

## Case Study: California's CORE Districts

The California Office to Reform Education (CORE) Districts was founded as an association of California's largest urban school districts, now representing more than 1.7 million students. CORE's mission statement is to collaborate in order to "innovate, implement, and scale successful strategies and tools that help our students succeed, so that all students are prepared for college and career."

In 2013, the U.S. Education Department granted CORE's request for a waiver under NCLB, allowing CORE to implement their own accountability systems, separate from the state of California's, and the ability to largely police themselves with help from a new independent oversight panel. With this newfound flexibility, CORE established the School Quality Improvement Index (SQII).

In addition to academic indicators, the SQII includes metrics to measure social-emotional and culture-climate factors, including chronic absenteeism, culture-climate surveys, suspension/expulsion rates and social-emotional skills.

During the 2014-15 school year, CORE conducted a field test of measures of four social-emotional skills involving more than 450,000 students in grades 3-12. According to the Brookings Institute, "analysis of data from the CORE field test indicates that the scales used to measure student skills demonstrate strong reliability and are positively correlated with key indicators of academic performance and behavior, both across and within schools" and "[t]hese findings provide a broadly encouraging view of the potential for self-reports of social-emotional skills as an input into its system for evaluating school performance."