

WESTPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION

***AGENDA**

(Agenda Subject to Modification in Accordance with Law)

PUBLIC CALL TO ORDER:

7:00 p.m., Staples High School, Room 333, Pupil Services Conference Room

ANTICIPATED EXECUTIVE SESSION: Non-Renewal of Certified Staff, Strategies for Negotiations

RESUME PUBLIC SESSION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Staples High School, Cafeteria B (Room 301), 7:30 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION

PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS (15 MINUTES)

MINUTES: April 7, 2014

PRESENTATIONS:

- | | | |
|---|---------|---|
| 1. School Climate | (Encl.) | Mr. Rizzo
Dr. Babich
Ms. Schwartz
Ms. Clarke |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress of the District Safe School Climate Committee • Short- and Long-Term Plans for Ethical Digital Citizenship • Modifications to Social Skills Curriculum, K-12 • Mental Health Services, K-12 | | |
| 2. Update: Special Education Program Improvements, 2008-13 | (Encl.) | Mr. Rizzo
Dr. Babich
Ms. Bodell
Ms. Curran |

DISCUSSION:

- | | | |
|---|---------|-------------------------|
| 1. Proposed Board Policy P 3431: Health and Medical Insurance | (Encl.) | Dr. Landon
Mr. Longo |
|---|---------|-------------------------|

DISCUSSION/ACTION:

- | | | |
|--|---------|------------|
| 1. Health Insurance Reserves | (Encl.) | Mr. Longo |
| 2. Green Task Force Solar Panel Installation Proposal | | David Mann |
| 3. Non-Renewal of Certified Staff | | Ms. Cion |
| 4. Approval of Contract: Registered Professional Nurses/ Health Assistants | | Ms. Cion |
| 5. Approval of Contract: School Custodians | | Ms. Cion |
| 6. Authorization for Capacity Studies at All Schools | (Encl.) | Dr. Landon |

DISCUSSION:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Productivity and Efficiency | (Encl.) | Mr. Block |
|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|

ADJOURNMENT

*A 2/3 vote is required to go to executive session, to add a topic to the agenda of a regular meeting, or to start a new topic after 10:30 p.m. The meeting can also be viewed on cable TV on channel 78; AT&T channel 99 and by video stream @www.westport.k12.ct.us

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION WELCOME USING THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:

- Comment on non-agenda topics will occur during the first 15 minutes *except* when staff or guest presentations are scheduled.
- Board will not engage in dialogue on non-agenda items.
- Public may speak as agenda topics come up for discussion or information.
- Speakers on non-agenda items are limited to 2 minutes each, except by prior arrangement with chair.
- Speakers on agenda items are limited to 3 minutes each, except by prior arrangement with chair.
- Speakers must give name and use microphone.
- Responses to questions may be deferred if answers not immediately available.
- Public comment is normally not invited for topics listed for action after having been publicly discussed at one or more meetings.

DEPARTMENT OF PUPIL SERVICES
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To: Dr. Landon

From: Michael Rizzo, Cynthia Gilchrest, Dr. Valerie Babich, Elaine Schwartz, Megan Clarke, and Natalie Carrignan

Subject: Safe School Climate: Social Skills K-12, Digital Citizenship, and Mental Health Services

Date: April 28, 2014

The foundation for all of our safe school climate efforts is the Board of Education policy pertaining to safe school climate and bullying, along with its administrative regulations. First adopted in 2002, and amended in 2007, 2008, and finally in 2011 in response to Public Act 11-232, our administrative, teaching, and pupil services teams are guided daily in their operations by this policy and the accompanying administrative regulations. These documents appear on our website so that they are readily available to parents and students and are published in all our parent and student handbooks. The essential change to the 2011 Connecticut legislation was the coupling of safe school climate and the prevention of and intervention to bullying. As a result of Public Act 11-232, every school has established a safe school climate committee consisting of administrators, teachers, pupil services staff, a parent, and at SHS, students.

Our efforts, however, are not limited to publishing and strictly adhering to the requirements of our safe school climate and anti-bullying policy and regulations. More importantly, we have historically and presently initiated and sustained programs that have been purposefully designed to not only prevent bullying and intervene wherever mean-spirited behavior occurs, but to teach students pro-social behaviors and to create a sustainable and positive school climate in our buildings.

Beginning in Kindergarten at the elementary school level, our initial intervention for students is the Westport Social Skills Curriculum, including key elements of Responsive Classroom, which is delivered to all elementary school students by their teachers. Within this curriculum are age appropriate lessons for our students in K-5 that teach pro-social behaviors including respect, tolerance, conflict resolution, internet safety, digital citizenship and, in developmentally appropriate ways that do

not label children, anti-bullying strategies. The use of the social skills curriculum during the first six weeks of the school year is aimed at establishing a behaviorally positive classroom community right from the start of the school year, and the components of this curriculum are continued on a regular basis in all of our classrooms throughout the school year. These lessons have devoted time each school day, are woven throughout our curriculum, and are referred to in “real time” when teachers become aware of teachable moments requiring intervention and direct instruction in social skills. Where issues arise in any classroom that require more intensive intervention, our teachers and pupil services staff make use of the Second Step program and Steps to Respect programmatic elements which use an approach that more aggressively addresses issues related to behavior that is mean, insensitive, or bullying in nature. So that the supportive relationships between parents, students, and pupil services staff are as continuous as possible, our school psychologists “loop” with their students, beginning work with them as they enter Kindergarten and continuing that relationship through grade 5, enabling them to establish meaningful relationships and connect with each student.

At the middle school level, all students take health education classes in grades 6, 7, and 8. In addition to addressing mean-spirited behavior at each grade level, classes address developing healthy behaviors and relationships, and teach the importance of respecting others in person and through social media. Additionally, teachers deliver support to students through our Prime Time (Coleytown) and Connections (Bedford) programs. These middle school adult advisor/advisee programs with a curriculum related to student life which includes significant discussions about bullying prevention and intervention strategies, and social issues, are typically scheduled every week during an extended 20-minute homeroom period. In addition, our school counselors deliver Developmental Counseling lessons to all students 6 times per year in 42-minute lessons. Areas that are covered through developmental counseling include academic and career counseling, and personal and social issues to include lessons on mean-spirited behavior, acceptance of others, tolerance, stress management, and decision making to name a few. Where appropriate and necessary, the Second Step program is utilized as an adjunct to the developmental counseling curriculum. Student-need inventories conducted by counselors at the beginning of each school year give our counselors and psychologists insight into particular needs that may extend beyond the developmental counseling curriculum. Counselors and psychologists form small groups of students and provide counseling and instruction based on the student needs articulated in these inventories. Finally, throughout the ITL curriculum delivered to middle school students digital citizenship and internet safety lessons are addressed with all students.

The middle school teaming model was designed and developed to provide students the most personalized and supportive middle school experience possible. Similar to elementary school, our middle school counselors loop with students beginning in sixth grade and work with them through eighth grade. All students meet with their counselor at least two times per year. In addition, regular discussions among the members of each grade level team regarding student climate and individual student issues are discussed on a daily basis. Where necessary, the grade level Assistant Principals and/or the Principal join with school counselors, teachers, nurse, and other pupil services personnel to discuss behavioral and social/emotional issues affecting school climate and individual student performance, including but not limited to mean-spirited behavior. Finally, school clubs, such as Coleytown Service Board and the Blue/Gold Student Council, work to engage all students in creating a positive school climate.

At the intervention level, the pupil services staff, administrators and teachers K-8 deliver the following with regard to promoting a safe school climate and identifying and eliminating mean-spirited behavior on the part of students:

- Individual student counseling, which includes social skills development, conflict resolution, and bullying intervention
- Group counseling for students, to include social skills development
- Observations of student behavior at lunch and recess by certified staff and administrators and, where necessary, facilitation to provide students with age appropriate social skills so as to improve school climate and eliminate mean-spirited behavior
- Parenting workshops and meetings specific to supporting students in developmentally appropriate ways, including the recognition and prevention of mean-spirited behavior and internet safety workshops
- Classroom based lessons related to understanding differences, making healthy choices, perspective taking, problem solving, communication and collaboration skills, and the identification and elimination of mean-spirited behavior
- Providing the paraprofessionals that monitor the lunch room and recess with knowledge and strategies to promote a safe school climate including skills to intervene when they witness mean-spirited behavior
- Grade level and individual teacher consultation for social skills and intervention strategies
- All school meetings specific to promoting a safe school climate
- Morning meetings (K-5)/Extended Homerooms (6-8) in classrooms, geared to building community in the classroom and teaching appropriate social skills
- Teaching students to resolve conflicts through structured mediations or making amends when feelings are hurt

- Consultation with administrators in the administration of discipline related to bullying, including but not limited to in-school suspension, out of school suspension, and recommendations to the Superintendent of Schools for expulsions
- Development of behavior plans, when necessary
- Development of safe school climate action plans at every building

For students at Staples High School, the following programs and practices are in place to address creating a safe school climate for all students.

All students take health classes in grades 9-11 in which bullying and hazing, digital citizenship and internet safety are specifically addressed. All students each year meet in small groups by grade with their grade level assistant principals to discuss such things as transition from middle school, climate of Staples, code of conduct, how to access supports and what role each student and each grade plays in creating and maintaining a supportive, caring, and safe school environment. Beginning in eighth grade, SHS staff and counselors establish individual relationships through individual and small group meetings discussing transition to high school, scheduling, resilience, and any questions that students may have.

The Staples organizational model was developed to provide students the most personalized and supportive high school experience possible. On a weekly or bi-weekly basis, the following meetings take place to discuss, plan for, and report progress on individual student needs, interventions, and/or address issues:

Student Support Team: Members include an administrator, teachers, and counselors reviewing individual student progress in academic and social/emotional domains, planning interventions, and monitoring progress

Collaborative Team: Members include Principal, Assistant Principals, department chairpersons, teachers, 2 students from the Student Assembly, the school climate specialist, and parents addressing issues of school climate, academic programs, and other school initiatives

Administrative Meeting; Members include Principal, a nurse, assistant principals, Director of Guidance, Director of Special Education for the purpose of reviewing at risk students, developing interventions, and reporting on progress

Consult Teams: Members include counselors, psychologists and social worker meeting every other week to discuss and plan interventions for students experiencing difficulty in social/emotional or academic areas within the school setting.

Additionally, clubs such as Teen Awareness Group, Peer Advisors, and the Gay/Straight Alliance address issues associated with improving school climate and mean-spirited behavior. The underlying theme of all these groups is the promotion of a Staples climate of caring and safety. The SHS Student Ambassador Club assists with eighth grade transition as well as with new students attending SHS for the first time. These ambassadors help new students feel more comfortable and at ease in their new environment. In addition, during each summer, all athletic team captains are required to attend a training session to provide the specific skills they will need to be team leaders and explain their responsibilities as leader and role models in creating a positive school climate. One of the major components of this training is hazing; what it is and how important it is that there be no hazing of young teammates.

At the intervention level at the high school, administrators, school counselors, school psychologists and social workers deliver the following with regard to identifying and eliminating mean-spirited behavior and promoting a safe school climate on the part of students:

- Individual student counseling, which includes social skills development, conflict resolution, and intervention when mean-spirited behavior occurs
- Group counseling for students to include social skills development
- Observations of student behavior throughout the day by administrators, teachers, and pupil services staff and, as an outcome of those observations, engaging students in appropriate social skills discussions so as to encourage healthy decision making and positive relationships
- Parenting workshops
- Classroom based lessons related to the identification and elimination of mean-spirited behavior, developing positive relationships, and making healthy choices
- Certified staff and administrators monitor the lunch rooms and intervene, if necessary
- Individual teacher consultation for intervention with specific student behaviors when needed
- Consultation with administrators in the administration of discipline related to bullying, including but not limited to in-school suspension, out of school suspension, and recommendations to the Superintendent for expulsion
- Conflict resolution for students, when needed
- Development of behavior plans, when necessary

District administrators and teachers reflect regularly on our curriculum and instruction, reviewing research and best practices, in an effort to continually improve our work. As part of that reflection we will incorporate high school students into our grade 3 Social Skills lessons. The lessons in which the students will assist will be determined by our district Social Skills Committee this summer. The third grade classroom teachers will facilitate the lessons with the high school students. The current K2BK high school club will continue next year. An advisor from the high school will be responsible for the club. Positive Youth Development through Human Services has offered to assist the schools next year, and we will be discussing how we can work together. The club will receive empathy-based training as well as training in the Westport Social Skills curriculum in the fall, prior to working in the third grade classrooms. We believe this programmatic change will preserve the integrity of our Social Skills curriculum while integrating what we have learned to be the most valuable parts of the high school students' experience of working with our elementary students.

We look forward to discussing these programs and interventions with you in depth and will be available to address any questions you have at that point.

School Climate

April 28, 2014

Focus Areas

Building-based school climate committees

Social/Emotional Learning, K-12

Digital Citizenship and Internet Safety

Mental Health Services, K-12

Historical Perspective

Social Skills, Developmental Counseling and Internet Safety

Staffing

Professional Development

Parent outreach

Current Trends

PA 11-232 - Strengthening of School Bullying Laws

Connecticut: 1 of 2 states to couple anti-bullying legislation with school climate initiatives

Move from "bullying" to "improving school climate"

Response to current trends: ongoing curriculum revisions, staffing, creation of school climate teams and plans

School Climate

National School Climate Center Standards

1. The school community has a shared vision and plan for promoting, enhancing and sustaining a positive school climate.
2. The school community's policies specifically promote: (a) the development and sustainability of social, emotional, ethical, civic and intellectual skills, knowledge, dispositions and engagement, and (b) a comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage students who have become disengaged.

School Climate Standards (cont.)

3. The school community's practices are identified, practiced and supported to (a) promote the learning and positive social, emotional, ethical and civic development of students, (b) enhance engagement in learning, teaching and school-wide activities, (c) address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage students who have become disengaged, and (d) develop and sustain an appropriate operational infrastructure and capacity building mechanisms for meeting this standard.
4. The school community creates an environment where all members are welcomed, supported and feel safe in social, cognitive, emotional, intellectually and physically.

School Climate Standards (cont.)

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

School Climate Committees

Goal areas: Social Emotional Security

Action Plans - Elementary, MS, and HS

School Climate Survey

A Systemic Approach

Social Skills K-5

Developmental Counseling 6-8

Developmental Counseling 9-12

Social Skills Curriculum, K-5

Responsive Classroom

Lessons and Themes

Social Emotional Learning Competencies

What is Responsive Classroom?

- An approach that was developed by teachers
- Research based
- Developed to deliberately help children build academic and social-emotional competencies throughout their day

Goal: to enable optimal student learning

Practices at a glance

Classroom Practices

- Morning Meeting
- Positive Teacher and Student Language
- Rule Creation
- Logical Consequences

Schoolwide Practices

- All school meetings, tidy classrooms, book clubs
- Organizing the physical environment to set the tone for learning

Social Skills Curriculum K-5

Themes

- Establishing Classroom Community
- Friendship
- Problem-solving
- Communicating feelings
- Exploring your Uniqueness
- Diversity
- Internet Safety

Social Emotional Competencies

5 Core Competencies

- 1) Self-awareness
- 2) Self-management
- 3) Social awareness
- 4) Relationship skills
- 5) Responsible decision making

Developmental Counseling 6-8

Domains across grade levels:

- Academic
- Career
- Personal/Social

Student connectedness

Parent workshops

Developmental Counseling, 9-12

Grade level themes and lessons

College and Career Readiness

Student Ambassadors, Groups, and Meetings

Parent workshops

Digital Citizenship

Making positive and ethical choices

Making relevant and informed contributions

Responding to unwanted attention or uncomfortable situations

Parent workshops

Mental Health

The Importance of Mental Health Services

“Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”. World Health Organization

Mental Health

Professional Development

- Recent examples: Anxiety disorders, DSM 5, Eating Disorders, Childhood Trauma, School Refusal
- DBT training planned for 2014-15

Clinical Supervision

Mental Health

Staffing and Training

- student-staff ratios
- collaboration with school nurses
- psychiatric and medical consultants
- youth mental health first aid, crisis preparation and intervention

Community Collaborations

- Westport Department of Human Services
- Positive Youth Development (PYD)

Conclusion

Administer annual school climate survey; review data, and form new goals

Continuous improvement of social skills and developmental counseling curriculum K-12

Ongoing professional development

Conduct parent and community workshops

Conclusion (cont.)

Requests to BOE:

- consider adoption of National School Climate Center Standards;
- continue to support staffing to meet social/emotional and mental health needs of students



National School Climate Center

Advancing Mind and Heart... Ensuring the Best Future for All Children

National School Climate Center
341 West 38th Street
New York, NY 10018
Number 1, August 2012

SCHOOL CLIMATE RESEARCH SUMMARY: August 2012

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National School Climate Center

Respecting Minds and Hearts, Because We Never Forget the Future

Introduction

Over the past three decades, researchers and educators have increasingly recognized the importance of K-12 school climate. This summary builds on previous school climate reviews¹ (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009; Cohen & Geier, 2010) and details how school climate is associated with and/or promotes safety, healthy relationships, engaged learning and teaching and school improvement efforts².

In America and around the world, there is growing interest in school climate reform and appreciation that this is a viable, data driven school improvement strategy that promotes safer, more supportive and civil K-12 schools. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2009) recommends school climate reform as a data driven strategy that promotes healthy relationships, school connectedness, and dropout prevention. The Institute for Educational Sciences includes school climate as a sound strategy for dropout prevention (Dynarski, Clarke, Cobb, Finn, Rumberger, & Smink, 2008). The U.S. Department of Education (2007) has invested in the *Safe and Supportive Schools* (S3) grant program to support state-wide school climate measurement and the study of school climate improvement efforts. A growing number of State Departments of Education are focusing on school climate reform as an essential component of school improvement and/or bully prevention. And, a growing number of educational ministries from around the world (e.g. China, France, Israel, Peru, Singapore, Spain) (Cohen, 2012), and the UN Children's Fund are invested in supporting school climate reform efforts³ (Shaefter, 1999).

The National School Climate Council (2007) recommends that "school climate" and a "positive and sustained school climate" be defined in the following ways:

²Cohen & Geier (2010) summary study had 132 citations, whereas this review includes 194 citations.

³The citations below represent approximately 5 % of experimental studies, 45 % of correlational studies, 25 % literature reviews and 25 % other descriptive studies (including qualitative studies) that have been published in peer-reviewed journals (with few exceptions).

⁴When we conducted our first school climate research summary in 2009, there were 8,180,000 results from Google. In August 2012, there are 19,400,000 results.

"School climate is defined as patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures."

"A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive, and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate includes norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe. People are engaged and respected. Students, families and educators work together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision. Educators model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits of, and satisfaction from, learning. Each person contributes to the operations of the school as well as the care of the physical environment (p.4)."

While early educational reformers such as Perry (1908), Dewey (1916), and Durkheim (1961) recognized that the distinctive culture of a school affects the life and learning of its students, the rise of systematic, empirical study of school climate grew out of industrial/organizational research coupled with the observation that school-specific processes accounted for a great deal of variation in student achievement (Anderson, 1982; Kreft, 1993; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Ever since, the research in school climate has been growing systematically, and in recent years many countries are showing a keen interest in this area. Literature in this field suggests that there are empirical evidences being documented on various aspects of school climate in several languages (for summary, see Benbenisty & Astor, 2005; Cohen et al., 2009 in English; Debarbieux, 1996; Janosz, Georges, & Parent (1998) in French; and Del Rey, Ortega & Fera, 2009 in Spanish).

In this review, we address five essential areas of focus: 1. Safety (e.g. rules and norms; physical safety; social-emotional safety); 2. Relationships (e.g. respect for diversity; school connectedness/engagement; social support; leadership); 3.



National School Climate Center

Education, Mental and Physical Health: The Three Spheres Not Enough

Teaching and Learning (e.g. social, emotional, ethical and civic learning; support for students' learning; support for professional relationships); 4. Institutional Environment (e.g. physical surroundings); and 5. School climate, the Processes of School Improvement. Although there is not yet a consensus about which dimensions are essential to measuring school climate validly, we believe that empirical reviews such as these may help to refine and focus our understanding of the aspects of school climate that can and need to be assessed. To date, there have been three independent reviews of school climate measures (Clifford, Menon, Condon, & Hornung; 2012; Gangi, 2010; Haggerty, Elgin, & Woodley, 2010).

As detailed below, the ever-growing body of research on school climate continuously attests to its importance in a variety of overlapping ways, including social, emotional, intellectual and physical safety; positive youth development, mental health, and healthy relationships; higher graduation rates; school connectedness and engagement; academic achievement; social, emotional and civic learning; teacher retention; and effective school reform. Further, it must be understood that both the effects of school climate and the conditions that give rise to them are deeply interconnected, growing out of the shared experience of a dynamic ecological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Ma, Phelps, Lerner, & Lerner, 2009). Thus, information in one section may relate to another dimension as well. Before we review the literature on the above five categories, it is worthwhile to discuss research on outcomes associated with overall school climate.

Outcomes associated with positive school climate

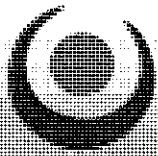
There is extensive research that shows school climate having a profound impact on students' mental and physical health. School climate has been shown to affect middle school students' self-esteem (Hoge, Smit, & Hanson, 1990), mitigate the negative effects of self-criticism (Kuperminic, Leadbeater, & Blatt, 2001), and affect a wide range of emotional and mental health outcomes (Kuperminic, Leadbeater, Emmons, & Blatt, 1997; Payton et al., 2008; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989; Shochet, Dadds, Ham, & Montague, 2006; Way, Reddy, & Rhodes, 2007). Research has also revealed a positive correlation between school climate and student self-

concept (Cohen, 1990; Eccles, 1978; Reynolds, Enns, & Lippitt, 1979; Mangione, 1990; Murray, Maughan, Marmot, & Caspi, 1979).

A positive and sound socio-emotional climate of a school is also related to the frequency of its students' substance abuse and psychiatric problems (Kasen, Johnson, & Cohen, 1990; LaRusso, Romer, & Selman, 2008; Ruus et al., 2007; Shochet et al., 2006). More specifically, a positive school climate is linked to lower levels of drug use as well as less self-reports of psychiatric problems among high school students (LaRusso et al., 2008). In early adolescence, a positive school climate is predictive of better psychological well-being (Ruus et al., 2007; Shochet et al., 2006; Virtanen et al., 2009).

Moreover, a series of studies revealed that a positive school climate is correlated with decreased student absenteeism in middle school and high school (deJung & Duckworth, 1986; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1989; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Reid, 1982; Rumberger, 1987; Sommer, 1985) and with lower rates of student suspension in high school (Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982; Lee, Cornell, Gregory & Fan, 2011). Furthermore, a growing body of research indicates that positive school climate is critical to effective risk prevention (Berkowitz & Bier, 2006; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2002; Greenberg et al., 2003) and health promotion efforts (Cohen, 2001; Najaka, Gottfredson, & Wilson, 2002; Rand Corporation, 2004; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993).

In overall, there seems to be abundant literature on school climate from different parts of the world that documents a positive school climate: i) having a powerful influence on the motivation to learn (Eccles et al., 1993); ii) mitigating the negative impact of the socioeconomic context on academic success (Astor, Benbenisty, & Estrada, 2010); iii) contributing to less aggression and violence (Karcher, 2002a, Gregory, Cornell, Fan, Sheras, Shih, & Huang, 2010; less harassment (Kosciw & Elizabethli, 2006; Blaya, 2006) and less sexual harassment (Attar-Schwartz, 2009); and iv) acting as a protective factor for the learning and positive life development of young people (Ortega, Sanchez, Ortega Rivera, & Viejo, 2011). In addition to these areas, studies around the world also indicate that quality of the school climate is also



responsibility for students' success, as well as the personal development and well-being of pupils (see, for example, Hattie, Neeben, Hanson, & Jakobsen, 2015; OECD, 2009). Studies on the evidence of the relationship between school climate and academic outcomes will be discussed in more detail in the 'teaching and learning' section.

1. Safety

Feeling safe – socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically is a fundamental human need (Maslow, 1943). Feeling safe in school powerfully promotes student learning and healthy development (Devine & Cohen, 2007). However, there is a great deal of research that shows that many students do not feel physically and emotionally safe in schools, largely as a result of breakdowns in the interpersonal and contextual variables that define a school's climate. In schools without supportive norms, structures, and relationships, students are more likely to experience violence, peer-victimization, and punitive disciplinary actions, often accompanied by high levels of absenteeism, and reduced academic achievement (Astor, Guerra, & Van Acker, 2010). Studies have also shown that students feel less safe in large schools and that verbal bullying is more likely to occur at such schools (Lleras, 2008). The NSCC's school climate assessment work with thousands of schools across America has shown that the adults in the school community (school personnel and parents/guardians) typically believe that bullying and social violence are a "mild" to "moderately severe" problem while students consistently report that it is a "severe" problem (Cohen, 2006). Cornell, Sheras, Gregory, and Fan (2009) explored the usefulness of threat assessment in targeting violence in which 9th grade students from 280 Virginia public high schools were compared to 95 high schools using the Virginia threat assessment guidelines (Cornell & Sheras, 2006), 131 following locally developed threat assessment procedures, and 54 not using a threat assessment approach. Their study found that in schools where threat assessment guidelines were followed, students reported less bullying, felt more comfortable seeking help, and possessed more positive perceptions of school climate. In addition, these schools had fewer long-term suspensions. Likewise, in another study, Gregory et al. (2010), using

national threat assessment and social climate data sample of over 7,000 middle grade students and 1,000 teachers randomly selected from 280 high schools showed that consistent enforcement of school discipline (structure) and availability of caring adults (support) were associated with school safety. Klein, Cornell & Konold (in press), using a sample of 3,687 high school students who completed the School Climate Bullying Survey and questions about risk behavior from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBS), found that positive school climate were associated with lower student risk behavior.

Although many urban and economically disadvantaged schools are plagued by physical violence, most students are not exposed to physical violence (Mayer & Furlong, 2010). Unfortunately, this is not the case for social, emotional and intellectual safety. In fact, bully-victim behavior is a serious public health problem. Research from the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) National Bullying Campaign showed that up to 25 percent of U.S. students are bullied each year (Melton et al., 1998). As many as 160,000 students may stay home from school on any given day because they are afraid of being bullied (Nansel et al., 2001). The growing trend of cyber bullying penetrates the home via computers and cellular phones. At least one out of three adolescents report being seriously threatened online, and 60 percent of teens say they have participated in online bullying. A growing body of research has underscored that bully-victim behavior is toxic; it undermines K-12 students' capacity to learn and develop in healthy ways. When students bully and/or are victimized repeatedly, it dramatically increases the likelihood that they will develop significant psychosocial problems over time (Wolke, Woods, Bloomfield, & Karstadt, 2000). Additionally, bullying affects student engagement and lowers their commitment to schoolwork. Bullying seems to adversely affect the witnesses, too. For example, a recent study of more than 2,000 students (ages 12 to 16) found that those who witnessed bullying reported more feelings of depression, anxiety, hostility and inferiority than either the bullies or victims themselves (Rivers, Poterat, Noret, & Ashurst, 2009).

Homophobia is one of the most common causes of bully-victim behavior (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009).



A recent school climate survey of 6,289 middle school and high school students revealed that roughly nine out of ten Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) students (86.2%) experienced harassment at school in the previous year (Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2008). In general, differences (e.g., race, gender, sexual identity, disability, socio-economic and/or cultural differences) are a common focus for bullying. McGuire, Anderson, Toomey and Russell (2010) found that school harassment due to transgender identity was pervasive, and this harassment was negatively associated with feelings of safety.

Recent research suggests that positive school climate is associated with reduced aggression and violence (Karcher, 2002b; Goldstein, Young, & Boyd, 2008; Brookmeyer, Fanti, & Henrich, 2006; Gregory, et al., 2010) as well as reduced bullying behavior (Kosciw & Elizabeth, 2006; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008; Yoneyama & Rigby, 2006; Birkett et al., 2009; Meraviglia, Becker, Rosenbluth, Sanchez, & Robertson, 2003) and sexual harassment, regardless of sexual orientation (Attar-Schwartz, 2009). However, this relationship has not been fully elucidated. One study revealed that the association between school climate and level of aggression and victimization is dependent upon each student's feelings of connectedness to the school (Wilson, 2004). Because the bullying of any one person is unacceptable and because violence in schools is documented as a real problem, future research needs to critically examine the complex set of individual, group, and organizational factors that shape and predict violent behavior in schools in order to better prevent it.

What is clear is that comprehensive, ecologically informed violence prevention efforts provide the essential foundation for improvement. Recent reviews of effective school discipline and bully prevention efforts underscore that we need to recognize and target individual, peer, school, family, and community processes (Osher, Bear, Sprague & Doyle, 2010; Swearer, Espelage, Vallancourt & Hymel, 2010; Gregory & Cornell, 2009).

There is growing evidence that educators also feel unsafe in schools. A significant number of teachers are threatened and/or assaulted by students every year (Dworkin, Haney,

& Johnson, 1998; McCreary, 1997; Gregory, Cornell, & Fan (in press). Using regression analysis on a statewide sample of 280 high schools showed that both structure (measured by student- and teacher-reported clarity of school rules) and support (measured by teacher-reported help seeking) were associated with less teacher victimization, controlled for school and neighborhood demographics. Their study also found that student support was a consistent predictor of school records of threats against faculty.

1.1. Rules and norms

Another important safety-related dimension is rules and norms. Research underscores the importance of school rules and perceived fairness in regard to dealing with students' behavior. There is evidence that schools in which rules are effectively enforced (i.e., better discipline management) have lower rates of student victimization and student delinquency (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, & Gottfredson, 2005). One of the most important explicit or implicit norms in schools relates to "witness-related" behaviors: either being a passive bystander who, knowingly or not, colludes with and supports bully-victim behavior or being an upstander who, directly or indirectly, says "no" to bully-victim behavior. Twemlow and his colleagues have been involved with a bully prevention program that focuses on promoting upstander behavior (Twemlow, Fonagy, Gies, Evans & Ewbank, 2001; Fonagy, Twemlow, Vernberg, Sacco, & Little, 2005). Building on and replicating these past empirical studies, for example, a recent cluster-level randomized controlled trial with stratified restricted allocation for 1,345 third to fifth graders in nine elementary schools in a medium-sized Midwestern city found that the teacher-implemented school-wide intervention that did not focus on disturbed children substantially reduced aggression and improved classroom behavior (Fonagy et al., 2009). The bully prevention/pro-upstander effort was also associated with pronounced improvements in elementary students achievement test scores (Fonagy et al., 2005).

How rules are enforced (e.g. the extent to which they are consistently and fairly enforced) is another factor that shapes how safe people feel in school. Consistent enforcement of school rules and availability of caring adults have been



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related to a "structure and support" (Gregory et al., 2010). Studies have shown that structure and support are linked to lower suspension rates and more student willingness to seek help in bullying situations (Ellor, Cornell, Gregory & Fan, 2010; Gregory, Cornell & Fan, 2011). Findings from Nesdale and Lawson (2011) on the study of the effects of social group norms (inclusion vs. exclusion vs. exclusion-plus-relational aggression) and school norms (inclusion vs. no norm) on a total of 383 children's (7 and 10-year-old) intergroup attitudes indicated that children's out-group attitudes reflected their group's norm but, with increasing age, they liked their in-group less, and the out-group more, if the group had an exclusion norm.

In summary, feeling safe in school is fundamental for educators to be able to effectively teach and for students to effectively learn. Since 1998 the problems of school violence and of bullying and harassment have been documented and estimated to affect 25 percent of all students (Cohen, 2006; Devine & Cohen, 2007; Melton et al., 1998). School bullying and harassment have moved to the virtual school, which is comprised of the social media that groups or individual students use to harass their peers (Campbell, 2005). Both in person and virtually bullying and harassment are most often based on perceived differences of sexual orientation, ethnicity, social class, and gender, alerting educators to the need for diversity education as well as violence prevention interventions. Violence against educators and staff has also risen in recent years (Novotney, 2009). Safety must be the first concern of every school, but school climate research (Cohen, in press) shows that the best ways to address safety concerns is by building strong school communities with respectful and trusting relationships among and between teachers and students with parents, school staff, and the surrounding community.

2. Relationships

The process of teaching and learning is fundamentally relational. The patterns of norms, goals, values and interactions that shape relationships in schools provide an essential area of school climate. One of the most important aspects of relationships in school is how connected people feel to one an-

other. From a psychological point of view, relationships refer not only to relations with others but relations with ourselves: how we feel about and take care of ourselves.

Research has also shown that in schools where students perceive a better structured and school discipline and more positive student-teacher relationships, there are lower associations with the "probability and frequency of subsequent behavioral problems" (Wang, Selman, Dishion, & Stormshak, 2010; Gregory & Cornell, 2009). Furthermore, it was found for both Chinese and American students that when students' perceived teacher-student support and student-student support, these perceptions were positively associated with self-esteem and grade point average while negatively associated with depressive symptoms (Jia et al., 2009).

If a teacher-student relationship is negative and conflictual in kindergarten, it is more likely that the student will have behavioral and academic problems in later grades (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Also, teachers' interactions with students can directly affect students' behavioral and emotional engagement in the classroom (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). When teachers support and interact positively with students, then students are more likely to be engaged and behave appropriately (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Another study on the effects of the 4Rs program (Reading, Writing, Respect, and Resolution) using a cluster randomized controlled trial design suggested positive effects of teachers' perceived emotional ability on classroom quality (Brown, Jones, LaRusso, & Aber, 2010).

Research has also shown that teachers' work environment, peer relationships and feeling of inclusion and respect are important aspects too. In a study of 12 middle schools, Guo (2012) found that the teachers' work environment, which may be considered as an indicator of teachers' relationships with each other and school administrators, fully mediated the path from a whole school character intervention to school climate change. This indicates the critical foundational role of positive adult relationships for a positive school climate. In the same schools, Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sakwarawich (2011) demonstrated that students with special needs, those who had *Individual Education Plans* (IEPs), only were able to benefit from the positive school climate if they felt included and respected by other students, indicating the



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central roles of peer relationships in the well-being of students with differences.

In summary, safe, caring, participatory and responsive school climates tend to foster a greater attachment to schools and provide the optimal foundation for social, emotional and academic learning for middle school and high school students (Blum, McNeely, & Rinehart, 2002; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Lee, Smith, Perry, & Smylie, 1999; Osterman, 2000; Wentzel, 1997). These research findings have contributed to the U.S. Department of Justice (2004), the U.S. Department of Education's (2007) *Safe and Drug Free Schools network*, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and a growing number of State Departments of Education emphasizing the importance of safe, civil and caring schools. Moreover, one of the very crucial components of sound relationships has been identified as 'trust' among members of the school community. For example, Bryk and his colleagues found evidence that schools with high relational trust (good social relationships among members of the school community) are more likely to make changes that improve student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

3. Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning represents one of the most important dimensions of school climate. School leaders and teachers should strive to clearly define the sets of norms, goals, and values that shape the learning and teaching environment. Research supports the notion that a positive school climate promotes students' abilities to learn. A positive school climate promotes cooperative learning, group cohesion, respect, and mutual trust. These particular aspects have been shown to directly improve the learning environment (Ghaith, 2003; Kerr, Ireland, Lopes, Craig, & Cleaver, 2004; Finnan, Schnepel, & Anderson, 2003). For example, as also outlined in the relationships section, research shows that the student-teacher relationship in kindergarten is related to later academic success and positive behavioral outcomes for students (Pianta, Steinberg, & Rollins, 1995; Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

Additionally, knowing an organizational culture and climate helps in "understanding individual as well as collective attitudes, behavior, and performance" (Ostroff, Kinicky,

& Tomkowi, 2005). A series of correlational studies have shown that school climate is directly related to academic achievement. The evidence found in the literature demonstrates that this is true for the elementary schools (Beauchamp,

Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1977; Brookover et al., 1978; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Cook, Murphy & Hunt, 2000; Freiberg, 1999; Griffith, 1995; Shipman, 1981; Sherblom, Marshall & Sherblom, 2006; Sterbinsky, Ross & Redfield, 2006), middle schools (Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsinger, & Dumas, 2003; Ma & Klinger, 2000), high schools (Lee & Bryk, 1989; Power et al., 1989; Stewart, 2008) and for all levels of schooling (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1989; MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009). In this connection, studies also point out the need to identify and include a wide range of factors such as classroom and school processes and multiple school climate indicators when examining student outcomes (Good & Weinstein, 1986; Madaus, Airasian, & Kellaghan, 1980; Rutter, 1983; Rutter et al., 1979; Fleming et al., 2005). Moreover, there is also evidence that the effect of positive school climate not only contributes to immediate student achievement, but its affect seems to persist for years (Hoy, Hannum, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998). The relevant literature also indicates that the prevalence of peer victimization in high school is an important factor in high school academic performance. Cornell, Gregory, Huang, & Fan (in press), in their study of 276 Virginia public high schools, found that the prevalence of teasing and bullying (PTB) as perceived by both ninth grade students and teachers was predictive of dropout rates for the cohort four years later. Researchers have also looked at the relationship between school climate and academic achievement in relation to student classroom participation. Studies show that when students are encouraged to participate in academic learning, their potential for academic achievement increases (Voelkl, 1995; Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 1999).

3.1. Social, emotional, civic and ethical education

The specific nature and goals of K-12 instruction impact academic achievement in a variety of ways. Educators (like parents) are always teaching social, emotional, civic, and ethical as well as intellectual lessons, intentionally or not (Higgins-



D'Alessandro, in recent research notes that evidence-based character education programs lead to higher achievement scores for elementary school students (Battistich, Burrows, Kuzlin, & Smith, 2003). Also, evidence-based socio-emotional learning programs have resulted in impressive gains in achievement test scores and in increasing the academic emphasis of elementary and middle school students (Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Bradshaw, Koth, Thornton, & Leaf, 2009; Elias & Haynes, 2008). A meta-analysis of over 700 positive youth development, social emotional learning (SEL) and character education studies that revealed evidence-based SEL programs had many significant positive effects, including improving students' achievement test scores by 11 to 17 percentile points (Payton et al., 2008).⁴ Evidence also comes from another meta-analysis conducted on 213 school-based, universal social and emotional learning (SEL) programs involving 270,034 kindergarten through high school students that suggested that Socio Emotional Learning (SEL) participants, compared to the control groups, demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

3.2. Service learning

Implementing learning activities beyond the classroom is an effective way to incorporate civic education into a school and these activities, in turn, promote student learning. Encouraging active and collaborative learning through authentic projects is most effective in an environment with a civic mission that encourages trusting relationships between all members of the school community (Carnegie Corporation of New York & Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Education, 2003; Wentzel, 1997; Skinner & Chapman,

⁴This work overlaps with recent research findings about risk/protective factors which the Search Institute has synthesized into their "developmental assets" framework (Scales & Roehlkepartain, 2003) and the focus on 21st Century skills by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). Each of these organizations have synthesized important pro-social and risk prevention research findings to develop models and instructional goals that complement the socio-moral emotional learning/character education research noted above.

2001). Service learning projects promote civic education because these activities teach students how to apply classroom material to real life situations (Morgan & Streb, 2001; Bradshaw, 2001; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). For example, activities like community service and debates about what kind of service to engage in enhance the learning environment by providing students opportunities to participate and to begin forming their own opinions of social and government systems (Torney-Purta, 2002; Youniss et al., 2002). Moreover, when these activities are presented in a collaborative environment, they encourage students to interact and build upon one another's ideas (Wentzel & Watkins, 2002; Ghaith, 2003). If students are given ownership and choice in their service learning projects, there is evidence that students' self-concept and tolerance for diversity will increase (Morgan & Streb, 2001).

Furthermore, school climate influences how educators feel about being in school and how they teach. Recent research shows that school climate powerfully affects the lives of educators and increases teacher retention. School climate enhances or minimizes emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of low personal accomplishment (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2002) as well as attrition (Miller, Brownell, & Smith, 1999). Research shows that when teachers feel supported by both the principal and their peers, teachers are more committed to their profession (Singh & Billingsley, 1998). A positive school climate is also associated with the development of teachers' beliefs that they can positively affect student learning (Guo & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2011; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future defines school climate in terms of a learning community and argues that poor school climate is an important factor contributing to teacher retention (Fulton, Yoon, & Lee, 2005).

3.3. Perceptions of school climate

Comparing teachers' perceptions to students' perceptions is also an important aspect to consider with regard to teaching and learning. When a study was conducted regarding student and teacher perceptions of overall school climate and academ-



In addition, it was found that teachers' perceptions of school climate were more sensitive to classroom-level factors, such as "poor classroom management and proportion of students with disruptive behaviors" while students' perceptions were more sensitive to school-level factors such as "student mobility, student-teacher relationships, and principal turnover" (Mitchell, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2010). Moreover, studies have also demonstrated that individual-level predictors, such as having behavior problems at school, being held back a grade, coming from a single-parent family, lower parents' education level, gender and students' ethnic background, gender, and age play significant roles in student perceptions of school climate (Fan, Williams, & Corkin, 2011; Schneider & Duran, 2010). These differences show that it is important to assess both sets of perceptions in relation to school climate improvement. In a study by Johnson and Stevens (2006), teachers' perceptions of school climate in 59 elementary schools were assessed using a modified version of the School-Level Environment Questionnaire (SLEQ). The study found a positive relationship between school mean teachers' perceptions of school climate and school mean student achievement.

The literature also shows that perception of the racial climate is another determining factor in student achievement. For example, Mattison and Aber (2007), using data from 382 African American and 1456 European American students, showed that positive perceptions of the racial climate were associated with higher student achievement and fewer discipline problems. The study found that racial differences in students' grades and discipline outcomes were associated with differences in perceptions of racial climate.

4. Institutional Environment

This section includes studies on the institutional environment, which can be broadly categorized in two aspects: i) school connectedness/engagement and, ii) physical layout and surroundings of school.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2009) defines school connectedness as "the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals." There is a growing body of research that suggests that school connectedness is a powerful

predictor of student engagement with academic health and academic outcomes (McNeely, Normantaker, & Baum, 2002; Whithick, 1996; Rimm et al., 2007; Resnick et al., 1997). Studies also show that school connectedness is associated with violence prevention (Karcher, 2002a, 2002b; Skiba et al., 2004), and student satisfaction and conduct problems (Loukas, Suzuki, & Horton, 2006). Moreover, school climate research indicates that school connectedness is a protective factor against risky sexual, violence and drug use behaviors (Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterie, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004; Kirby, 2001)⁵.

In this context, the literature also documents evidence on the relationship between perception of school climate and student engagement. For example, Bandyopadhyay, Cornell, Fan, & Gregory (2012), using the statewide sample of 7,058 ninth-graders randomly selected from 289 schools participating in the Virginia High School Safety Study, found that individual differences in perception of school climate characterized by bullying were associated with lower commitment to school, but not less involvement in school activities. The findings from the study also suggested that school level differences in student perceptions of bullying climate were associated with both lower commitments to school and less involvement in school activities.

Research on this topic has also investigated how smaller schools can greatly improve school climate and how the physical layout of the school can affect safety. Studies on this topic show that there are various benefits to smaller schools for student achievement, safety, and relationships among members of the school community. For example, a study by McNeely et al. (2002) found that smaller schools are positively correlated to school connectedness. In addition, research suggests that, at the middle-school level, smaller schools lead to better academic performance though the picture is more complicated at the elementary and high school levels (Stevenson, 2006). However, reducing the school size is not the only way to improve the school environment. Instead, a school should strive to form smaller learning communities as a way to improve the learning environment (Cotton, 2001). On the other hand,

⁵For a summary of this research, see Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2009)



Klein and Cosnell (2010) found that schools with lower numbers of incidents was higher, the rate of bullying offenses was in fact lower in larger schools. Given these conflicting data and findings on the effect of school size on school climate, the field needs more research to better inform this debate.

School space is another environmental dimension that impacts students' feelings about safety. Astor et al., (2010) demonstrated that students felt unsafe in unsupervised areas of the school building. In fact, there is a growing body of research that illuminates how environmental variables such as classroom layout, activity schedules and student-teacher interactions can influence student behaviors and feelings of safety (Conroy & Fox, 1994; Van Acker, Grant, & Henry, 1996). It has been found that the quality of school facilities affects student achievement and that the mediator of this relationship is school climate (Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008).

5. School Climate, the Processes of School Improvement

School climate is an important factor in the successful implementation of school reform programs (Bulach & Malone, 1994; Dellar, 1998; Gittelsohn et al., 2003; Gregory, Henry, & Schoeny, 2007; Guo & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2011). For example, teachers' perceptions of school climate influence their ability to implement school-based character and development programs (Beets et al., 2008; Guo, 2012). Studies about the implementation of character education programs suggest that the most effective ones are those incorporated into the school curriculum and developed holistically with the school community (Kerr et al., 2004). For example, teachers are expected to positively influence children and youth, not only teaching them to read, write, and think in words and numbers, but also to develop their social and moral sensitivities, character, and sense of citizenship (Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2002; in press; Cohen, in press). The core characteristics of a liberal education that are implicit in specific sets of required disciplines are the development of rational, critical, and imaginative thinking, an understanding of one's culture, its values and traditions, as well as engaging with other cultures, embracing diverse ideas, and being skilled in methods and technologies that facilitate communication of all kinds (Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2011). There is a growing

body of scientifically-based research supporting the strong impact that a shared socio-emotional and educational behaviors can have on students in school and ultimately in life (Liberati, Higgins-D'Alessandro, Venzoni, & Rosen, 2010; Zins et al., 2004).

Theoretically, school climate improvement efforts are grounded in ecological systems theories of child and youth development that recognize that characteristics of the individual, family, school, and other layers of the environment impact individual learning and behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Felner et al. (2001) argue, "whole school change efforts, when implemented comprehensively and with appropriate intensity and fidelity, may powerfully influence the prevention of socio-emotional, behavioral, and academic difficulties, as well as promotion of the acquisition of the full range of developmental competencies necessary for life success, well-being, and resilience (pg. 177)." Some of the most important research that elucidates the relationship between school climate and school improvement efforts has emerged from a multi-year study of schools in Chicago. Bryk and his colleagues found evidence that schools with high relational trust (good social relationships among members of the school community) are more likely to make changes that improve student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). In their most recent summary of this work, Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton (2010) detail how the following four systems interact in ways that support or undermine school improvement efforts: (i) professional capacity (e.g., teachers' knowledge and skills; support for teacher learning; and school-based learning communities); (ii) order, safety and norms (labeled as "school learning climate"); (iii) parent-school-community ties; and (iv) instructional guidance (e.g. curriculum alignment and the nature of academic demands). The authors underscore how their research has shown relational trust is the "glue" or the essential element that coordinates and supports these four processes, which are essential to effective school climate improvement (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010).

Summary

School climate—by definition—reflects students', school



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Enriching Minds and Hearts Because the Three R's are Not Enough

essentials, and student experiences of school life are fully, emotionally, critically, and ethically as well as academically. Over the past two decades, research studies from a range of historically disparate fields (e.g., risk prevention, health promotion, moral education, character education, mental health, and social-emotional learning) have identified research-based school improvement guidelines that converge predictably to promote safe, caring, responsive and participatory schools (Brown, Corrigan, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, in press; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009; Benninga et al., 2003; Berkowitz & Bier, 2006; Greenberg et al., 2003; Cohen, in press). School climate matters. Positive and sustained school climate is associated with and/or predictive of positive child and youth development, effective risk prevention and health promotion efforts, student learning and academic achievement, increased student graduation rates, and teacher retention. These research findings have contributed to the U.S. Department of Education in examining ways to use school climate and culture as an organizing data-driven concept that recognizes the range of pro-social efforts (e.g. character and moral education, social emotional learning, developmental assets, community schools) and risk prevention/mental health promotion efforts that protect children and promote essential social, emotional, ethical and civic learning (Jennings, 2009).

Despite the contribution and the growing interest in school climate improvement, the field lacks consensus about definitions, measurements, improvement models, and delineated implementation strategies. Clearly, the field is evolving and calls for rigorous and empirically sound research that focuses on relating specific aspects and activities of interventions to changes in specific components of school climate and how both interventions and climate affect specific socio-moral emotional, civic, and cognitive development and the teaching and learning of students and teachers. Understanding the interactions of these processes in the contexts of interventions will enable schools to successfully adapt interventions that have been shown to promote these positive outcomes. The keys to great schools include smarter educational policies as well as changes at the school and district levels; however, educators have the power to create schools that substantially

better the quality of the future lives of our students in this and future generations.

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Notes:

1. If you would like to receive abstracts for the citations noted below or care to share other empirical school climate research studies that have been published in peer-reviewed journals, please write to info@schoolclimate.org
2. Photocopying for nonprofit educational purposes is permitted.

Guiding Principles

The *Responsive Classroom* approach is informed by the work of educational theorists and the experiences of exemplary classroom teachers. Seven principles guide this approach:

1. The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
2. How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand.
3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. To be successful academically and socially, children need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
5. Knowing the children we teach—individually, culturally, and developmentally—is as important as knowing the content we teach.
6. Knowing the families of the children we teach and working with them as partners is essential to children's education.
7. How the adults at school work together is as important as their individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

Classroom Practices

The *Responsive Classroom* is a general approach to teaching, rather than a program designed to address a specific school issue. It is based on the premise that children learn best when they have both academic and social-emotional skills. The *Responsive Classroom* approach consists of a set of practices that build academic and social-emotional competencies and that can be used along with many other programs.

These classroom practices are the heart of the *Responsive Classroom* approach:

- **Morning Meeting**—gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead
- **Rule Creation**—helping students create classroom rules to ensure an environment that allows all class members to meet their learning goals
- **Interactive Modeling**—teaching children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through a unique modeling technique
- **Positive Teacher Language**—using words and tone as a tool to promote children's active learning, sense of community, and self-discipline
- **Logical Consequences**—responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity

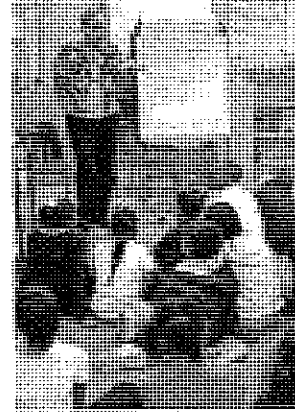
- **Guided Discovery**—introducing classroom materials using a format that encourages independence, creativity, and responsibility
- **Academic Choice**—increasing student learning by allowing students teacher-structured choices in their work
- **Classroom Organization**—setting up the physical room in ways that encourage students' independence, cooperation, and productivity
- **Working with Families**—creating avenues for hearing parents' insights and helping them understand the school's teaching approaches
- **Collaborative Problem Solving**—using conferencing, role playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students

Teacher Skill Drives Common Core Success

How Responsive Classroom® Helps



Effective implementation of the Common Core State Standards calls for essential changes to teacher practice. Mapping curriculum content to the standards is just half of the work of implementing the Common Core. The second crucial half is providing teachers with the high-quality, sustained professional development that enables them to shift their instructional practices as needed so that students learn in the ways intended by the Common Core.



“Without dispute, the single most important factor in achieving the standards is teachers with instructional prowess,” says Lora Hodges, executive director of Northeast Foundation for Children (NEFC), developer of the *Responsive Classroom* approach to teaching. “We need teachers who engage all students, lift them to high levels of content mastery, provoke critical thinking and deep analysis, and coach students into becoming strong communicators and collaborators.”

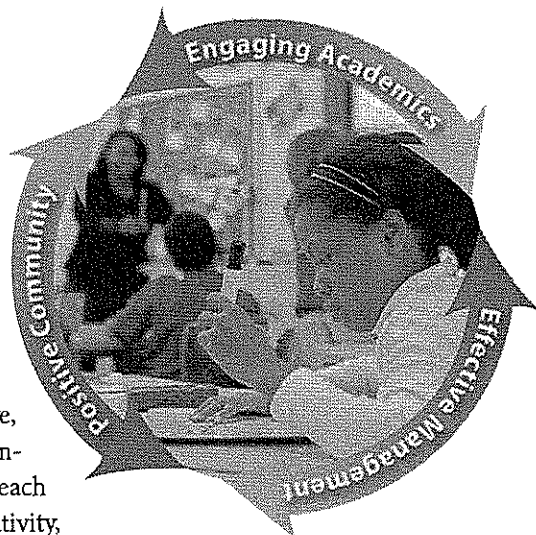
Among U.S. teachers, there is no shortage of passion for helping every child succeed. The Common Core makes it clear, Hodges notes, that there must also be no shortage of professional development in helping teachers translate this passion into practice. “What a teacher believes, knows, and does has a major influence on how students learn,” she says. “Teachers are at their best when they have not just passionate beliefs but also knowledge of how students learn best, and a body of evidence-based practices that enable them to deliver high-quality instruction.”

Since 1981, teachers have been turning to the *Responsive Classroom* approach to increase their knowledge of teaching and their capacity to deliver high-quality instruction. When they use this approach, students experience academic gains while building vital social and emotional competencies—competencies such as a calm focus that enables deep thinking, interpersonal skills for collaborating with diverse classmates, and a stick-to-itiveness that helps them persist in the face of difficulty. These are among the crucial skills students need to achieve the rigor inherent in the Common Core and to successfully navigate our increasingly complex world.

What Is the Responsive Classroom Approach?

Responsive Classroom is a research-based approach to elementary education that gives teachers highly practical strategies for developing competencies in three crucial domains:

- ✳ **Engaging Academics:** Offering lessons and assignments that are active and interactive, appropriately challenging, purposeful, and connected to students' interests so that students reach higher levels of motivation, skill mastery, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving.
- ✳ **Effective Management:** Establishing and teaching behavior expectations, handling behavior mistakes, managing the schedule, and organizing physical spaces in ways that enable students to work with autonomy and focus.
- ✳ **Positive Community:** Creating an environment in which every child feels safe and fully included, teacher and students share a common purpose, and a sense of joy envelops hard work, which together enable children to take the risks necessary for learning.



Some examples of *Responsive Classroom* practices are starting each day with a whole-class Morning Meeting to set the tone for learning, giving students meaningful choices in their learning, and using positive teacher language to support maximum student growth.

As schools and districts increasingly recognize that developing students' social and emotional competencies is key to improving academic outcomes, they are providing *Responsive Classroom* professional development for their teachers.

As a result, an estimated one million students each year are impacted by *Responsive Classroom* practices. School leaders report that after staff receive *Responsive Classroom* training, their school sees increased teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and an improved school climate.

RESEARCH: Responsive Classroom Increases Teachers' Use of Standards-Based Practices

Research shows that the *Responsive Classroom* approach strengthens teachers' ability to help students meet Common Core standards. A 2013 study by the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education found that teachers who use the *Responsive Classroom* approach used higher levels of standards-based mathematics teaching practices than non-*Responsive Classroom* teachers. As a result, researchers studying their classrooms observed:

- ✱ Higher levels of mathematical discourse
- ✱ More skill in representing mathematical concepts and problems
- ✱ Greater cognitive depth within lessons
- ✱ Greater coherence and accuracy of mathematical content

For details, see the research brief, "The Responsive Classroom Approach Increases the Use of Standards-Based Mathematics Teaching Practices," by Erin R. Ottmar, Sara E. Rimm-Kaufman, Robert Q. Berry, and Ross A. Larsen. http://bit.ly/rc_math

For other research on the Responsive Classroom approach, visit www.responsiveclassroom.org/research.

A CLOSER LOOK: How Responsive Classroom Aligns With the Common Core

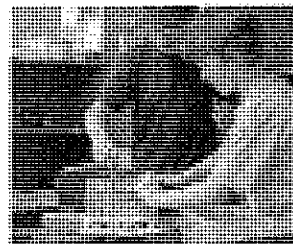
All *Responsive Classroom* practices help teachers create the conditions that enable students to do the higher-order learning called for by the Common Core. Especially important are the *Responsive Classroom* solutions that address the following Common Core challenges:

Common Core Challenge: A Climate of Learning All Day, Every Day

All the Common Core-aligned tools and techniques being offered to teachers will go only so far without one linchpin: the use of positive and effective teacher language.

Language—word choice, tone of voice, and pacing—is perhaps the most powerful tool available to teachers. It permeates every aspect of teaching. Teachers can't give a lesson, welcome a student into the room, coach students on a math assignment, or guide a language arts project without using language.

And how a teacher uses language has a huge impact on how students think, feel, and learn. Skillful teacher language creates a climate of joyful, rigorous learning and lights a fire in each child; unskillful teacher language can create a climate of frustration or fear and tear



children down. If teachers are going to help students reach the high bar set by the Common Core, they need to pay attention to this most potent item in their teacher toolkit.

Every adult can probably name a time when a mentor's words inspired them to go for something big, or when an especially encouraging comment kept them going when they were tired or scared. The question is, What exactly was it that made those utterances so inspiring and encouraging? How can teachers become conscious of those elements of language and use them deliberately when they speak to students?

Responsive Classroom solution: Using effective teacher language

Responsive Classroom trainings and resources break successful teacher language down into its building blocks and teach them to educators systematically. For example, teachers learn these four types of language that are especially crucial for helping students reach Common Core standards:

- ✱ **Envisioning language**—language that inspires students to imagine themselves achieving beyond their current reality
- ✱ **Open-ended questions**—questions that encourage inquisitiveness and connection-making by drawing on students' own thoughts, knowledge, and feelings
- ✱ **High-quality feedback**—feedback that names what students are specifically doing well so they know what to build on as they progress toward learning goals
- ✱ **Reminders and redirections**—brief words and phrases that keep children's behavior on track while building their autonomy, sense of competence, and self-discipline

For each type of language, teachers learn not only the how's (which words and what tone of voice have the most impact), but also the when's (in what situations to use each type of language).

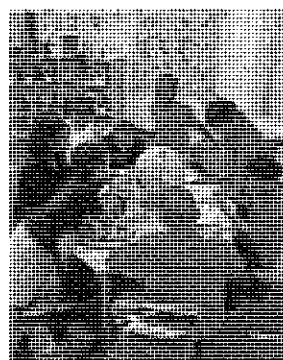
This conscious use of language brings out the best in children, inspiring hard work and enabling profound growth in students' academic engagement and achievement.

Common Core Challenge: Rich Academic Conversations

The Common Core's Speaking and Listening standards reflect a vision of students engaged in rich academic conversations and oral presentations that open minds and deepen learning.

"This is a worthy vision because it's this kind of high-quality communication that allows students to reap the full benefit of school," says NEFC's Hodges.

To succeed in academic conversations and presentations, students need to use a certain language—the language of learning. As Hodges puts it, "The language of learning is much more than ordinary speech. It is a set of concrete skills and strategies for listening, then



thinking; for thinking, then speaking; for translating curiosity into well-thought-out questions and arguments; for building on others' ideas and taking a conversation and train of thought to a higher and higher level."

Students don't come to school automatically knowing how to speak this language. Nor can we expect them to gradually pick it up by themselves. Instead, we need to deliberately teach the language of learning to students from the earliest grades onward, guiding them in the specific skills, words, and social conventions that make up this language.

But just as students don't automatically know this language, teachers may not automatically know how to teach it. Many may think there's nothing to this language, and so there's nothing to teach. Others might think the opposite—that the language of learning can't be taught, that some people just think and communicate in this way and some just don't. "Both would be dangerous assumptions," says Hodges. "Speaking, listening, reasoning, and intellectual curiosity are proficiencies that students must have as they work on curriculum that's mapped to the Common Core. When they come to the table without this set of proficiencies, or come with any of these proficiencies underdeveloped, teachers can and must teach them what they need to know."

Responsive Classroom solution: Teaching the language of learning

The *Responsive Classroom* approach gives teachers ways to explicitly teach the language of learning. It addresses core speaking and listening competencies such as:

- ✱ Listening with respect and to fully understand
- ✱ Speaking clearly, concisely, and confidently
- ✱ Asking purposeful questions and answering others' questions thoughtfully
- ✱ Backing up assertions with sound evidence
- ✱ Agreeing and disagreeing respectfully to advance powerful exchanges of ideas

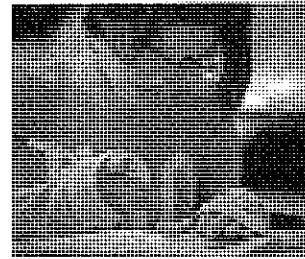
All *Responsive Classroom* teaching practices help build children's speaking and listening skills, and teachers receiving training in the approach learn how to use these practices in concert to introduce the skills, give students multiple opportunities to practice, offer meaningful feedback, and address common mistakes.

Importantly, teachers learn how to integrate this teaching and practice into activities throughout the school day—during math and language arts and other academic lessons, in Morning Meeting, during recess and lunch, and at dismissal—rather than treating them as an add-on to the teaching of academic content.

When teachers systematically teach the language of learning in this way, classroom discussions and presentations take on new depth and nuance. Not only does this mean meeting the Common Core standards, it also means that students get practice in the speaking and thinking skills they need for navigating life outside of school.

Common Core Challenge: More Complex Content and Skills

The Common Core is asking students to master harder content and skills. To name just a few examples, certain content and skills are being taught a grade earlier than before; students are being asked not only to solve math problems, but also to explain to others how they solved those problems; and in reading and writing, students are expected not only to draw conclusions, but to cite evidence to justify those conclusions.



“Teachers might feel a bit overwhelmed by these expectations,” says *Responsive Classroom* program developer Mike Anderson. “But by thinking through what skills their students are missing and then teaching students these skills, they’ll make the prospect of reaching these standards manageable for themselves and their students.”

Before every assignment, says Anderson, teachers should think about the prerequisite skills students need. “If students are being asked to explain to each other how they solved a problem, do they know how to take turns talking? Do they know how to respectfully show that they aren’t (or are) following a classmate’s explanation? If they’re to cite evidence to back up a conclusion, do they know how to mark important information in a text so they can find it later? Do they know how to think about whether information is important in the first place?”

By asking such questions and then specifically modeling each missing skill, Anderson notes, teachers will be able to scaffold children toward succeeding at more complex tasks.

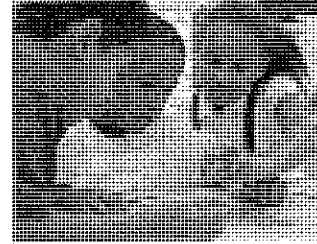
Responsive Classroom solution: Interactive Modeling

When teachers receive *Responsive Classroom* training, another practice they learn is Interactive Modeling, a simple yet highly effective technique for teaching these prerequisite skills. In conventional modeling, teachers show students what a procedure, task, or thinking process looks like. Interactive Modeling goes beyond that in three important ways:

- ✱ **Active observation by students**—Teachers using Interactive Modeling do little to no narrating and explaining during their modeling. Instead, they prompt students themselves to notice details about what the teacher demonstrated.
- ✱ **Immediate practice**—Interactive Modeling has built-in steps for students to immediately practice the skill the teacher demonstrated.
- ✱ **Immediate feedback**—Teachers using Interactive Modeling observe students’ practice carefully and take the time to give high-quality feedback in the moment.

“This combination of active noticing, immediate practice, and immediate feedback is so powerful,” Anderson comments. “It gets students to engage more deeply, learn more, and remember more. And that means they build a firmer and more logical staircase of competencies that enables them to tackle harder content and skills.”

Common Core Challenge: Genuine Student Engagement



The cognitive tasks the Common Core is asking students to do—analyze texts and data, evaluate arguments, interpret words from context, integrate information from diverse sources, apply methods learned in one context to another—require mental stamina and will feel like hard work to many children.

To motivate children to keep trying when the work gets hard, teachers need to ensure that the work is engaging. One of the best ways to do that is to give students some choice in their learning.

Teachers have always built choice into their lessons: *Choose six of the following ten questions to answer* or *Choose a partner to work with*. But these sorts of choices aren't motivating enough for students to truly stretch themselves.

So what kind of choice will do the job? And how can teachers structure choice so that students meet important learning goals, their own work stays manageable, and the classroom remains calm and orderly?

Responsive Classroom solution: Academic Choice

The *Responsive Classroom* practice of Academic Choice meets all these criteria. Students are invited to choose, within teacher-set boundaries, what they learn, how they learn, or both.

- ✱ **What to learn**—For example, to meet a particular learning goal, a teacher may allow students to decide which book to read, which animal to study, which community issue to research, and so forth.
- ✱ **How to learn**—For example, after students read a nonfiction text about the American Revolution, a teacher may give them three choices for how to analyze and summarize the text: write an essay, create a graphic representation, or write a song.

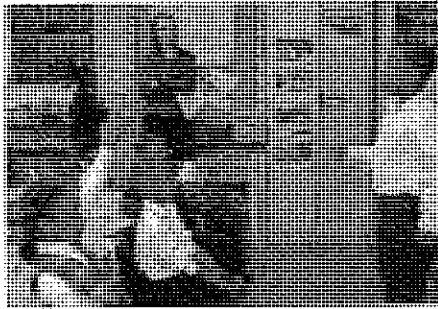
Meaningful choices such as these are highly motivating. If a child can choose a topic that sparks her, she'll be more willing to do the difficult text analysis being asked of her. If a student can select a research presentation method that matches his learning style or that he feels competent with, he'll go into the research with more confidence and energy.

In addition to giving meaningful choices, teachers using *Responsive Classroom* Academic Choice lead students through three activity phases:

- ✱ **Planning**—Teachers present available choices for meeting a learning goal and then help students choose and plan their work responsibly.
- ✱ **Working**—Students follow through on their plan. As students work, teachers observe, offer support, and extend students' thinking.

✱ **Reflecting**—Teachers guide children in answering questions such as *What about my work surprised or excited me?* and *How does this work change the way I think about this topic?* Such questions help children assimilate what they've learned.

Giving truly meaningful choices and taking children through these three phases of academic work improves children's thinking and problem-solving skills, decreases problem behaviors, and builds their social interaction skills. These outcomes are vitally important if students are to succeed with the Common Core.



Keeping the Focus on Teacher Skill

“We need common training and common resources,” one teacher tweeted in response to a news commentary asking how our nation is to effectively implement the Common Core. This teacher was exactly right.

If we give teachers the appropriate training and resources, they'll transform their teaching from good to great, enabling children to soar to new heights. *Responsive Classroom* professional development is one way to ensure that teachers have the skills they need to help children meet the Common Core State Standards.

Responsive  Classroom®

Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc.
85 Avenue A, P.O. Box 718
Turners Falls, MA 01376-0718

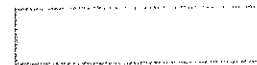
800-360-6332 Fax 877-206-3952
www.responsiveclassroom.org

This white paper is available
on the *Responsive Classroom* website at
<http://bit.ly/rcwhitepaper2>



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News from CASEL and Our Partners in the Field of Social and Emotional Learning

A Leading SEL Program Gets Positive Results—But Only if It's Used

by Sara Rimm-Kaufman

In March 2014 the American Educational Research Journal (AERJ) published results from a large, rigorous, three-year study of the Responsive Classroom approach. Responsive Classroom is one of 23 exemplary evidence-based social and emotional learning programs identified in the 2013 CASEL Guide. The study, funded by the Institute of Education Sciences in the U.S. Department of Education and the National Science Foundation, was conducted by Sara Rimm-Kaufman and colleagues at the University of Virginia Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL). In addition to being a national leader in the SEL field, in 2007 Rimm-Kaufman was the first scholar to receive CASEL's Joseph E. Zins Award for Action Research on Social and Emotional Learning. In this blog entry, Rimm-Kaufman describes the origins of the study, its method, and its findings.

In 2000 I began research on the Responsive Classroom approach. I've conducted two studies—one from 2001 to 2004 and a second from 2008-2011. My goal has been to conduct research and share findings that provide guidance for administrators and teachers making decisions about daily practice in classrooms. There has been a consistent, single thread present in both studies—my team and I wrestle with key questions about *how* the Responsive Classroom creates change. The focus on “mechanism” speaks to a need we have in educational and psychological

research to understand how children's personal attributes and their experiences in classrooms influence their self-control, engagement in learning, and achievement. Recently we have been examining this issue in math classrooms in the presence of the new, challenging mathematics standards.

I was initially drawn to Responsive Classroom because of the intent of its developers. The approach was created by a group of wise educators who wanted schools to feel like caring, safe communities. Upon examining the principles and practices, I could see they were based on strong developmental theory. They didn't just focus on improving a set of social and emotional skills in children. They also focused on enhancing the capacity of teachers to be able to interact with children effectively. For example, teachers learned strategies to facilitate warm and responsive interactions with children, use proactive approaches to handling behavior problems, utilize language effectively, and foster children's development of self-control and autonomy.

The study described in the *AERJ* article examined the efficacy of the Responsive Classroom approach over three years. Twenty-four schools were assigned randomly to intervention or comparison conditions. We studied 2,000 students and their teachers from the end of second grade to the end of fifth grade to examine the effects of exposure to the Responsive Classroom approach on math and reading achievement. We paid careful attention to the interactions that occurred when teachers were using Responsive Classroom practices. We watched and coded seven hours of video footage for the 300 teachers. Each video was coded between two and three times with different coding systems. We measured use of Responsive Classroom practices in one set of observations and utilized the Classroom Assessment Scoring System in another. For math classrooms we used the M-Scan measure to assess teachers' use of standards-based mathematics.

These observations expanded our understanding of classroom and teaching practices. We have published papers in the *Journal of School Psychology*, *School Psychology Quarterly*, *Prevention Science*, *School Psychology Review*, and the *Elementary School Journal* that shed light on Responsive Classroom practices and teacher effectiveness. The findings

we report in the recent *AERJ* paper showed that exposure to Responsive Classroom practices produced 11-12%-ile gains in student math and reading achievement over three years. Gains were larger for students who were in the lowest quartile (below 25%-ile) in math achievement in second grade. However, the findings show that simply receiving training in the Responsive Classroom approach did not improve student achievement. Achievement gains were only evident when teachers *adopted* the Responsive Classroom practices and *used* them regularly in the classroom.

Focus groups with teachers revealed experiences that were important in helping them adopt Responsive Classroom practices. Principal support for Responsive Classroom practices was critically important. So were efforts by school leaders to create a psychologically safe environment that allowed teachers to take the risk of learning and using new methods.

To read the AERJ article go to:

<http://aer.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/02/21/0002831214523821.abstract>

For more information about research conducted by Sara Rimm-Kaufman see:

<http://www.socialdevelopmentlab.org/>

For short informative article summaries from the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning see:

<http://curry.virginia.edu/research/centers/castl/projects/castl-research-briefs>

For information about doctoral and masters programs that teach about SEL at the Curry School of Education, see:

<http://curry.virginia.edu/academics/areas-of-study/educational-psychology>

For information about the Responsive Classroom approach, see www.responsiveclassroom.org

The New York Times

March 11, 2013

Defining Bullying Down

By EMILY BAZELON

NEW HAVEN

THE March 3 death of Bailey O'Neill, a 12-year-old boy in Darby Township, Pa., was widely attributed to bullying, based on allegations that a classmate hit the boy in the face in January. He suffered a concussion, his family said, and eventually seizures.

Bullying was also the headline in the death of Amanda Todd, a 15-year-old Canadian girl who committed suicide after making a viral video in which she described being seduced, stalked and blackmailed online, probably by an adult.

Were these instances of actual bullying? It's hard to say. But what's notable is that observers automatically assumed they were, even though we know that "bullying" isn't the same as garden-variety teasing or a two-way conflict. The word is being overused — expanding, accordionlike, to encompass both appalling violence or harassment and a few mean words. State laws don't help: a wave of recent anti-bullying legislation includes at least 10 different definitions, sowing confusion among parents and educators.

All the misdiagnosis of bullying is making the real but limited problem seem impossible to solve. If every act of aggression counts as bullying, how can we stop it? Down this road lies the old assumption that bullying is a rite of childhood passage. But that's wrong.

Bullying is a particular form of harmful aggression, linked to real psychological damage, both short and long term. There are concrete strategies that can succeed in addressing it — and they all begin with shifting the social norm so that bullying moves from being shrugged off to being treated as unacceptable. But we can't do that if we believe, and tell our children, that it's everywhere.

The definition of bullying adopted by psychologists is physical or verbal abuse, repeated over time, and involving a power imbalance. In other words, it's about one person with more social status lording it over another person, over and over again, to make him miserable

But when every bad thing that happens to children gets called bullying, we end up with misleading narratives that obscure other distinct forms of harm. In the case of a district attorney has said he has found no evidence of bullying as he properly d

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history of intimidation over time. It's a tragedy if the evidence ends up showing that he died from head injuries caused by another child's punches, but it's a different kind of tragedy if that child was known for bullying, and that his parents and his school failed to stop him.

In the video Amanda Todd made before her death, her account of online seduction, stalking and blackmail cries out for condemnation and police investigation. Yet because she also reported conflicts with kids at her school, her death was mostly ascribed simply to bullying.

On the other extreme of the spectrum, overly broad legal definitions of bullying — for example, ones that leave out the factors of repetition or power imbalance — can lead parents to cry bully whenever their child has a conflict with another child.

Sorting through the accusations is a burden for schools, especially when state laws straitjacket their response to a bullying accusation, rather than allowing them to use their judgment and take account of context. And the “bully” label carries a stigma that's hard for a child to escape. It makes a child seem permanently heartless, rather than capable of feeling empathy, which almost all are.

Crying wolf about bullying isn't good for the children who play the victim, either. Those who hold onto that identity are less likely to recover from adversity. Bullying victims need sympathy; they also need help learning to be resilient.

One way to better identify real bullying is to listen to how teenagers themselves describe their interpersonal conflicts. Most teenagers can identify bullying, but they can also distinguish it from what they often call “drama,” which, the researchers Danah Boyd and Alice Marwick have shown, is an accurate and common name for the ordinary skirmishes that mark most children's lives. In fact, it's drama that's common, and bullying, properly defined, that's less so.

Understanding what bullying means to children is integral to the success of every smart bullying prevention effort, because it harnesses the power of the majority. One effective strategy is for schools to survey their own students about bullying, and then broadcast the results to students. When they see evidence of what most of them know intuitively — that bullying is outlier behavior — they're even less likely to engage in it.

It's also crucial for the adults in the school to set the tone. They have to understand what bullying is and what it's not, respond when they see a domineering child going after a victim, and foster the strong ties with students that make all the difference for children's sense of belonging and decisions about where to turn when they need help.

Adults can also often do more good by asking questions that push children to come up with their

own strategies than by dictating solutions themselves. By many measures, teenagers today are faring better than they were a generation ago. The rates of teenage pregnancy, binge drinking and drunken driving are down. So is violent juvenile crime and even fighting on school property.

Those heartening developments help explain why bullying is holding our national attention: as a society, we have the wherewithal now to attend to a psychological harm that has long deeply affected kids, but which adults used to mostly ignore. Bullying is a problem we can and should address. But not if we're wrongly led to believe that it's everything and everywhere.

Emily Bazelon is a senior editor at Slate and the author of "Sticks and Stones: Defeating the Culture of Bullying and Rediscovering the Power of Character and Empathy."

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: March 18, 2013

An Op-Ed essay on Tuesday about the widening definition of bullying misidentified the hometown of Bailey O'Neill, a 12-year-old boy whose death was widely attributed to bullying. It was Darby Township, Pa., not Upper Darby.

SEARCH

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CYBER BULLYING

WHO IS AT RISK

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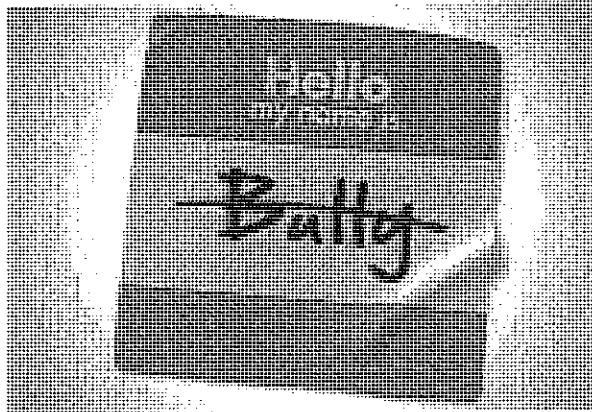
Post date: October 23, 2013

By: Erin Reiney, MPH, Health Resources and Services Administration and Susan P. Limber, Ph.D., Clemson University

"That kid is a bully."

We have all heard someone utter these words at one time or another, but is it fair to label a child?

The labels *bully*, *victim*, and *target* are used often by media, researchers and others to refer to children who bully others and children who are bullied. Yet, you won't find these terms used in this way on StopBullying.gov. For example, rather than calling a child a "bully," our website refers to "the child who bullied."



Some have asked us: Why does it matter? Isn't it easier to just say "bully?"

We can certainly understand wanting to use shorthand terms, since it feels a bit clumsy saying "the child who bullied" or "the child who was bullied." However, here are several important reasons we avoid using labels like *bully* and *victim*:

- Using a label sends a message that the child's behavior doesn't change from one situation to the next.** Actually, a child may play different roles in bullying, depending on the situation. She may bully a younger child on the bus on Monday, watch anxiously as a friend is verbally bullied on Tuesday, and be bullied herself online over the weekend. Research confirms that a small but worrisome group of children are regularly bullied but also bully others (Limber et al., 2012; Nansel et al., 2001; Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002).
- Labels suggest that behavior is fixed and is unlikely to improve over time.** Fortunately, behavior can change for the better. A 2nd grader may frequently bully a classmate but, with help from teachers and parents, could stop this behavior by 3rd grade. Nevertheless, the label may have "stuck" and could be associated with him through his elementary years and beyond.
- Labels can be harmful to kids.** In her book "Mindset: The New Psychology of Success," Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck notes that labels can limit how children see themselves and how other children and adults see them. She argues that every label sends a message that tells children how to think about themselves. Too often, the messages say, "You have permanent traits and I'm judging them," as opposed to "You are a developing person and I am interested in your development."

Both positive and negative labels can cause problems. According to Dweck, "when you're given a positive label, you're afraid of losing it, and when you're hit with a negative label, you're afraid of deserving it." These labels may also affect how others treat children who are involved in bullying – even if they describe the behavior using other terms, such as "fighting" or "drama." When children are labeled as "bullies," it may signal to their peers that they are bad kids who should be avoided and it may give adults permission to show scorn. Similarly, when children are labeled as "victims," this may send a message that they are weak or deserving of pity – when what they may actually need is help to stop the bullying.

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4. Using labels may suggest that bullying is purely the "fault" of the child and allow us to ignore other factors that contribute to bullying behavior. Although individual differences in temperament and personality may play a role in children's involvement in bullying, there are many factors that make bullying more or less likely, such as peer influences, family dynamics, and school climates (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012; Espelage & Swearer, 2011). To reduce bullying, it is important to focus on all of these factors.

So, the next time you are tempted to use the terms "bully," "victim" or even "bully-victim" as shorthand labels for children involved in bullying...don't. Focus on behavior, not on the label.

Join the conversation on the StopBullying.gov Facebook page

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As a part of my schoolwork, my school gives me the use of computers and storage space on the server for my work. My behavior and language are to follow the same rules I follow in my class and in my school. To help myself and others, I agree to the following promises:

1. I will use the computers *only* to do school work, and not for *any other* reason. I will not store material that is not related to my schoolwork.
2. I will use the Internet *only* with my teacher's permission.
3. I will not give my password to anyone else, and I will not ask for or use anyone else's password.
4. I will *not* put on the computer my address or telephone number, or any other personal information about myself or anyone else.
5. I will not upload, link, or embed an image of myself or others without my teacher's permission.
6. I will not play games that a teacher has not approved.
7. I will be polite and considerate when I use the computer; I will not use it to annoy, be mean to, frighten, threaten, tease, bully, or poke fun at anyone; I will not use swear words or any other rude language.
8. I will not try to see, send, or upload anything that says and/or shows bad or mean things about anyone's race, religion or sex. I will not try to see, send, upload or play any games, apps or websites that are violent or promote violence.
9. I will not damage the computer or anyone else's work.
10. I will not take credit for other people's work and I will not pretend to be anyone else online.
11. If I have or see a problem, I will not try to fix it myself but I will tell the teacher.
12. I will not block or interfere with school or school system communications.
13. My teacher may look at my work to be sure that I am following these rules, and if I am not, there will be consequences which may include not being able to use the computer.
14. I know that the conduct that is forbidden in school is also forbidden when I use computers outside of school if it interferes with other students' education, and if I break the rules there will be consequences in school.

As a part of my schoolwork, my school lets me bring my own device, such as a phone, tablet or computer, to school with me. I promise to follow the same rules I follow in my class and in my school and using school computers. To help myself and others, I agree to the following promises:

1. I will not use my device to take a photo or video of anyone else unless the teacher says it is okay as part of a lesson.
2. I know that my teacher can take my device away from me and can look at my device at any time if it appears that I am not following the rules or if I am using my device at a time I am not supposed to use it.

3. If the teacher tells me to turn off my device, put my device away or give my device to my teacher, I will do it right away.

4. I know that school is not responsible if anything happens to my device at school and that I can't leave my device at school overnight.

Print Student's Name: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parents: I have read and discussed with my child the Acceptable Use Agreement, and I give permission for his or her use of the resources. I understand that computer access and my child's ability to bring his/her own device are conditional upon adherence to the agreement. Although students are supervised using computers, and their use of school computers is electronically monitored, I am aware of the possibility that my child may gain access to material that school officials and I may consider inappropriate or not of educational value.

Print Parent's Name: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

*** STUDENTS MAY NOT USE COMPUTERS OR BRING THEIR OWN DEVICES UNLESS THIS AGREEMENT IS SIGNED AND RETURNED TO THE TEACHER.**

ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT: INTRANET/INTERNET

Grades 3 - 5, *

Including Summer School
(Renewable in grades 6 & 9)

As a part of my schoolwork, my school gives me the use of computers and storage space on the server for my work. My behavior and language should follow the same rules I follow in my class and in my school. To help myself and others, I agree to the following promises:

1. I will use the computers *only* to do school work, as explained to me by my teacher and not for *any other* reason. I will not use a school computer for personal or illegal purposes.
2. I will use the Internet *only* in ways the teacher has approved.
3. I will not give my password to anyone else, and I will not ask for or use anyone else's password.
4. I will *not* put on the computer my address or telephone number, or any other personal information about myself or anyone else.
5. I will not upload, link, or embed an image of myself or others to non-secured, public sites.
6. I will not use games or other electronic resources that have objectionable content or that engage me in an inappropriate simulated activity.
7. I will be polite and considerate when I use the computer. I will not use it to annoy, be mean to, frighten, tease, or poke fun at anyone. I will not use swear words or other rude language.
8. I will not use the computer to bully or threaten anyone, including teachers, schoolmates or other children.
9. I will not try to see, send, or upload anything that says and or shows bad or mean things about anyone's race, religion or sex. I will not try to see, send, upload or play any games, apps or websites that are violent or promote violence.
10. I will not damage the computer or anyone else's work. I will not pretend to be anyone else online.
11. I will not break copyright rules or take credit for anyone else's work.
12. If I have or see a problem, I will not try to fix it myself but I will tell the teacher. *If the problem is an inappropriate image I will turn off the monitor and then seek help.*
13. I will not block or interfere with school or school system communications.
14. My computer use is not private; my teacher may look at my work to be sure that I am following these rules, and if I am not, there will be consequences which may include not being able to use the computer.
15. I know that the conduct that is forbidden in school is also forbidden when I use computers outside of school if it interferes with other students' education, -and if I break the rules there will be consequences in school.

As a part of my schoolwork, my school lets me bring my own device, such as a phone, tablet or computer, to school with me. I promise to follow the same rules I follow in my class and in my school and using school computers, as described above, To help myself and others, I agree to the following promises:

- 1. I will not use my device to take photos or video of any other person unless it is part of a lesson and I have permission from my teacher.**
- 2. I will not use social media apps or websites on my device while I am at school.**
- 2. I know that my teacher can take my device away from me and can look at my device at any time if it appears that I am not following the rules or if I am using my device at a time I am not allowed.**

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3. If the teacher tells me to turn off my device, put my device away or turn in my device to the teacher, I will do it right away.

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Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parents: *I have read and discussed with my son or daughter the Acceptable Use Agreement, and I give permission for him or her to use these resources. I understand that computer access and my child's ability to bring his/her own device is are conditional upon adherence to the guidelines above. Although students are supervised when using these resources, and their use is electronically monitored (while on school computers), I am aware of the possibility that my son or daughter may gain access to material that school officials and I may consider inappropriate or not of educational value.*

Print Parent's Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

*** STUDENTS MAY NOT USE COMPUTERS OR BRING THEIR OWN DEVICES UNLESS THIS AGREEMENT IS SIGNED AND RETURNED TO THE TEACHER.**

ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT: INTRANET/INTERNET

Middle Schools and High School * (including Summer School)

I understand that the Westport schools provide electronic resources, including Internet access and storage space for students' work, as an integral part of the curriculum. Behavior and language in the use of these resources should be consistent with classroom standards. I agree to the following responsibilities and restrictions:

1. I will use the electronic resources, including storage space, *only* for educational purposes related to work in Westport schools, and not for *any* personal, commercial or illegal purposes.
2. I will use the Internet *only* with the permission of the staff member in charge.
3. I will not use games or other electronic resources that have objectionable content or that engage me in an inappropriate simulated activity.
4. I will not give my password to any other user, nor attempt to learn or to use anyone else's password, and I will not transmit my address or telephone number, or any personal or confidential information about myself or others.
5. I will not upload, link, or embed an image of myself or others to non-secured, public sites without my teacher's permission and a signed parental permission slip.
6. I will not make statements or use the likeness of another person through website postings, email, instant messages, etc., that harass, intimidate, threaten, insult, libel or ridicule students, teachers, administrators or other staff members of the school community, make statements that are falsely attributed to others, or use language that is obscene. I will not impersonate another individual online in any forum.
7. I will not attempt to access, upload, or transmit material that attacks ethnic, religious or racial groups, or material that is pornographic, violent, or explicitly sexual in nature.
8. I will not violate copyright laws, damage or tamper with hardware or software, vandalize or destroy data, intrude upon, alter or destroy the files of another user, introduce or use computer "viruses," attempt to gain access to restricted information or networks, or block, intercept or interfere with any email or electronic communications by teachers and administrators to parents, or others.
9. I will report any problems to the supervising staff member.
10. I understand that my use of the school system's computers is not private, and that the district reserves the right to monitor use to assure compliance with these guidelines; violations may lead to revocation of computer access and/or other disciplinary measures.
11. I understand that the prohibited conduct described above is also prohibited off campus when using private equipment if it has the effect of seriously interfering with the educational process, and that such off-campus violations may lead to disciplinary measures.

I understand that the Westport schools allow me to bring my own devices such as phones, tablets and computers. In order to be permitted to bring my own device, I agree to the following responsibilities and restrictions:

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1. I will follow all school rules while using my own device on school grounds and I understand that the rules outlined above regarding my use of school computer resources apply to my use of my own device on school property and that rule 11 above applies to my use of my device off school property.

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2. I will not take photos or record video of any student, teacher or administrator unless I have that individual's express permission to do so.

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3. I will not use my device during class unless expressly instructed to do so by a teacher and I will immediately comply with a directive to turn my device off, to put my device away or to turn my device over to a teacher or administrator.

4. I understand that my device may be confiscated at any time and that a teacher or administrator may view contents of my device including but not limited to, texts, emails or social media postings, if it appears that I may have used my device in violation of school rules or this Agreement.

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5. I understand that the district is not responsible for theft, damage or loss of my device and I understand that I am not permitted to leave my device at school overnight unless it is secured in a locked locker.

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Print Student's Name: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parents: I have discussed with my son or daughter this Acceptable Use Agreement, and I give him or her permission to use electronic resources, understanding that this access and use of personal devices on school grounds is conditional upon adherence to the agreement. Although students are supervised when using school these resources, and their use is of school resources is electronically monitored, I am aware of the possibility that my son or daughter may gain access to material that school officials and I may consider inappropriate or not of educational value.

Print Parent's Name: _____ Parent's
Signature: _____ Date: _____

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ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT: INTRANET/INTERNET

Grades K- 2 ,*

Including Summer School
(Renewable in Grades 3, 6 & 9)

As a part of my schoolwork, my school gives me the use of computers and storage space on the server for my work. My behavior and language are to follow the same rules I follow in my class and in my school. To help myself and others, I agree to the following promises:

1. I will use the computers *only* to do school work, and not for *any other* reason. I will not store material that is not related to my schoolwork.
2. I will use the Internet *only* with my teacher's permission.
3. I will not give my password to anyone else, and I will not ask for or use anyone else's password.
4. I will *not* put on the computer my address or telephone number, or any other personal information about myself or anyone else.
5. I will not upload, link, or embed an image of myself or others without my teacher's permission.
6. I will not play games that a teacher has not approved.
7. I will be polite and considerate when I use the computer; I will not use it to annoy, be mean to, frighten, threaten, tease, bully, or poke fun at anyone; I will not use swear words or any other rude language.
8. I will not try to see, send, or upload anything that says and/or shows bad or mean things about anyone's race, religion or sex. I will not try to see, send, upload or play any games, apps or websites that are violent or promote violence.
9. I will not damage the computer or anyone else's work.
10. I will not take credit for other people's work and I will not pretend to be anyone else online.
11. If I have or see a problem, I will not try to fix it myself but I will tell the teacher.
12. I will not block or interfere with school or school system communications.
13. My teacher may look at my work to be sure that I am following these rules, and if I am not, there will be consequences which may include not being able to use the computer.
14. I know that the conduct that is forbidden in school is also forbidden when I use computers outside of school if it interferes with other students' education, and if I break the rules there will consequences in school.

As a part of my schoolwork, my school lets me bring my own device, such as a phone, tablet or computer, to school with me. I promise to follow the same rules I follow in my class and in my school and using school computers. To help myself and others, I agree to the following promises:

1. I will not use my device to take a photo or video of anyone else unless the teacher says it is okay as part of a lesson.
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3. If the teacher tells me to turn off my device, put my device away or give my device to my teacher, I will do it right away.

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Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

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ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT: INTRANET/INTERNET

Grades 3 - 5, *

Including Summer School
(Renewable in grades 6 & 9)

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2. I will use the Internet *only* in ways the teacher has approved.
3. I will not give my password to anyone else, and I will not ask for or use anyone else's password.
4. I will *not* put on the computer my address or telephone number, or any other personal information about myself or anyone else.
5. I will not upload, link, or embed an image of myself or others to non-secured, public sites.
6. I will not use games or other electronic resources that have objectionable content or that engage me in an inappropriate simulated activity.
7. I will be polite and considerate when I use the computer. I will not use it to annoy, be mean to, frighten, tease, or poke fun at anyone. I will not use swear words or other rude language.
8. I will not use the computer to bully or threaten anyone, including teachers, schoolmates or other children.
9. I will not try to see, send, or upload anything that says and or shows bad or mean things about anyone's race, religion or sex. I will not try to see, send, upload or play any games, apps or websites that are violent or promote violence.
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6. I will not make statements or use the likeness of another person through website postings, email, instant messages, etc., that harass, intimidate, threaten, insult, libel or ridicule students, teachers, administrators or other staff members of the school community, make statements that are falsely attributed to others, or use language that is obscene. I will not impersonate another individual online in any forum.
7. I will not attempt to access, upload, or transmit material that attacks ethnic, religious or racial groups, or material that is pornographic, violent, or explicitly sexual in nature.
8. I will not violate copyright laws, damage or tamper with hardware or software, vandalize or destroy data, intrude upon, alter or destroy the files of another user, introduce or use computer "viruses," attempt to gain access to restricted information or networks, or block, intercept or interfere with any email or electronic communications by teachers and administrators to parents, or others.
9. I will report any problems to the supervising staff member.
10. I understand that my use of the school system's computers is not private, and that the district reserves the right to monitor use to assure compliance with these guidelines; violations may lead to revocation of computer access and/or other disciplinary measures.
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Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Print Parent's Name: _____ Parent's
Signature: _____ Date: _____

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My Content....	Appropriate grade language and word choice was missing from my writing. I did not have appropriate grade level describing words in part of my answer to help me be specific.	I used appropriate grade language and word choice while writing. I used appropriate grade level describing words in part of my answer to help me be specific.	I used --- grade language and word choice while writing. I used appropriate grade level describing words in every part of my answer to help me be specific.
Word Choice	I answered the question but did not use an example or explanation on to support my answer.	I explained parts of my answers and used an example to support my thinking.	I used an example and explained my thinking for every part of the discussion board question(s).
Elaboration			
Discussion Specific:			
<i>Fill in as explained by teacher</i>			
My Reply....	In my reply to another classmate's post I used respectful language and explained my thinking.	In my reply to another classmate's post I used respectful language and explained my thinking.	In my reply to another classmate's post I used respectful language and explained my thinking. My feedback furthered the discussion by asking an appropriate question or based on feedback to my reply.
Respectfulness	In my reply to another classmate's post with respectful language.		

INTERNET SAFETY ISSUES

- Social Networking
- Cyberbullying
- Mobile Devices
- Online Personal Safety
- Parent Resources

How to Respond

Strategies for dealing with uncomfortable online situations:

1. Quit the website.
2. Quit the application.
3. Turn off the computer.
4. Always tell an adult or parent.
5. Leave the conversation and talk to the friend on the phone or in person.

Calendar for Eighth Grade Transition

2013–2014

January 14 – Department Chairs and High School Counselors meet with Eighth Grade Counselors in the High School Guidance Office.

8:00 am – 12:00 pm

January 23 – Assistant Principal, Director of Guidance, Counselors and Staples High School students meet with Eighth Graders at Coleytown Middle School.

1:45 pm – 2:30 pm

January 24 – Assistant Principal, Director of Guidance, Counselors and Staples High School students meet with Eighth Graders at Bedford Middle School.

2:00 pm – 2:45 pm

January 30 – Eighth Grade Parent Night – Assistant Principal, Director of Guidance, Staples High School Counselors, Eighth Grade Counselors (if available) meet with Eighth Grade parents at Staples High School in the auditorium. (Snow date: February 5th)

7:00 pm

February 4 – Curriculum Open House at Staples High School in the auditorium. (Snow date: February 12th)

7:00 pm

April – June – PPT and 504 transition meetings with Bedford and Coleytown Middle Schools.

June – Staples High School Counselors will meet with all Eighth Graders to review schedules and resolve conflicts for Conflict Resolution. Dates and times are to be determined.

August – Freshmen Family Tours

8th Grade Meetings with Students

- **Introductions:** you and Student Ambassadors. *"What do you want to know about Staples?"*
- **Role of High School Counselor:** available for academic, personal/social, and college/career counseling. (For academic issues, a discussion with the individual teacher is most helpful. Attendance and discipline will be handled by the asst. principal's office.)
- **Schedule:** general (not detailed) explanation of a class meeting 4x a week on a rotating basis. (They seem to be under the illusion that they will have a 4 day week!)
- **Academic Course Selection:** emphasize choosing the appropriate classes for them and those classes will not be the same for everyone. Illusion that they must be in all honors courses to be challenged.
- **Elective Course Selection:** choose carefully & be flexible! Some are competitive (Radio/Pottery) and some are not open to 9th graders (Culinary). Once selected, other options not always available.
- **Free period:** discuss with parents and 8th grade counselor. It is a good decision for some and not for others. Must take 7 courses each semester as a 9th grader.
- **Learning Centers:** one for each academic subject and technology literacy that you can visit during your free period. Going for extra help is OK (encouraged) – most kids do.
- **Expectations:** difference between middle and high school in terms of taking responsibility for your work and deadlines. Have to do homework!
- **Attendance Policy:** learn about on the first day of school next year. There is no homeroom at the high school – you arrive at school and go straight to your first class. Get to school on time!
- **Four Year Plan:** freshman year is part of plan building toward graduation and post high school planning. (Not only does freshman year count, but it is 1/3 of the GPA they will have when applying to college.)
- **Involvement:** clubs/activities/athletics. Athletic tryout info will be on website and Westport News - check for deadlines.
- **Spring:** don't drop the ball. There may be a reference to middle school grades when you initially arrive at high school. Keep up activities as well. Middle school algebra and foreign language grades appear on the high school transcript (not incorporated into the GPA).
- **June:** meet individually with counselor at SHS to review schedule, answer questions
- **August:** individual tours the week before school starts

GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT SCHEDULE

2013 - 2014

Senior Parent Coffee

CAFETERIA

Thursday, September 12th at 7:30 am

Friday, September 13th at 8:30 am

Freshmen Parent Coffee

CAFETERIA

Thursday, September 26th at 7:30 am

Friday, September 27th at 8:30 am

Financial Aid Night

AUDITORIUM

Thursday, October 10th at 7:00 pm

Alumni/College Panel

AUDITORIUM

Wednesday, November 27th at 11:00 am

Junior Parent Night

AUDITORIUM

Thursday, January 9th at 7:00 pm

Snow Date January 16th

Eighth Grade Parent Night

AUDITORIUM

Thursday, January 30th at 7:00 pm

Snow Date February 5th

Sophomore Parent Coffee

CAFETERIA

Thursday, April 24th at 7:30 am

Friday, April 25th at 8:30 am

College Panel Night

AUDITORIUM

Tuesday, May 20th at 7:00 pm

Sophomore Parent Coffee

Thursday, April 24, 2014
7:30 – 8:30am
and
Friday, April 25, 2014
8:30 - 9:30am
Staples Cafeteria



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Welcome

The purpose of today:

- Staff introductions
 - Timeline/process/resources
 - Classroom presentations
- April 21st – May 5th



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SHS Guidance Staff

<u>Counselor</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Tom Brown	341-1229	tbrown@westport.k12.ct.us
Victoria Capozzi	341-5198	vcapozzi@westport.k12.ct.us
Jennifer Currie	341-5133	jcurrie@westport.k12.ct.us
Leslie Hammer	341-1228	lhammer@westport.k12.ct.us
Denise Honeycutt	341-1232	dhoneycutt@westport.k12.ct.us
Ed Huydic	341-1233	ehuydic@westport.k12.ct.us
Bill Plunkett	341-1430	wplunkett@westport.k12.ct.us
Elaine Schwartz	341-1434	eschwartz@westport.k12.ct.us
Deborah Slocum	341-1234	dslocum@westport.k12.ct.us
Christine Talerico	341-1238	ctalerico@westport.k12.ct.us
PJ Washenko	341-1431	pwashenko@westport.k12.ct.us
Susan Fugitt	341-1424	sfugitt@westport.k12.ct.us
Shauna Flaherty	341-1886	sflaherty@westport.k12.ct.us

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College and Career Center

- College and Career Center Coordinators - Susan Fugitt and Shauna Flaherty
- Located in Room 571 adjacent to the Guidance Office
- Walk-In Hours are available for students to meet with a counselor to answer questions – Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri. during lunch periods.
- Resources include: summer programs, community service opportunities, jobs, working papers.

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College & Career Center Programs



Grade 9

"Do What You Are" personality type indicator

Grade 10

Career Interest Profiler/Resume

Grade 11

Naviance College Search
Interview Techniques and College
Essay Workshop
Job Shadow Opportunity

Grade 12

College Representative Visits
Trip to NCC/Vocational/ Technical
schools

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Naviance/Family Connection

- <http://connection.naviance.com/Staples>
- A comprehensive web based program designed to aid in career development and college decision making
- Students and parents share a username and password
- If user name and/or password are misplaced, please call the College & Career Center at 341-1424.



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Connecting with Careers

- Career Interest Profiler/Resume
- April 22nd – April 30th

All sophomores will be seen during a Physical Education class.



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colleges careers resources

Click on Careers tab

search for careers: **Career Interest Profiler**

explore careers

- > [introduction](#)
- > [personality tests](#)
- > [career finder](#)
- > [career interest profiler](#)

what are my interests?

- > [personality tests](#)
- > [career finder](#)
- > [career interest profiler](#)

Introduction

You are about to begin the Career Interest Profiler, a tool that can help you discover the types of work activities and careers that match your interests. The Interest Profiler has 160 questions about your preferences that people do at their jobs.

When choosing your answers, think about whether you would like or dislike doing a particular work activity if you had a chance to do it. Try to think about whether you have enough education or training to perform the activity.

This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. The more accurately you answer each question, though, the better your results will be. If you need to leave the profiler in the middle and come later, remember to complete all the questions on the page you are on and click the "Save and Continue" button. When you return to this section, you will pick up where you left off.

When you are ready to begin, please click the "Start Profiler" button below.

Staples High School
70 North Avenue
Westport, CT 06880-2120
p. (203) 341-1200

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[Home](#) | [careers](#) | [about us](#)

search for careers:

[more search options](#)

my career interest profiler
Here are your results:

- Realistic: 2
- Investigative: 7
- Artistic: 19
- Social: 7
- Enterprising: 8
- Conventional: 22

} View results

Your strongest interests are in green. You can think about your interests as work activities you like to do. Your interests can help you find occupations you might like to explore. The more an occupation meets your interests, the more likely it is to be satisfying and rewarding to you.

Are you ready to explore the occupations that match your interests? Just click the button below.

[View My Results \(20240404154\)](#)

Definitions

explore careers
 > [find a career & cluster](#)
 > [explore careers & clusters](#)

what are my interests?
 > [personality type](#)
 > [cluster finder](#)
 > [career interest profiler](#)

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The careers listed below match your choices in the Career Interest Profiler. The bolded careers are your best matches. The careers are broken out by job zone, from "Little to No Preparation" to "Extensive Preparation." Click the question marks to learn more about the job zones.

[Return to scores](#)

Medium Preparation [?]

- **Spicologists**
- **Resecutary Therapists**

Considerable Preparation [?]

- **Anthropologists**
- **Archaeologists**
- **Clinical Psychologists**
- **Critics**
- **School Counselors**
- **Historians**
- **Preschool Assistants**
- **Atmospheric and Space Scientists**
- **Biologists**
- **Geographers**
- **Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians**
- **Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists**
- **Childcare**
- **Researchers and Communications**
- **Urban and Regional Planners**

Extensive Preparation [?]

- **Agricultural Sciences Teachers, Postsecondary**

} View possible careers

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Resume

- Template in Naviance
- Helpful to keep a running record of all activities from grades 9-12



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Click on "about me" tab

Challenges, Hobbies, **about me**

resume

interesting things about me:

- > interests/hobbies
- > awards
- > volunteer
- > travel
- > special interests

official things:

- > middle
- > honors
- > awards
- > test results

surveys to take:

- > personality
- > leadership
- > communication

Using the Resume Builder, you can take everything about your self, then reorganize your information into multiple printable versions that you can use for whatever you need. The Resume Builder has just 3 easy steps:

1. Add entries
2. Rearrange the contents
3. Save and print!

You haven't created any resumes yet. Let's get started!

Joshua Allen Reed

Andrea Carlson

Objective

Summary

Education

Work Experience

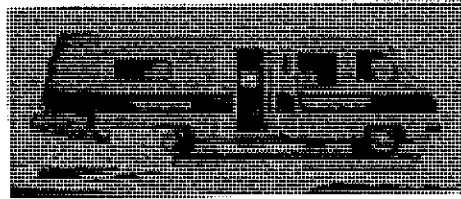
Activities

Extracurricular

References

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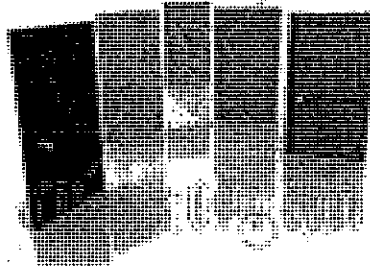
Roadtrip Nation Video



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Post High School Options

- Apprenticeship Training Programs
- Community Colleges/Two Year Colleges
- Employment
- Four Year Colleges & Universities
- Gap Year
- Military
- Post Graduate Year
- Technical/Vocational Schools



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SHS Report Card

Report Card						
Staples High School 70 North Avenue Westport, CT 06880				Principal: John Dodg Phone: (203)41-1200		
Student Name	Staples High School		M4			
RES & LITERATURE	Robbins, Barbara	B-	B-	B+	B	0.5
RD. WRIT. FICTION	Fernandez, Anna	A-	B+	A	A-	0.5
PRE-CALCULUS	Gilford, Sarah	B-	C	C+	B-	0.5
PHYSICS A+ LAB	Rogers, James	A	A	B	A	0.5
INTRO. TO PSYCHOL	Rogers, James	A	A	B	A	0.5
JR PHYS ED	Gandy, Kelly	B+	B+	B+	B+	0.25
JR PHYS ED	Shames, Christopher	A-	A-	A-	A-	0.25
JR PHYS ED	Shames, Christopher	A-	A-	A-	A-	0.25
Hacking Padol Grade Point Average: 2.9000						

Report Cards reflect a quarterly overall GPA.

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Schoology

- Teachers use Schoology to post assignments and communicate via e-mail with students and parents
- Schoology is a supplement to the student's assignment pad
- Parents contact Jane Alix at 341-1214 for assistance
- Students see Mrs. Wippick in main office or the ITL Center for assistance

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Home Access Center (HAC)

View grades of all kinds:

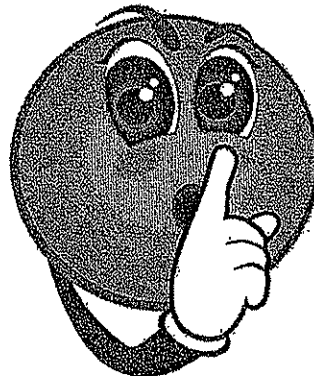
- Live grade book
- Report cards
- Transcripts
 - available at the end of each semester
- Separate log-in with same user name and password for both Schoology and HAC
- If denied access to HAC, contact Maryann Garcia 341-1280 for assistance

Note: IPRs no longer exist. Please use HAC to track progress.

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Keep your child's academic information private!

- Do not share test scores or GPA
- Every child is not in the same place at the same time



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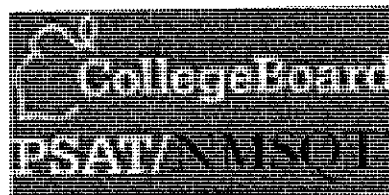
PSAT – What is it?

- PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)
- Administered nationwide by the College Board
- Three scores: critical reading, math, writing
- “Selection Index” (SI) - used exclusively for the National Merit competition
- Not used in the college admission process

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PSAT at Staples

- Take the official PSAT in October of junior year.
- Sign up in the Guidance Office.
- More information will follow in September.



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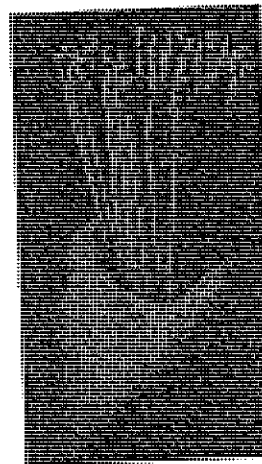
Official PSAT
score report
contains a
wealth of
useful
information



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Standardized Testing

- Most colleges require either an SAT or ACT as an entrance exam.
- SAT and/or ACT are generally taken in the spring of the junior year and again in the fall of senior year.
- Many schools are becoming SAT/ACT optional – to view an updated list of schools log on to www.fairtest.org



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Types of Standardized Testing

- SAT Reasoning Test - designed to assess skills and application of knowledge www.collegeboard.com
- SAT Subject Area Tests - one hour content based tests www.collegeboard.com
- ACT - curriculum based test with an optional writing section www.actstudent.org

New SAT changes will not affect current Sophomores

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SAT vs. ACT

SAT

- Assesses skills and application of knowledge
- 3 hours and 45 minutes
- Critical Reading, Math and Writing
- Focuses on vocabulary and includes math up to Algebra 2
- Penalty for wrong answers
- 200-800 per section and 2400 is the highest possible combined score

ACT

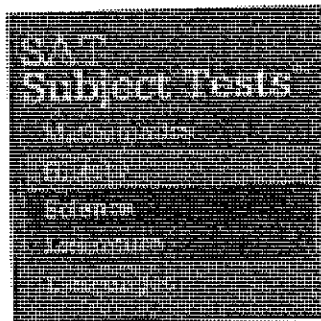
- Curriculum based tests with an optional writing section
- 3 hours and 25 minutes (includes writing)
- English, Reading, Math and Science Reasoning (Optional writing recommended)
- Concentrates on grammar, syntax and punctuation and includes some pre-calculus
- No penalty for wrong answers
- 1-36 per section and 36 is the highest possible composite score

SAT and ACT score comparison chart:
<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/act-sat-concordance-tables.pdf>

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SAT Subject Tests

- One hour content based tests
- Only required at the most selective colleges
- Always verify requirements with college websites
- Typically taken in May or June of junior year
- Child should consult with counselor and teacher before registering



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SAT Subject Test Guide

- If your child is enrolled in certain honors or AP classes, and doing very well, it may make sense to take these tests **this June**.
- **Always** check with the subject area teacher before registering.
- Register for tests on College Board Website

SUBJECT TEST	STAPLES CLASS	NOTES
Math Level 1	Algebra 2 Honors	If taking Pre-Calc Honors and a very strong student, colleges will expect Math Level 2.
Math Level 2	Pre-Calc Honors	Should be taken at end of Pre-Calc H when material is most fresh. Exam does NOT have Calculus on it.
Biology (MB or Molecular)	Biology Honors/ AP Biology	Better success if able to wait until after AP Biology.
Chemistry	Chemistry Honors/ AP Chemistry	Better success if able to wait until after AP Chemistry.
Physics	Physics Honors	Please consult with teacher about additional review. Does not help to wait for AP Physics.
United States History	AP US History	Completion of course
World History	AP World History	Completion of course
Literature	AP English Language	The reading passages are difficult. Must be good with reading comprehension.
French, Spanish, German, Modern Hebrew, Latin, Italian or *Chinese, *Japanese, *Korean (*only offered in November)	World Languages	Language subject tests are frequently taken by native speakers so student must be excellent in language. Possibility of taking subject test upon completion of AP level.

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Register With Full Legal Name

- Students must register for all standardized tests using their full legal name (name on birth certificate)
- Verify school records to ensure that students full legal name is being used on official documents such as transcripts and report cards.



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Athletic Recruiting

- View NCAA website to review recruiting rules and regulations.
at www.eligibilitycenter.org/
- See Mr. Marty Lisevick, Athletic Director, for more information.
- View *Athletics in the College Admission Process* guide on guidance website.
 - List of non-eligible Staples classes in above guide

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Art/Music/Theater

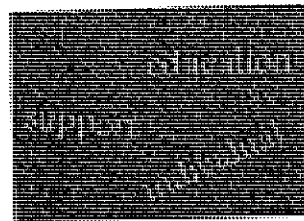
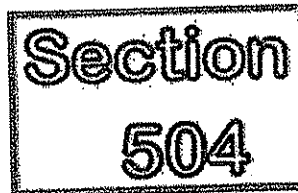
- Begin to investigate portfolio/audition requirements.
- Always use your teacher as a guide.



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Students with Learning Differences

If your son/daughter currently receives accommodations through a 504 or IEP you will receive a letter explaining the accommodation request process for college entrance exams.



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U.S. Service Academies

United States Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs)
United States Coast Guard Academy (New London)
United States Merchant Marine Academy (Kings Point)
United States Military Academy (West Point)
United States Naval Academy (Annapolis)

- All but the Coast Guard Academy require an appointment from a US Senator or congressman from CT
- Check individual website
- Must begin process in junior year

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Junior Year Timeline

October

- Official PSATs

December

- Naviance College Search
- PSAT results mailed home
- Counselors visit juniors in their English classes

January

- Junior Parent Night
- Post HS Planning Guide distributed
- Individual junior family appointments begin

April/May/June

- Standardized Testing
- Job Shadow opportunity
- College Panel Night
- Interview & Essay Writing Workshop
- Student Description Forms
- Students should talk with teachers about letters of recommendation
- End of Year Check In

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Senior Year Timeline

September/October

- Senior Parent Coffee
- Transcript & credit status letter mailed home
- Students ask or confirm with teachers regarding recommendation letters
- Counselors visit seniors in their English classes
- Individual student and/or family meetings
- Financial Aid Night

November

- Students attend Alumni/Senior College session

September - December

- College rep visits to Staples
- Students continue to consult with counselors

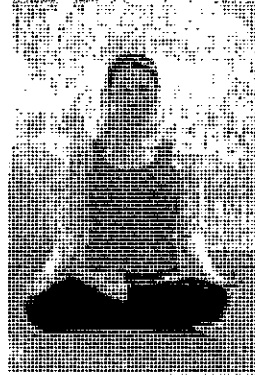
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Fostering Resilience

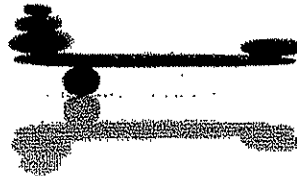
- Help your child deal with setbacks
- Model appropriate reactions to obstacles
- Every stumbling block is an opportunity to grow
- Be the calming force for your child



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Balance

- Let your child have fun! Help him/her choose activities that are meaningful – quality NOT quantity
- Help your child choose appropriately challenging courses
- Ensure balance in your child's life



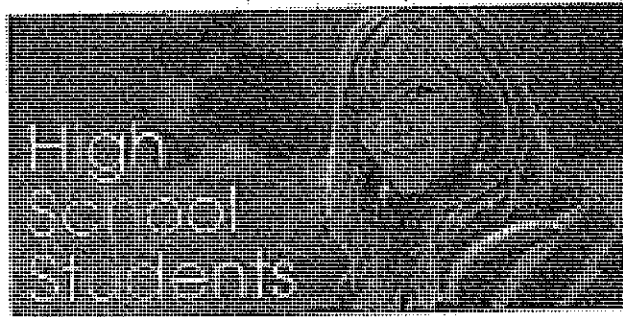
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Online Resources

- www.collegeboard.com for SAT info
- www.actstudent.org for ACT info
- www.fairtest.org for SAT/ACT optional info
- Naviance website <http://connection.naviance.com/staples>
- Staples Guidance Department Website
shs.westport.k12.ct.us/staples
Click on "Departments" tab and "Guidance"

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Let's hear it for our kids!



Thank you for coming.

- Please complete and hand in the evaluation form
- This presentation will run on Channel 78 and be available on Youtube (link will be on the guidance website)

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Staples High School

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Staples Resilience Project

All of us—parents, teachers, and counselors alike—care deeply about the education, growth, and well-being of our young adults. We parent them, we teach them, and we help guide them as they grapple with figuring out their own unique combination of interests, assets and values. We are all in this together to give them the tools they need to continue this growth throughout their lives and to become the well-adjusted, thriving individuals we all hope they will ultimately become.

Crucial to their continued growth is *resilience*, the ability to cope with life's inevitable disappointments and injustices. Here in the Guidance Department we notice, increasingly, that many of our young people would benefit from a bit more of this asset. We are also deeply concerned that so many of our students are struggling to manage the stress that comes with the very high expectations of this community. Many of our students are not coping well with the pressure they feel to excel, and this can manifest itself in varying degrees as worry, anxiety, depression, self-harm and substance abuse.

As counselors, we live and breathe this stuff; we are constantly researching, collaborating with colleagues, and looking for ways to support our students and to help them find balance, strength, and direction. You, as teachers and parents, are very much the front line: you are with these wonderful young adults every day. We hope to use this as a forum for sharing with you some of the information and resources that we have found helpful in this area. We hope that you will find it useful, as well.

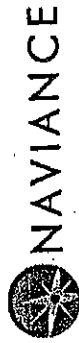
Victoria Capozzi

Leslie Hammer

Deb Slocum

- 1) [☞ Mindset](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/1_mindset.pdf) (http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/1_mindset.pdf)
- 2) [☞ Mindset Follow-Up](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/2_follow_up_re_mindset.pdf) (http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/2_follow_up_re_mindset.pdf)
- 3) [☞ Teenagers and Identity Development](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/3_teenagers_and_identity_development.pdf)
(http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/3_teenagers_and_identity_development.pdf)
- 4) [☞ Making Sense of the Teenage Brain](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/4_making_sense_of_the_teenaged_brain.pdf)
(http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/4_making_sense_of_the_teenaged_brain.pdf)
- 5) [☞ Positive Psychology](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/5_positive_psychology.pdf) (http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/5_positive_psychology.pdf)
- 6) [☞ Positive Psychology Follow-Up](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/6_positive_psychology_follow-up.pdf) (http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/6_positive_psychology_follow-up.pdf)
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- 8) [☞ How Children Succeed](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/8_how_children_succeed.pdf) (http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/8_how_children_succeed.pdf)
- 9) [☞ Less Stress, More Success](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/9_less_stress%2C_more_success.pdf)
(http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/9_less_stress%2C_more_success.pdf)
- 10) [☞ On Cheating](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/10_on_cheating.pdf) (http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/10_on_cheating.pdf)
- 11) [☞ Scheduling 2013](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/11_scheduling_2013.pdf) (http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/11_scheduling_2013.pdf)
- 12) [☞ Welcome Back](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/12_welcome_back.pdf) (http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/12_welcome_back.pdf)
- 13) [☞ Grit](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/13_grit.pdf) (http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/13_grit.pdf)
- 14) [☞ Introversion](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/14_introversion.pdf) (http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/14_introversion.pdf)
- 15) [☞ Gratitude](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/15%29_gratitude.pdf) (http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/15%29_gratitude.pdf)
- 16) [☞ Perfectionist vs. Self-Driven](http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/16%29_perfectionist_vs_self-driven.pdf) (http://westport.k12.ct.us.s3.amazonaws.com/shs/16%29_perfectionist_vs_self-driven.pdf)

Contact us at: [☞ shs-resilience-project@westport.k12.ct.us](mailto:shs-resilience-project@westport.k12.ct.us) (<mailto:shs-resilience-project@westport.k12.ct.us>)



Do What You Are

- Grade 9 -

People with a preference for **FEELING**:

- Are aware of and express their emotions
- Are able to sense other people's emotions
- Have a strong need to please people
- Strive to create harmony
- Make decisions based on their personal likes and dislikes
- Have people as the primary focus of their lives
- Are good at assessing the impact of actions or decisions on people.

Judging (J) - Perceiving (P) is about:

The way we like to live our lives, more structured (making decisions) or more spontaneous (taking in information)

People with a preference for **JUDGING**:

- Like to make a plan and follow it
- Like to make a decision and move forward
- May resist deviations to their plan
- Don't like to begin new projects until old ones are completed
- Don't like to "beat around the bush"
- Feel satisfied once they reach a decision
- Are time and deadline oriented

People with a preference for **PERCEIVING**:

- Are energized by change
- Don't mind leaving things open
- Don't like to be constrained by lists or plans
- Tend to start more projects than they finish
- Are information seekers
- Tend to welcome additional information about a situation
- Tend not to be time sensitive

What Does Your Four-Letter Personality Type Mean?

Personality type is a wonderful non-judgmental tool for helping people better understand themselves and others. It is widely used by educators and counselors to help people make potentially satisfying career decisions. It is important to remember that students are constantly growing, developing and changing as a result of maturing and life experiences. No one personality type is better than any other and each has its own strengths and weaknesses. The results are a snapshot of where each student is at this time in his/her life.

Staples High School
College & Career Center
203. 341-1424
203. 341-1886

How to get started:

Returning Users to Naviance:

1. Go to www.connection.naviance.com/staples
2. Enter your user name and password
3. Select *About Me* tab, then *Personality Type* link
4. Scroll down to *Start Assessment (or View Results)*.

New Users to Naviance:

1. Please call (203) 341-1424 or (203)341-1886 to obtain your registration code.

Extraversion (E) – Introversion (I) is about:

How we interact with the world & where we direct our energy

People with a preference for **EXTRAVERSION:**

- Are energized by other people... Lose energy if they spend too much time alone
- Like to "think" out loud.
- Often have good verbal skills
- Tend to talk a lot during meetings
- Like to meet new people
- Are natural conversationalists
- Tend to be aware of their surroundings
- Are easy to get to know
- Show the world who they really are... no surprises.

People with a preference for **INTROVERSION:**

- Like to spend time alone... Lose energy if they spend too much time with people
- Like to figure things out quietly
- May not be aware of their surroundings
- May be difficult to get to know
- Tend to keep strengths hidden... can surprise others

Sensing (S) – iNtuition (N) is about:

What kind of information we naturally notice & remember

People with a preference for **SENSING:**

- See reality
- Are down-to-earth and realistic
- See and grasp details...are quick to see "the trees"
- Tend to be literal
- Tend to prefer reality to fantasy
- Like to work with practical, concrete problems
- Tend to not like theoretical or abstract problems
- Like to write out the specifics necessary to complete a job

People with a preference for **INTUITION:**

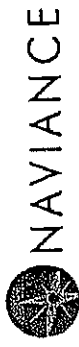
- See possibilities
- Have vivid imaginations
- May miss the details
- Tend to prefer fantasy to reality
- Tend to be abstract and visionary...Are quick to see "the forest"
- Like to work on complicated or abstract problems
- Becomes impatient with practical problems
- Are often bored by the specifics of an assignment

Thinking (T) - Feeling (F) is about:

Whether we make decisions logically and impersonally, or by using personal values

People with a preference for **THINKING:**

- May not be aware of, or show their emotions
- Don't like to deal with other people's emotions
- Like analysis and logic
- Use impersonal analysis and logic to make decisions
- Have a need for fairness
- Tend to analyze and critique
- Are good at thinking about logical consequences of actions or decisions



Career Interest Profiler

- Grade 10 -

**Discover the types of work activities
and careers that match your interests.**

- **Learn about yourself** – The more you know about what kind of work you like, the more options you will have in finding which career suits you best.
- **Learn about which occupational interests fit your profile** – Discover the numerous career options that are available.....many you might not have even thought existed.

**Staples High School
College & Career Center
203. 341-1424
203. 341-1886**

How to get started:

Returning Users to Naviance:

Go to www.connection.naviance.com/staples

-Enter your user name and password.

-Select Careers tab

-Career Interest Profiler Link

-Start Assessment

New Users to Naviance:

Please call the College & Career Center to obtain your registration code.

Six Occupational Interests:

1. Investigative

You are a thinker.
You enjoy observing, learning and evaluation.
You like the challenge of thinking through problems.
You prefer working on your own.
You often use science and math in problem solving.
You may describe yourself as inventive and original.

2. Artistic

You are a "creator."
You enjoy art of all types, including drama, music, literature and poetry.
You like using your imagination and creativity.
You prefer working in unstructured environments.
You have a need to express yourself.
You may describe yourself as sensitive or emotional.

3. Social

You are a "helper."
You enjoy assisting people in various ways.
You are concerned about the well-being of others.
You like working in groups.
Verbal and communication skills come naturally to you.
You may describe yourself as friendly or empathetic.
You may describe yourself as athletic
You often enjoy working outdoors.

4. Enterprising

You are a "persuader."
You enjoy leading or managing other people.
You often respond well to competition, and you enjoy leading teams to victory.
You are willing to take risks.
You value status, power, money and material possessions.
You may describe yourself as ambitious or energetic.

5. Conventional

You are an "organizer."
You enjoy systematic, step-by-step work tasks.
You like to keep things neat and in order.
You prefer working in stable environments with predictable routines.
You are detail-oriented and persistent.
You may describe yourself as efficient or dependable.

6. Realistic

You are a "doer."
You enjoy "hands-on" activities -- building, tinkering, fixing.
You prefer concrete instead of abstract problems.
Using tools and machinery seems to come naturally to you.



NAVIANCE

Family Connection

- Grade 11 -

Connect Yourself with Colleges

- A comprehensive program to help you in making decisions about colleges and universities.
- Compare GPA, standardized test scores, and other statistics to actual historical data from Staples High School for students who have applied and been admitted in the past
- Stay informed about college visits and scholarships opportunities.

Staples High School
College & Career Center
203. 341-1424
203. 341-1886

How to get Started

Returning Users to Naviance:

1. Go to www.connection.naviance.com/staples
2. Enter your user name and password
3. Select Colleges tab

New Users to Naviance:

1. Please call (203) 341-1424 or (203) 341-1886 to obtain your registration code.

How to Use

“About Me” Tab - Official Things

- **College Profile:** your personal information, such as weighted GPA and test scores if applicable. Please check to see if the information is correct. If not, please call the College & Career Center at the above numbers.

“Colleges” Tab

- **College Search:** Look for colleges by name or narrow down your list of schools based on selected criteria.
- **School Websites:** Link to get additional information directly from the schools that you are interested in.

- **Investigate:** Individual school stats, Acceptance History, and School Overlaps.
 - **Scattergrams:** See and compare your weighted GPA and test scores with past SHS graduates who have applied to the same school.
 - **Deadlines:** Check each school you are applying to.
 - **Colleges I am Thinking About:** Generate a list from your College Search. This list is also available to your counselor.
 - **College Visits:** Fall schedule of schools that will be visiting.
 - **Scholarship information:** Sort by scholarship name, category or deadline.
 - **New Supermatch feature:** a “fuzzy” approach to ranking your preferences. Not only do you get a list of schools that match your needs perfectly, but you’ll also see the ones that come close.
- *****
- **Reminder:** Print the list of schools you generate from **Colleges I am Thinking About**. Bring this list to your counselor when you meet for your junior appointment.