petaluma High School, suspensions related to violence and harassment are down 68% after holding steady for four years. Kenilworth Junior High showed the most dramatic results after one year:

- Battery reduced by 100%
- Theft reduced by 85%
- Fighting reduced by 77%
- Gang Incidents reduced by 70%
- Injury to Another reduced by 62%
- Bullying reduced by 47%
- Excessive Tardiness reduced by 47%
- Sexual Harassment reduced by 28%

Research Behind the Model

In California, nearly 37% of middle and high school students were bullied or physically assaulted at school, and about 75% of these experiences were bias-related.¹ Students without a strong connection to school are more than three times more likely to be bullied repeatedly.² Traditional, top-down disciplinary strategies have failed to turn this tide because they focus on policing individual offenders, instead of addressing the root causes of negative school climate.³ Yet we know that sustainable, positive school climate, and the Social-Emotional Learning it enhances, improves a range of essential factors, including students' physical and mental health, school connectedness, academic achievement, graduation rates and risk prevention, as well as teacher retention and performance-based funding for schools.⁴ Improving school climate requires a comprehensive approach, harnessing student, school and community assets to change schools from the inside out.⁵ Efforts must be student-focused, relationship-oriented, and involve classroom and school-level organizational changes.⁶ These efforts boost student engagement, while providing youth with the social capital to solve problems and desist from negative behavior.⁷ When young people are empowered to shape and embrace positive norms, the entire system benefits.⁹ Visit championsofunity.org/education-resources/research-and-policy-briefs for citations.

Good science makes clear exactly which approaches boost student success, and what resources support them. Let's get to work!

What Major Organizations have Invested in CABYA?

Numerous organizations have recognized the **CABYA** model's tremendous capacity to make a lasting difference in young people's lives. Major investors include Chevron Corporation, Sierra Health Foundation, Southern California Schools Risk Management Joint Powers Authority (JPA), and The California Endowment. Partners and affiliates include Challenge Day, Safe School Ambassadors, School Climate Consortium, Community Matters, school districts and community organizations.

How Can Individuals, Foundations and Corporations Bring CABYA to More Communities?

Participate: Be the change! **CABYA** empowers young people— and adult volunteers —to recognize that *no matter who you are, where you serve, you are the change you seek*. From community members to corporate leaders, **CABYA** volunteers tell us their experience is "transformational," "incredible," "life-changing." Facilitate a **CABYA** activity, change a young person's life, and you could change your own.

Promote: The bullying and violence at Columbine woke America up to the urgent need for comprehensive school climate change. We know now what works— and what happens if we don't take action. It's time we stopped tragic trends like last year's rash of bullied teen suicides. Promote **CABYA**'s proven approach, and you'll help put critical tools into classrooms and communities to build unity.

Support: **CABYA**'s sustainable, self-reinforcing impacts are a concrete investment in our children's future. Student performance goes up, disciplinary problems go down. Contact us to explore levels of sponsorship and support, and put your organization at the forefront of positive school climate change.

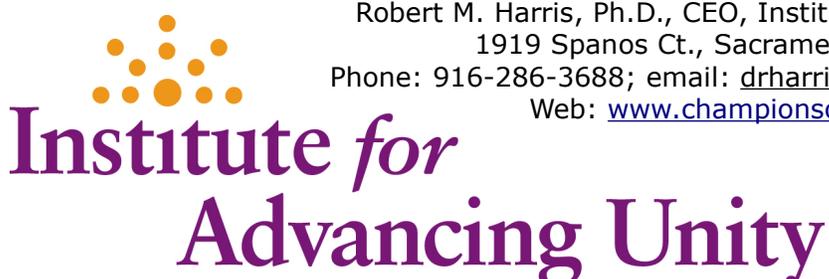
About the Institute for Advancing Unity

The Institute for Advancing Unity is an education organization that brings together leading programs and practices that build unity in our schools and communities. These tools for change enable people to learn about the consequences of prejudice and violence, acquire skills that foster harmony, and make choices that empower themselves and others to build unity. Our school climate work has garnered national interest: the IAU was one of only 150 organizations selected in 2010 to participate in the first ever *Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention Summit*. The IAU returned to Washington, DC in January 2011 to chair the congressional briefing *Bullying Prevention Strategies that Work: How Programs and Policies Transform our Communities*, where we shared successful programs like **CABYA** with educators and federal officials.

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