

Newtown Public Schools
Safe School Climate District Plan
Approved by the Newtown Board of Education
January 10, 2012

School Climate Standard #1:

The school community has a shared vision and plan for promoting, enhancing and sustaining a positive school climate.

INDICATOR 1.1: *School policies and practices support school, family, youth and community members working together to establish a learning community.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Convene focus groups to collect and analyze relevant data.
2. Review and amend existing Board of Education policies, as needed
3. Strategies will be identified based upon data collection and aligned with the Newtown Strategic Plan.
4. Review and amend existing student codes of conduct (i.e. Newtown Character Attributes, CARES, PBIS matrices) and disciplinary procedures and practices to align with the Newtown Core Character Attributes.
5. School, family and youth publicize and model the Newtown Core Character Attributes.
6. Newtown's Core Character Attributes will be displayed and reviewed at all meetings to promote a positive and safe climate.
7. No claim for damages shall be made against a school employee who reports, investigates and responds to bullying, in accordance with the provisions of the safe school climate plan, if such employee was acting in good faith in the discharge of his or her duties or within the scope of his or her employment. The immunity provided in this subsection does not apply to acts or omissions constituting gross, reckless, willful or wanton misconduct.
8. No claim for damages shall be made against a student, parent or guardian of a student or any other individual who reports an act of bullying to a school employee, in accordance with the provisions of the safe school climate plan, if such individual was acting in good faith. The immunity provided in this subsection does not apply to acts or omissions constituting gross, reckless, willful or wanton misconduct.
9. No claim for damages shall be made against the board of education that implements the safe school climate plan, and reports, investigates and responds to bullying, if such board of education was acting in good faith in the discharge of its duties. The immunity provided in this subsection does not apply to acts or omissions constituting gross, reckless, willful or wanton misconduct.

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Conduct a K-12 Safe School Climate Survey annually.
- Analyze existing data at school and district levels quarterly.
- Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric annually.

INDICATOR 1.2: *Schools gather accurate and reliable data about school climate from students, school personnel and parents/guardians for continuous improvement and share it with the school community.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Consider, collect, analyze and communicate relevant school data.

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Establish baseline data on school climate and behavioral indicators.
- Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric annually.

INDICATOR 1.3: *Capacity building is developed over time to enable all staff to meet school climate standards.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Implement professional development relating to school climate based upon current research and school/district data.

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Review and analyze Professional Development Feedback forms.
- Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric.
- Analyze a K-12 Safe School Climate Survey data.

School Climate Standard #2:

The school community sets policies specifically promoting

(a) the development and sustainability of social, emotional, ethical, civic and intellectual skills, knowledge and dispositions and

(b) a comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage students who have become disengaged.

INDICATOR 2.1: *Policies and mission and vision statements that promote social, emotional, ethical and civic, as well as intellectual skills and dispositions are developed and institutionalized*

STRATEGIES:

1. Infuse Newtown's Core Character Attributes, as developed by the District Strategic Plan, into the safe school district and school climate plans.
2. Review and amend student, faculty and parent procedures for internal consistency and tone (e.g. handbooks, forms, discipline report).
3. Model and support civic responsibilities.

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Newtown Student Success Plan (Grades 5-12).
- Review and revise procedures/documents annually.
- Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric annually.

INDICATOR 2.2: *Policies and mission and vision statements are developed and institutionalized that promote a comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage students who have become disengaged.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Use existing committees to develop a list of practices to target at-risk behaviors.

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Analyze academic achievement and discipline data at each school annually.
- Establish systemic (K-12) communication plan (e.g. Power School, Inform, RtI) for academic and behavioral data.
- Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric annually.

INDICATOR 2.3: *Policies promote use and monitoring of natural and informal opportunities (e.g. recreational and extracurricular aspects of classroom and school life, formulation of codes of conduct and fair enforcement of rules, mentoring and informal interactions among and with students) to ensure the helpful norms of learning and teaching that foster mutual respect and caring, safety and well-being, civil, pro-social, responsible behavior and a psychological sense of community.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Promote positive and personal interactions between staff and students (i.e. learn as many student names as possible; greet students when they enter classes; acknowledge students as they pass in the hallways).

2. Promote positive and personal interactions between school and home(i.e. phone calls, e-mails, etc.).
3. Informal and/or formal mentoring (adult to student) relationships are developed in school/community.
4. Students are given multiple opportunities for becoming school/community leaders.

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Analyze parent survey feedback.
 - Administer and analyze a Student Interest Inventory (K-12).
 - Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric annually.
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School Climate Standard #3:

The school community's practices are identified, prioritized and supported to:

(a) enhance engagement in teaching, learning and school-wide activities;

(b) address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage those who have become disengaged; and

(c) develop and sustain an appropriate operational infrastructure and capacity building mechanisms for meeting this standard.

INDICATOR 3.1: *Specific practices are designed to enhance engagement of every student through classroom-based social, emotional, ethical and civic learning activities.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Provide professional development on individual learning styles and up-to-date information on child and adolescent development.
2. Provide regular opportunities for all students to engage in service to their class and school community .

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Analyze Professional Development Feedback forms.
 - Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric annually.
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INDICATOR 3.2: *Teachers and school administrators design specific classroom and school-wide practices to address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage those who have become disengaged.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Apply a variety of classroom management strategies and teaching methods that are conducive to the diverse needs and learning styles of students.
2. Allow teachers to modify teaching methods already in place to promote engagement;

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Analyze Teacher Growth Plan. and T.E.A.M. Module Reflection Papers.
 - Track student membership and involvement in school clubs, projects and extracurricular activities.
 - Track and monitor the number and patterns of student self-referrals to the nurse and guidance offices, etc. annually in each school.
 - Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric annually.
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INDICATOR 3.3: *School leaders develop and sustain a comprehensive system of learning supports by ensuring an appropriate operational infrastructure and capacity building mechanisms.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Identify and evaluate behavioral/academic interventions.
2. Develop partnerships between parents and school officials in an effort to address the interests and needs of each child's development (discuss child's behavior, grades, and accomplishments).
3. Continue to provide parent/guardian workshops about how to better support their child's learning and development (including issues about behavior) while collaborating with the school.
4. Faculty regularly review "disengaged" students' records and progress collaboratively.

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Analyze SRBI data for assessing success of interventions.
 - Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric annually.
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School Climate Standard #4:

The school community creates an environment where all members are welcomed, supported and feel safe in school: socially, emotionally and physically.

INDICATOR 4.1: *School leaders promote comprehensive and evidence-based instructional and school wide improvement efforts designed to support students, school personnel and community members feeling welcomed, supported and safe in school: socially, emotionally and physically.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Generate and implement simple ways to *promote feelings of “connectedness”* in the school environment; when students are close to individuals at school, happy to be at school, feel a part of the school, feel they are treated fairly and feel safe -- physically, emotionally and intellectually -- they are more likely to be successful academically and be healthier individuals.
2. Build upon our family welcome and orientation program appropriate to each level by offering multiple *opportunities for parents* to be involved in meaningful school and classroom activities that can fit diverse schedules, skills and abilities.
3. School climate improvement goals are explicitly included in overall school/district improvement plans.
4. Disciplinary consequences are educative rather than punitive.
5. Schools have a welcoming message and atmosphere.
6. Schools/districts engage in explicit (vocal and visible) public relations campaign to promote concepts of connectedness and safety.
7. Create multiple ways for students to report anonymously alleged incident of mean behavior(s).

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Observe interactions in classrooms and on school property.
- Evaluate family-friendly policies and practices and the availability of resources available to support them.
- Develop satisfaction surveys or a suggestion box for visitors.
- Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric annually.

INDICATOR 4.2: *Students, their families, school staff and community stakeholders are regularly surveyed about and asked to indicate what the school should do to further enhance a welcoming, supportive and safe environment.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Analyze school climate survey results.

2. Create a parent feedback system to enhance a welcoming, supportive and safe environment.

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric.

INDICATOR 4.3: *School leaders monitor and evaluate the interventions designed to support people feeling welcomed, supported and safe and use that data to improve relevant policies, practices, facilities, staff competencies and accountability.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Regularly revisit and monitor school-wide and specific school climate improvement goals.
2. Devote regular time in faculty meetings for input and discussion.

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric annually.

School Climate Standard # 5:

The school community develops meaningful and engaging practices, activities and norms that promote social and civic responsibilities and a commitment to social justice.

INDICATOR 5.1: *Students and staff model culturally responsive behavior. This reflects continuous learning that builds knowledge, awareness, skills and the capacity to identify, understand and respect the unique beliefs, values, customs, languages and traditions of all members of the school community.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Infuse Newtown's Core Character Attributes, as developed by the District Strategic Plan, into the Safe School District and School Climate Plans.
2. Infuse current events, local, state, national and global affairs into the curriculum to promote awareness of social, political and civic issues.
3. Model and support civic responsibilities (e.g. Cultural Arts, N.I.C.E., Interact Club, Leo Club, Student Council).

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Schedule professional development for all employees in creating a safe school climate.
 - Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric annually.
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INDICATOR 5.2: *Relationships among and between staff and students are mutually respectful, supportive and civil.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Develop a process to identify students who feel disconnected.
2. Enlist student input to discuss ongoing issues within the school community (e.g. class meetings, focus groups, Morning Meetings, Student Council) and share findings with appropriate school staff and Safe School Climate Specialist.
3. Use of Core Character Attributes is role modeled at all times and in all settings by all school community members (i.e. students, employees, family member(s)).

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Perform building “walk throughs” to collect and analyze data in evaluating a safe school climate.
 - Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric annually.
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INDICATOR 5.3: *Students and staff are actively engaged in and celebrate milestones and accomplishments as they work to achieve meaningful school and community life and improvement efforts.*

STRATEGIES:

1. Recognize students and staff who exemplify the Core Character Attributes.
2. Highlight special accomplishments by publicly displaying information and pictures of classroom activities.
3. Students and staff are regularly recognized for small and larger contributions to the school/local community.

MEASUREMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OPTIONS FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES:

- Analyze school climate data to inform practice.
 - Evaluate school improvement in creating a safe school climate based upon the Core Character Attributes.
 - Assess level on Safe School Climate Rubric annually.
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