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Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships

Evaluation Summary



SUMMARY REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2013



Introduction

Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships (Start Strong) was a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) in collaboration with Blue Shield of California Foundation (BSCF) and Futures Without Violence. From 2008 to 2012, RWJF and BSCF invested \$18 million in 11 *Start Strong* sites across the country to promote healthy relationships among 11- to 14-year-olds and identify promising strategies to prevent teen dating violence (TDV).

The core components of the *Start Strong* program were to: i) educate and engage youth in schools and out of school settings; ii) educate and engage teen influencers such as parents/caregivers, teachers, and other mentors; iii) change policy and environmental factors; and iv) implement effective communications/social marketing strategies.

RTI International conducted an independent evaluation of *Start Strong* on behalf of RWJF and BSCF. The evaluation consisted of an outcome evaluation and a policy evaluation.

The outcome evaluation examined both student and teacher differences over time, in four *Start Strong* schools and four comparison schools. Three *Start Strong* sites participated in the outcome evaluation, collectively representing mid-sized and large urban areas and reflecting racial/ethnic diversity and regional diversity. Student data were collected from a sample of 1,517 students across the eight schools at four waves (i.e., time points): fall 2010, spring 2011, fall 2011, and spring 2012. Teacher data were collected from a sample of 185 teachers from the same eight schools at two waves: fall 2010 and spring 2012.



The policy evaluation assessed the adoption, implementation, and sustainability of TDV prevention policy efforts in *Start Strong* sites over the course of two years (2010 to 2012). All 11 *Start Strong* sites participated in the policy evaluation.

This report summarizes findings from the outcome and policy evaluation of *Start Strong*.

Summary of Key Findings

Outcome Evaluation: Prevention in middle school matters.

- Most students in the evaluation study were already dating, and many were experiencing dating violence while in 7th grade.
- *Start Strong* had a sustained positive impact on middle-school students' attitudes towards teen dating violence and gender equality, two key factors related to TDV.
- *Start Strong* students who reported TDV victimization, perpetration, or both at wave 1 were differentially impacted by *Start Strong*.
- For at least one follow-up wave, these students reported a reduction in bullying perpetration, a more positive school climate, more positive attitudes towards gender equality, and increased parent-child communication.
- No significant differences were detected between teachers at *Start Strong* schools and comparison schools.

Policy Evaluation: Policy efforts can make a difference.

- By fall 2012, six of the 11 *Start Strong* communities achieved significant policy wins. As a direct result of their work, five sites secured important changes to TDV-related school district policies. Sites also provided technical assistance and awareness-building to inform changes to state legislation. State legislation was strengthened in three states.
- In addition, all 11 sites established one or more practice changes that remained in place in the school year after the completion of *Start Strong* funding. Practice change included prevention education, staff training, and parent education.
- *Start Strong* policy efforts raised support for TDV prevention, elevated the work of grantees, and led to other significant changes beyond written policy.
- Collaborations became more extensive and varied over the course of the initiative.

Start Strong Site

Communities that implemented *Start Strong* and mobilized local resources, leaders and community partners to support healthy teen relationships and prevent teen dating violence.

Atlanta, GA

Austin, TX

Boise, ID

Boston, MA

Bridgeport, CT

Bronx, NY

Indianapolis, IN

Los Angeles, CA

Oakland, CA

Providence, RI

Wichita, KS



START STRONG: BUILDING HEALTHY TEEN RELATIONSHIPS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Background on Teen Dating Violence

Teen dating violence (TDV) is a growing public health concern. It includes both physical (e.g., hitting, pushing, kicking) and psychological abuse (e.g., criticizing, dominating, controlling)—either in person or electronically—as well as unwanted sexual activity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Youth Risk Behavior Survey, approximately 1 in 11 high school students (9.4%) report being hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend¹. *Start Strong* was designed to promote healthy relationships among middle school students, ages 11 to 14, before the incidence of dating violence reaches the levels seen in older teens.

Although multiple studies have found that adolescents on average reported initiating dating activities around age 11, knowledge about TDV among middle school-aged youth is limited. In addition, the majority of existing work relies on cross-sectional data, which cannot describe how TDV behaviors change over time.

The *Start Strong* Evaluation

RTI International (RTI) conducted an independent evaluation of *Start Strong* on behalf of RWJF and BSCF. The *Start Strong* evaluation consisted of two parts: an outcome

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2011.”



evaluation and a policy evaluation. The overall purpose of the evaluation was to assess the overall impact of *Start Strong* by looking at:

- the effectiveness of the program among students and teachers; and
- the adoption, implementation, and sustainability of TDV prevention policy efforts in *Start Strong* sites.

Start Strong Outcome Evaluation Design

RTI conducted a longitudinal, quasi-experimental study in which data were collected from the same students and teachers at multiple time periods.

Three sites participated in the outcome evaluation, collectively representing mid-sized and large urban areas and reflecting racial/ethnic and regional diversity. The evaluation matched four comparison schools on school-level features (i.e., school size; percent students on free or reduced lunch; race/ethnicity; and metropolitan area characteristics). The outcome evaluation looked at both student and teacher differences over time, in four *Start Strong* schools and four comparison schools, which did not have TDV prevention or healthy relationships programs. Student data were collected from a sample of 1,517 students across eight schools at four waves: fall 2010, spring 2011, fall 2011, and spring 2012. Teacher data were collected from a sample of 185 teachers from the same eight schools at two waves: fall 2010 and spring 2012 (see Appendix A for additional detail on evaluation methodology).

The outcome evaluation assessed change in key factors targeted by the *Start Strong* initiative. For students, measures included TDV perpetration and victimization, student attitudes related to TDV, having friends involved in TDV, sexual harassment, bullying, the perceived satisfaction in boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, and parent-child communication about healthy relationships. Teacher measures included student-teacher relationships, student acceptance of TDV, teacher awareness of TDV, and TDV reporting (see Appendices B and C for measures and items from student and teacher surveys).

Start Strong Outcome Evaluation – Key Findings

MOST STUDENTS IN THIS STUDY WERE ALREADY DATING, AND MANY WERE EXPERIENCING DATING VIOLENCE AT WAVE 1 (FALL 2010) WHILE IN 7TH GRADE.

- 75 percent of students surveyed report ever having a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- More than 1 in 3 (37%) students surveyed report being a victim of psychological dating violence in the last 6 months.
- Nearly 1 in 6 (15%) students surveyed report being a victim of physical dating violence in the last 6 months.
- Nearly 1 in 3 (31%) students surveyed report being a victim of electronic dating aggression in the last 6 months.

START STRONG HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT ON KEY FACTORS RELATED TO TEEN DATING VIOLENCE. (SEE EXHIBIT 1)

- Short-term results (waves 1-2): Compared with students in comparison schools, students in *Start Strong* schools reported:



Start Strong School

A school implementing the required evidence-based teen dating violence prevention curriculum (Safe Dates or Fourth R) as part of *Start Strong*.

Start Strong Grantee

The lead agency or community organization that received the grant from RWJF or BSCF to implement the *Start Strong* model in their community.



- decreased acceptance of teen dating violence;
 - more positive attitudes toward gender equality;
 - increased parent-child communication about relationships,
 - increased support and satisfaction in their boyfriend/girlfriend relationships.
- Long-term results (waves 1-4): Results persisted over time for two key factors linked to the prevention of teen dating violence. Students at *Start Strong* schools reported:
 - decreased acceptance of teen dating violence, and
 - more positive attitudes toward gender equality.



Students at Start Strong schools reported decreased acceptance of teen dating violence and more positive attitudes toward gender equality than students at comparison schools.

Exhibit 1: Outcome Evaluation Results – Student Survey —Waves 1 to 4²

DOMAIN/MEASURES	WAVES 1-2	WAVES 1-3	WAVES 1-4
TDV acceptance	✓	✓	✓
TDV acceptance – girls hitting boys	✓	✓	✓
TDV acceptance – boys hitting girls	□	□	□
Attitudes toward gender equality	✓	✓	✓
Parent-child communication	✓	□	□
Boyfriend/girlfriend-satisfaction	✓	□	□
Boyfriend/girlfriend-support	✓	□	□

✓: Statistically significant difference between *Start Strong* and comparison students

START STRONG STUDENTS WHO REPORTED TDV VICTIMIZATION, PERPETRATION, OR BOTH AT WAVE 1 WERE DIFFERENTIALLY IMPACTED BY START STRONG.

- *Start Strong* students with prior TDV experiences (victimization, perpetration, or both at wave 1), classified as high-risk, showed more positive results on some outcomes than students who did not report TDV victimization and/or perpetration.
 - For at least one follow-up wave, high-risk students reported a reduction in bullying behaviors, a more positive school climate, more positive attitudes towards gender equality, and increased parent-child communication.

NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES WERE DETECTED BETWEEN START STRONG TEACHERS AND COMPARISON SCHOOL TEACHERS.

² No statistically significant difference between *Start Strong* and comparison students detected for the following measures: TDV victimization, TDV perpetration, boyfriend/girlfriend-criticism, boyfriend/girlfriend-dominance, perceived negative consequences of TDV, peer TDV.



Background on Policy Change

Policy change was a core component of the *Start Strong* initiative. Although it can be a difficult and long-term process, policy change at the local or state level can ensure sustainability and a lasting impact. *Start Strong* policy efforts focused on supporting TDV prevention policies and creating positive school environments, which foster healthy adolescent relationships while paving the way for academic success and healthier life choices. *Start Strong* grantees provided education, technical assistance, and a model school TDV prevention policy as a way to support policy change.

After reviewing policy status and prospects for change within their communities, *Start Strong* grantees identified specific goals for policy change efforts. Goals included adopting new policy, adapting existing policy, and implementing existing policy. Grantees chose goals and strategies based on their best opportunities to work across school, district, and state levels to change policy and institutionalize TDV prevention.

Start Strong Policy Evaluation Design

The purpose of the policy evaluation was to assess the adoption and implementation of formal and informal policy related to TDV prevention and healthy relationship promotion in *Start Strong* sites. All 11 *Start Strong* sites participated in the policy evaluation over the course of two years (2010 to 2012). The evaluation examined policies at the state and school district levels at baseline and follow-up, as well as the sites' experiences with policy change, including their objectives, activities, and factors impeding or supporting progress. The policy evaluation describes the experience of 11 sites, and the policies existing in 10 states (two sites were located within a single state) and 11 school districts.

The policy evaluation included three activities in each of the 11 *Start Strong* sites:

- *Document review*-- a content analysis of state and local policy materials;



- *Structured telephone interviews*--with individuals in each site knowledgeable about policy provisions and efforts at three waves: early 2011, fall 2011 and fall 2012; and
- *Stakeholder survey*--a quantitative assessment of key stakeholders in schools and school administration at two waves: fall 2010 (at the beginning of *Start Strong* implementation) and fall 2012 (three months after the end of funded implementation).

Start Strong Policy Evaluation - Key Findings

AT BASELINE (FALL 2010), POLICY VARIED WIDELY AMONG SITES.

- At the state level:
 - Four sites had both TDV-specific policies and policies addressing TDV-related behaviors such as bullying or sexual harassment.
 - The remaining seven sites had state-level policies addressing TDV-related behaviors only.
- At the local level:
 - Two sites had policies addressing both TDV and related behaviors.
 - Eight sites had policies addressing TDV-related behaviors only.
 - One site had neither DV-specific nor related policy at the local level.
- Although policies existed, many policies did not require action or provide resources for implementation; other policies had never been implemented.
- Stakeholders in schools and local educational agencies (school districts) varied in their attitudes toward TDV.
 - Local educational agencies staff were more likely than in-school staff to view TDV as a serious issue and to consider it a serious problem in the district.

AT FOLLOW UP (FALL 2012), SIX OF THE 11 START STRONG COMMUNITIES ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANT POLICY WINS. AS A DIRECT RESULT OF THEIR WORK, FIVE SITES SECURED IMPORTANT CHANGES TO TDV-RELATED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES. STATE LEGISLATION WAS STRENGTHENED IN THREE STATES. (SEE EXHIBIT 2)

- One site provided education and technical assistance to address the prevention of and response to TDV and sexual assault in state education agency (SEA) regulation.
- One site provided the *Start Strong* model policy, which resulted in new policy at the school district level that incorporated most components of the *Start Strong* model school policy.
- One site enacted a bullying policy at the school district level for the first time.



- One site contributed to the adoption of TDV prevention policies in several school districts, and provided education and awareness building on electronic abuse (i.e., using technology to control a dating partner or spread rumors) As a result of these and other efforts, electronic abuse was included in the state bullying policy.
- One site added TDV prevention to its existing local school district’s sexual harassment policy.
- One site provided technical assistance and awareness building on electronic abuse, which ultimately contributed to the incorporation of specific language addressing electronic abuse into state and local policies.

Exhibit 2: Policy Change at the State and/or Local School District Level at Follow-up (Fall 2012)*

SITE	Enacted new state policy: TDV	Enacted new local policy: TDV or bullying	Added TDV to local policy	Added electronic abuse to state or local policy
A	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓
E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
F	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓

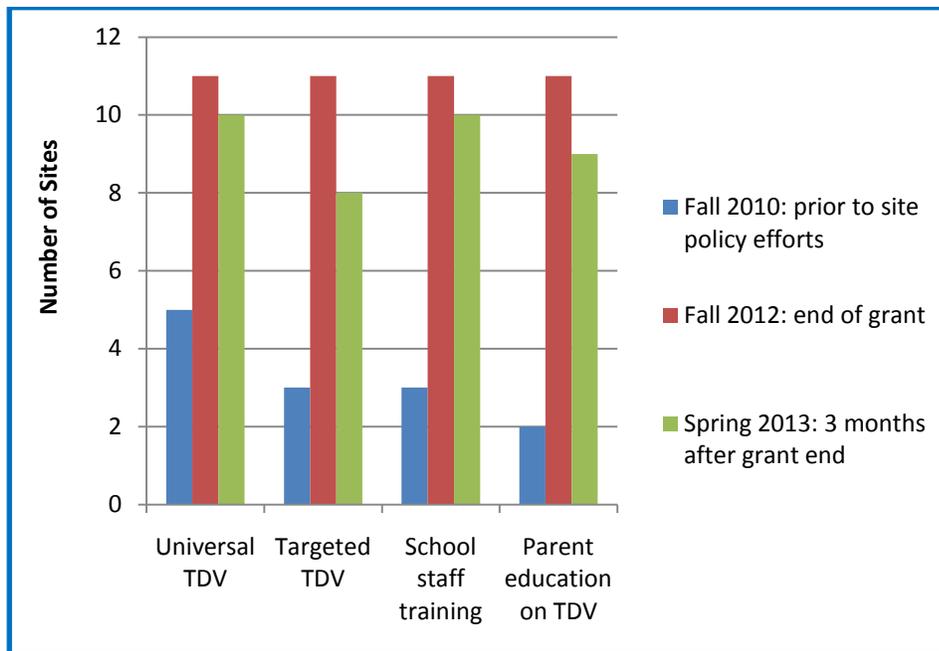
* Technical assistance, educational and awareness building activities of the sites raised local awareness and contributed to these changes.

ALL 11 SITES ESTABLISHED ONE OR MORE PRACTICE CHANGES THAT REMAINED IN PLACE IN THE SCHOOL YEAR FOLLOWING THE COMPLETION OF *START STRONG* FUNDING. (SEE EXHIBIT 3)

- These practice changes included providing TDV education for all students, targeted TDV education for at-risk students, school staff training on TDV, and parent education about TDV. In many sites, these were resources that had not previously been available.
- All sites had implemented each of these core practice changes by the end of the *Start Strong* implementation period. In most sites, implementation continued even after the end of funded activities. However, not all were implemented as widely as they were during the *Start Strong* program (i.e., some existed in only a subset of *Start Strong* schools).



Exhibit 3: TDV Prevention Practice Before, During, and After *Start Strong* Implementation (n=11)



BEYOND WRITTEN POLICY, *START STRONG* POLICY EFFORTS RAISED SUPPORT FOR TDV PREVENTION, ELEVATED THE WORK OF GRANTEES AND LED TO OTHER SIGNIFICANT CHANGES.

- Grantees reported being asked to speak at local and state conferences, public forums and parent workshops, and expanding TDV training. Other notable achievements included providing expert input to a statewide commission on family violence; developing a webinar on TDV that can be accessed by teachers across the district and state; creating a written response protocol to guide school staff who respond to TDV incidents; and adding questions about TDV to the school nurses' electronic medical records questionnaire.

COLLABORATIONS BECAME MORE EXTENSIVE AND VARIED OVER THE COURSE OF THE INITIATIVE.

- Early school district collaborations expanded over time. Frequently added collaborators included coalitions addressing domestic violence or youth development, and elected officials at the state and local level.

***START STRONG* INFLUENCED STAKEHOLDERS' KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD TDV.**

- At follow up in fall 2012, school staff had significantly increased knowledge about TDV policy, but not local education agency staff. School staff indicated increased awareness of relationship-related fighting and increased perceptions of TDV as a problem at their school. At the same time as awareness of policy increased, agency staff reported less satisfaction with current TDV prevention policy and its enforcement.



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Prevention in middle school matters.

There is a critical window of opportunity to teach young adolescents about healthy relationships and prevent TDV. *Start Strong* influenced two key factors related to TDV – attitudes towards TDV and gender equality. We can speculate that continued and strengthened emphasis on improving attitudes towards gender equality and challenging the acceptance of TDV might ultimately decrease TDV behaviors among the *Start Strong* middle school students.

We need to better understand adolescents who experience TDV at a young age.

While there is a growing body of knowledge on TDV among older adolescents in high school, we need to better understand this young age group, especially adolescents who experience TDV at a young age. *Start Strong* students with prior TDV experiences showed more positive results on some outcomes than students who did not report TDV victimization or perpetration. These positive results, however, were inconsistent across measures and data collection waves.

Parent-child communication about relationships is important.

Parent-child communication is not typically a focus of TDV prevention efforts; however, research suggests that positive parent-child communication predicts positive outcomes among youth. *Start Strong* had short-term effects on increasing parent-child communication about relationships, and these effects were maintained among the high-risk students over the long term (through wave 4).

Greater emphasis on engaging teachers in school-based TDV prevention is needed.

These results suggest that teachers at *Start Strong* schools may not have heard about, participated in, or remembered *Start Strong* programming in their schools. Findings also suggest a greater emphasis on engaging teachers in school-based TDV prevention to further reinforce desired messages in the school setting. Examples of potential school-wide efforts include: generating communication campaigns on how students can best respond to TDV behaviors, educating all school staff about the core messages of a



school-based curriculum in order to generalize effects, and providing administrative support to teachers on school-wide policies and practices related to TDV.

There is more to learn on how best to prevent teen dating violence.

Start Strong evaluation results suggest that further refinement of TDV programming would be beneficial, as would ongoing programming or booster sessions to maintain program effects. We can also speculate that dating relationships among middle school students are less stable than those found later in adolescence, which may explain the lack of findings for TDV behaviors.

Although challenging, policy efforts can make a difference at the state and local levels.

Grantees' policy experiences demonstrate both the challenges and potential of policy change efforts. Changing TDV policy is a slow process, often not achievable within an initiative lasting a few years. It is, therefore, commendable that *Start Strong* sites made substantive changes in school district policy and contributed to strengthening state policy. Factors facilitating policy change – high-level champions, the absence of competing agendas – may lie well outside the influence of a TDV prevention initiative. However, grantees' experiences providing education and technical assistance demonstrated the potential effectiveness of key steps in the policy change process articulated in the *Start Strong* model policy tool kit.

Whatever the starting point, opportunities exist to inform, support, and facilitate policy change.

Policy change through the adoption or strengthening of existing policy was much more feasible than adoption of new policy within the four-year *Start Strong* timeline. Examples of such modifications included specifying electronic abuse within bullying policy at the school district level or adding TDV to an existing code of conduct. At the same time, short-term policy achievements may build support for more comprehensive long-term change. *Start Strong* grantees also contributed to significant policy changes in three states and six districts, in addition to those still in process by the end of the initiative. *Start Strong* policy efforts demonstrated that program staff, many with minimal policy experience, can effectively inform, support, and facilitate policy change.

Practice change can be a key element in sustaining policy change efforts.

Grantees implemented practice *in advance* of a desired policy, and implemented practice changes *in support* of an adopted policy. By focusing on capacity building, engagement, and achievable on-the-ground changes, grantees left sustainable resources that will continue beyond *Start Strong*. Examples include web-based teacher training resources, response protocols for school staff, and additional screening questions for school nurses to help document TDV incidents. Sustained implementation of these fundamental practices may reflect increased commitment to TDV prevention within *Start Strong* communities. In addition, these practice changes may ultimately facilitate ongoing policy change by shifting norms, elevating the importance of TDV, engaging champions, and broadening support for TDV prevention.





STUDY LIMITATIONS

Student Outcome Evaluation: Because the intervention was multifaceted, the student outcome evaluation cannot identify which activities were most important in changing students' attitudes and behaviors. Although the sample was large, and racially/ethnically diverse, it was not nationally representative, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other middle school students. It is also noted that student data were self-reported; thus, responses may be biased toward perceptions of what is socially acceptable or desirable.

Teacher Outcome Evaluation: There was an extended interval between baseline (fall 2010) and follow-up (spring 2012) data collection in the teacher outcome evaluation. A shorter time interval between teacher surveys might have captured effects on teachers that decayed later. The sample of teachers in *Start Strong* schools was not limited to teachers who taught one of the required TDV prevention curricula. It is also noted that teacher data were self-reported; thus, responses may be biased toward perceptions of what is socially acceptable or desirable.

Policy Evaluation: Information on existing policy was compiled through interviews with the most knowledgeable sources within each *Start Strong* team and review of all identified documents. However, some gaps may exist in our depiction of policies at baseline, including local bullying policy. In addition, the views of local education agencies and school staff stakeholders who were surveyed cannot be generalized to the larger population of educators in the *Start Strong* sites and may not represent the views of their entire community or state.



Appendix A: Detailed Methodology Description

Outcome Evaluation: Selection of Schools for Student and Teacher Data

Start Strong was implemented in 11 sites across the country and included multiple components: school TDV prevention curricula, social marketing, parent activities, and policy efforts. For the curricula, grantees chose between two evidence-based programs: *Safe Dates* and *The Fourth R*. In accordance with *Start Strong*'s community-driven focus, grantees defined other components, which varied across sites. Given this variability, the following criteria were defined to maximize consistency in the sites that were part of the outcome evaluation:

- implementation of *Safe Dates* to 7th graders during the 2010-2011 school term,
- a minimum of 100 students per grade in order to have adequate statistical power, and
- feasibility of participation in the evaluation.

Three sites met these criteria, collectively representing mid-sized and large urban areas, racial/ethnic diversity, and regional diversity. The quasi-experimental evaluation design matched four comparison schools to the intervention schools on the following criteria: school size; percent students on free or reduced lunch; race/ethnicity; and metropolitan area characteristics. Across the schools, the probability of students on free/reduced school lunch ranged from 43 percent to 95 percent. The *Start Strong* schools were in Indianapolis, IN (2), Los Angeles, CA (1), and Bridgeport, CT (1). The comparison schools were in Indianapolis, IN (2), San Diego, CA (1) and Saginaw, MI (1).

Participants

Students. Student data were collected in four waves: in fall 2010, spring 2011, fall 2011, and spring 2012 (grade 7 for waves 1 and 2; grade 8 for waves 3 and 4). A total of 2,626 students were eligible to participate. Parent consent and student assent were obtained from 1,487 students (57%; range of 44% to 71% across schools). On average, 96% of eligible students completed the survey (wave 1: 96%; wave 2: 93%; wave 3; 98%; wave 4: 96%)³. The student survey collected data on TDV-related attitudes and behaviors (see **Appendix B** for a detailed list of constructs). The sample was not nationally representative. At wave 1, the average age of participants was 12 years old. Gender and race/ethnicity were included as control variables in statistical analysis. The student participants were 50% female and 50% male. Race/ethnicity of youth was 23% white; 28% African American; 32% Hispanic; 17% other.

Teachers. Data were collected from 7th and 8th grade teachers at two waves: fall 2010 and spring 2012. Participants included core teachers (math, social studies, language arts, science) and “specials/electives” teachers (e.g., health, physical education, advisory). A total of 246 teachers across the eight schools were invited to participate; 185 participated at wave 1 (75% participation rate), and 125 teachers participated at Wave 2 (29% attrition rate from wave 1 to 2). Teachers reported on TDV-related attitudes and school policies (see **Appendix C** for a detailed list of constructs).

³ Student attrition was primarily due to students no longer being enrolled in the school.



Policy Evaluation: Data Collection and Sources

RTI conducted the policy evaluation using multiple data collection methods and sources to address the research questions. These included:

Document Review. To provide additional information about formal policy related to TDV, RTI reviewed documents from each of the 11 sites. Documents spanned multiple levels, including state legislation and state educational agency policy; local educational agency policy, administrative regulation and codes of conduct; and school-level student handbooks. Documents were provided by sites and/or identified through web searches. RTI reviewed all policies explicitly addressing TDV at the state, district or school level as well as policies addressing bullying and harassment, which might be applicable to TDV.

Structured Telephone Interviews. To describe each site's efforts to influence and change policy and practice within the domains noted above, RTI interviewed each site's "policy champion." Each of the coordinators identified the person at that site who was most knowledgeable regarding TDV policy change efforts. RTI conducted interviews at three time points (early 2011, fall 2011, and fall 2012). The first interview established the status of the policy adoption/implementation process, key players, and their expectations about how the policy adoption/implementation would proceed over the next two school years. Subsequent interviews reviewed any changes to policy, efforts to inform policy, and any external events influencing policy adoption and implementation. Policy champions also reported on practice changes in key areas (e.g., universal teen and targeted dating violence education, staff training, parent education) that may either result from or precede formal policy change. These interviews assisted the evaluation team in interpreting policy documents.

Stakeholder Survey. To assess the impact of sites' policy efforts among educators, RTI conducted a web-based survey of school staff and local educational agency staff in 10 sites⁴. Between 5 and 23 respondents were recommended by each *Start Strong* coordinator as being the most knowledgeable regarding TDV policy and prevention. The survey instrument used items comparable to the teacher survey fielded in the outcome evaluation sites as well as items recommended for evaluation of policy advocacy efforts (Reisman, Gienapp, & Stachowiak, n.d.).

⁴ One *Start Strong* site was unable to participate in the stakeholder survey due to restrictions from its local school system.



Appendix B: Student Survey – Key Measures and Example Items

(Note: All items ask about last 6 months).

Student Behaviors (victimization and perpetration)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying: teased, picked on • Sexual harassment: made sexual jokes, made sexual gestures • Teen dating violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Physical:</i> slapped, scratched ○ <i>Emotional/psychological:</i> criticize, say mean or harsh things ○ <i>Electronic:</i> repeatedly checked up on, spread rumors
Beliefs/Attitudes
Decision-making efficacy: I think I am a good decision-maker, the decisions I make turn out well.
Gender stereotyping: on a date, the boy should be expected to pay for everything, it is more important for boys than girls to do well in school.
Perceived negative consequences of dating abuse: bad things happen to people who are violent to their boyfriend/girlfriend, hitting a boyfriend/girlfriend is not that big a deal.
Acceptance of dating abuse: hitting a boyfriend/girlfriend is not that big a deal, my friends would be angry with me if I hit a boyfriend/girlfriend.
Beliefs supporting aggression: it is ok for a girl to hit her boyfriend if he did something to make her mad, it is ok for a boy to hit a girl if she hit him first.
Relationship Competencies
Responses to anger: hit the person I was mad at, screamed at the person I was mad at.
Communication skills: suggested a compromise when I had a disagreement with someone, listened to the other person’s point of view when I had a disagreement with someone.
Parent-child communication: talking with parent about bullying between friends, talking with parent about flirting behavior between boys and girls.
Dating relationship-satisfaction: satisfaction in a relationship, student happiness in a relationship.
Dating relationship-quality: if student can turn to boyfriend/girlfriend for support, if student can turn to boyfriend/girlfriend for cheering up.
Dating relationship-criticism: boyfriend/girlfriend said mean or harsh things to them.
Dating relationship-control: made boyfriend/girlfriend do things he/she did not want to do.
Peers
Peer violence: number of friends that have injured others, number of friends that had been in a fight with others.
Peer dating violence: number of friends that have had a partner that was physically violent to them, number of times that the student had witnessed a girl being mean to a person she was dating.
School Context
Perceived student-teacher relationships: most teachers treat student with respect, adults at school care about my feelings and what happens to me.
Substance Use
Substance use: number of times respondent has gotten in a fight because of drinking, committed dating violence because of drinking.



Appendix C: Teacher Survey - Key Measures and Example Items

(Note: All items ask about the last 12 months.)

<p>Perceived student acceptance of TDV: a peer hitting a girlfriend/boyfriend, a peer threatened a girlfriend/boyfriend for no reason.</p>
<p>Perceived teacher/student relationships: teachers treat students with respect, adults care about students' feelings and what happens to them.</p>
<p>Awareness of bullying and TDV: teachers will stop students from being hurtful or mean to each other, teachers know when students are being picked on or being bullied by other students they are dating.</p>
<p>Teaching and reporting TDV: adults at the school teach students what teen dating violence is, adults are teaching students how to report teen dating violence.</p>
<p>Perceived student TDV reporting: students are encouraged to report bullying and aggression by other students they are dating, students report it when one student threatens to hit another student he/she is dating.</p>
<p>Perceived student help-seeking: students feel free to ask for help from school staff if there is a problem with other students they are dating, there is help at school for students having problems in their dating relationships.</p>
<p>Responses to TDV: teachers take action to solve the problem when students report teen dating violence, teachers feel comfortable handling dating violence among students.</p>
<p>Perceived enforcement of TDV policies: principal enforces school rules involving dating violence, principal backs me up on my enforcement of school rules for dating violence.</p>
<p>Perceived severity of TDV at school: physical fighting between students who are dating, verbal/emotional abuse between students who are dating.</p>
<p>Perceived severity of teachers not addressing TDV: teachers are ignoring it when a student verbally threatens another student he/she is dating, teachers are ignoring it when a student is physically aggressive to another student he/she is dating.</p>



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