

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

National Safe Supportive Schools Learning Collaborative

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

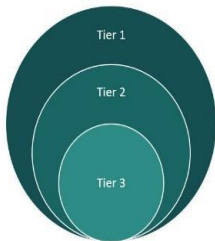
### Apply now to be part of a national learning collaborative on safe supportive schools.

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 and trauma-informed school mental health systems**. 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. Participating districts and schools will receive training, technical assistance, implementation support, and guidance to effectively create the conditions needed for safe supportive schools. District leaders will be supported to **attend an in-person, pre-conference session** of the national Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health.

### 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 culturally responsive and trauma informed.

**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 schools 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 local education authority and 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 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.

Educators and staff from participating schools will engage in **six hours of professional development** per year (supported by NCS3 asynchronous learning content and discussion/reflection facilitation tools).

District Team S3-LC Learning Content <i>Nine Monthly Virtual Learning Sessions (VLSs)/year (1.5 hours each)</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>▪ Measuring impact Funding and sustainability</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 responsive school and classroom policies, structures, and strategies to support students</li> <li>▪ Supporting BIPOC, Newcomer, and LGBTQ+ Youth 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>▪ Frameworks for trauma-informed, healing-centered schools</li> <li>▪ Whole school approaches to trauma (safety, prevention)</li> <li>▪ Signs of trauma in classroom/school settings</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 and educator well-being</li> </ul>
School Staff Professional Development Content <i>Asynchronous Learning and Facilitated Discussion Sessions/Year (6 hours total per year)</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](#)
- 

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

Training, Technical Assistance, Implementation, Resources:	District S3-LC Teams <i>(Including S3-LC School Leaders)</i>	S3-LC School Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive, <b>professional development, expert training, coaching, and technical assistance</b> provided at no cost 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 individualized faculty NCS3 faculty support to district leaders</li> <li>○ Monthly national learning and consultation sessions</li> <li>○ Training and technical assistance for safe supportive schools improvement planning</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Funding support</b> (up to \$2,000/district) for district leader(s) <b>to attend an in-person cross-district, strategic planning session</b>. Session will be held late fall 2023, as a pre-conference session to the Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health.</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></li> </ul>	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and implementation support for up to 4 school mental health clinicians/school               <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>• <b>Pre-recorded professional development 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 4-6 individuals), with the **local education agency as the lead**. Teams must include:

- **at least two district leaders**

*Examples of district leaders include: Director of Student Supports, SEL Coordinator, Mental Health Coordinator, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Superintendent, Director of Special Education.*

- **at least one school leader from each of two schools** (1 leader/school)

*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 school leaders have some expertise and comfort facilitating safe supportive schools content.*

Other recommended team members include:

- local children’s mental/behavioral health authority/agency
- leaders from other local agencies and/or organizations (e.g., youth/family advocacy, community behavioral health partner, public health, Medicaid/insurer, after school provider)

The S3-LC Team will assess and support school mental health quality, trauma responsiveness, and cultural responsiveness (using [The SHAPE System](#); a free online portal). 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 district, state, and throughout the nation after the 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

### S3 District Leader Responsibilities

- Attendance (of at least one district leader) at an in-person, pre-conference district strategic planning meeting

*This session will be held in late fall 2023, the day before the Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health. Up to \$2,000 in travel support will be provided.*

- Submit District and School S3 Improvement Progress Updates monthly
- Monthly support calls with NCS3 faculty lead
- Facilitate District and School Team participation in activities listed below

### S3 District Team Responsibilities

- Participate in S3 orientation webinar (60 min) and Kick-Off Learning Session (3 hours)
- Register (free) 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, Trauma Responsive Schools Implementation Assessment, and Culturally Responsive Schools Assessment at the start of each year and end of the Learning Community
- Participate in monthly, virtual S3 learning and consultation calls to discuss and share best practices, progress, and lessons learned with other district teams
- Contribute to S3 District Improvement Plan and monthly Progress Updates and engage in continuous quality improvement toward S3 goals

### Participating School Responsibilities

- Identify at least 1 Leader/school to be on the District Team
- Engage school staff in six hours of professional development per year using NCS3 asynchronous learning content and discussion/reflection facilitation tools.
- Register (free) on the School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation System (the SHAPE system; [www.theSHAPesystem.com](http://www.theSHAPesystem.com))
- Complete the school profile, the School Mental Health Quality Assessment, Trauma Responsive Schools Implementation Assessment, and Culturally Responsive Schools Assessment quality measures at the start of each school year and end of the Learning Community
- Contribute to School S3 Improvement Plan and monthly Progress Updates and engage in continuous quality improvement toward S3 goals
- Invite, engage, and support clinician (counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, school-based community mental health clinicians) attendance, in the following (free) trainings:

#### **Selected Intervention Training and Implementation Support**

- Culturally Responsive, Anti-Racist, and Equitable (CARE) School Mental Health
- Intervention(s) selected by participating schools, including:
  - Supporting Transition Resilience of Newcomer Groups (STRONG)
  - Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS)
  - Bounce Back
- **How long?** ~ 8 hours of CARE training, ~9-12 hours of SMH intervention training
- **Who?** School Mental Health Staff (up to 4 school mental health clinicians per school), e.g., school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, school-based community mental health clinician



## APPLICATION SUBMISSION

All applications must be submitted online in the application portal **by 11:59 PM EDT on March 31, 2023**. Faxed, mailed, or emailed submissions will **not** be accepted. Applicants will receive an email confirmation of receipt of the application. Identification of the two participating schools is preferred, but not required, as part of this application process. Schools can be chosen after notification of acceptance but must be selected by June 30, 2023.

[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 **April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023**.

## TIMELINE OF S3 LC ACTIVITIES

2023-2025 SCHEDULE OF S3 LC ACTIVITIES <i>(Dates subject to change)</i>	
Feb 10, 2023	Request for Applications released
Feb 16, 2023	RFA Webinar – <a href="#">Join Zoom Meeting</a>
Mar 31, 2023	Applications due
April 10, 2023	Selected districts announced
Leadership Training, Technical Assistance, and Cross-Site Learning for District Teams (including school team leaders)	
April 26, 2023	Welcome Webinar (60 minutes)
Aug 23, 2023	Orientation Webinar (60 minutes)
Sept 27, 2023	S3-LC Kick-Off (3 hours)
Oct 2023 – Jun 2025	Monthly S3-LC Learning Session* (90 minute each)
December 2023	District Leader on-site strategic planning pre-conference meeting.
Sept 2023 – June 2025	Six learning sessions including NCS3 asynchronous learning and facilitation of discussion (all school staff; 2 hours/session)
Oct 2023 – June 2025	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.*

*Virtual learning session calls are tentatively scheduled for the third Wednesday of each month, October 2023-June 2025, 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>1,2</sup>:** For the two schools participating in the S3-LC please list:

School Name:	
# Enrolled Students:	Grades Served:
Name and title of 1-2 school leads for S3-LC:	
School Name:	
# Enrolled Students:	Grades Served:
Name and title of 1-2 school leads for S3-LC:	

<sup>1</sup> Placing a name in the application assumes individuals have agreed to the NCS3 objectives and S3-LC requirements for participation.

<sup>2</sup> Identification of the two participating schools is preferred, but not required, as part of this application process. Schools can be chosen after notification of acceptance but must be selected by June 30, 2023.



**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, 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 schools 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 by June 30, 2023.