Implementing the New Connecticut Anti-Bullying Legislation

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Topic Areas

- School Climate Development Model
- Pivotal shift from fixing the problem (bullying prevention) to creating the climate (improving school climate)
- National School Climate Standards
- School Climate Assessments
- Safe School Climate Plans
Public Act 11-232
An Act Concerning the Strengthening of
School Bullying Laws

Morning
Practice & Implementation
“What does it look like and how do I do that?”

Afternoon
Legal Aspects

10 Most Frequently Asked Questions
Pivotal Shift

Fixing the Problem

Bullying Prevention

Creating the Climate

Improving School Climate
Ultimate Remedy for Bullying

To Create and Maintain *Positive School Climate*...Environments that do not support any form of mean-spirited behaviors (physically, emotionally and intellectually)

Healthy and happy

“*Climates of Respect*”
National School Climate Standards: 
*Finalized March 2010*

“There is growing appreciation that school climate – the quality and character of school life\(^1\) – fosters children’s development, learning and achievement. School climate is based on the patterns of people’s experiences of school life; it reflects the norms, goals values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structures that comprise school life.”

\(^1\)This definition of school climate was consensually developed by members of the National School Climate Council (2007). The terms “school climate”, “school culture” and “learning environment have been used in overlapping but sometimes quite different ways in the educational literature. Here, we use the terms interchangeably.
Even the “experts” do not agree about what “Bullying” looks, feels and sounds like...
“Bullying” is about Abuses of Power

• One person’s “bullying” is another’s...
  – “Kids will be kids”
  – “They were only joking around”
  – “Oh, they’re really friends”
  – “It’s not bad enough yet”
  – They’re just roughhousing”
  – “That is just teasing”
  – And, so many more.....
What Is “Bullying”
The Difficulty With Definition

- No standard or consistent definition
- 45 States…45 different definitions
  - Most involved acts of harassment or intimidation that continue with regularity for a certain period of time (usually six months or more)
  - At the core, “bullying” is about power abuses
- Wideness or narrowness determines how many children involved: 5% - 30%
Looking For Bullying
We Miss What is Right Under Our Noses

• To understand how difficult intervening whenever “bullying” occurs...
  – As you watch the short video clip...
  – Count the number of ball passes that occur among the students with WHITE SHIRTS
Two Questions...

• How many of you are parents, aunts, uncles or mentors of children?

• How many of you are raising/mentoring “BULLIES”?
A TOXIC School Concept
A True Conversation Closer

• No school wants to have any of it**
• No parent/guardian will admit their child is one**
• No child will own up to being one**

** Bullying, Bully, “Bullier”, Bullying Behaviors

• Everyone avoids these terms except the Target’s family
Another Way to Think About This...

- Think about individuals in your lives...
- Have they every been *Mean* to anyone?
  - You?
  - Peers?
  - Siblings?
  - Adults?
  - Anyone????
‘BULLY’ and ‘BULLYING’ are OUT!!! “Mean” Is A Better Term/Concept

• No one knows what “bullying” looks, feels and sounds like
  – We miss what is right under our noses

• Everyone knows what “mean” looks, feels and sounds like
  – If “mean” is the standard, we are much more likely to help make it safer

• If it’s mean...Intervene!!!!!
Fixing the Problem

Bullying Prevention

Creating the Climate

Improving School Climate
Solving “Bullying” by Passing State Anti-Bullying Laws

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Missouri’s Law only pertains to “Cyber-Bullying”
CT and WY: Only two that combine Bullying and School Climate legislation
The Reason for Legislation

Honor the “Spirit” (intent) of the law, not merely the “Letter” of the law to create truly physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and positive learning environments for every single school community member, student and adult alike.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Student Growth &amp; Skill Development</th>
<th>Safe &amp; Respectful Community-wide School Climate Building</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dealing with, Problem Solving, Intervening w/ Individual Student Behavior</td>
<td>School-wide Interventions in Response to Pervasive Issues</td>
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Programs & Practices

◆ Alternative to Suspension Program
◆ Character Education
◆ Faculty / Staff Role Modeling
◆ Keeping in from Recess
◆ Parent Involvement
◆ Peer Leadership
◆ Peer Mediation
◆ School-Wide Social Contract
◆ Student Assistance
◆ Suspension
◆ Other
SCHOOL

QUALITY of RELATIONSHIPS

STUDENT

STAFF

ADMINISTRATOR

PARENT

VALUES

STANDARDS

NORMS

RULES

IDEAS

NON-NEGOTIABLES

EXPECTATIONS

BELIEFS

BOUNDARIES

ASSUMPTIONS
Climate: It is All About the Quality of Relationships

Defined as: how well the people within the school / workplace treat each other

- Physically
- Emotionally
- Intellectually
  - Actions [+/-]
  - Verbal and non-verbal exchanges [+/-]
  - Use/abuse of inherent power advantages [+/-]
  - Tone of voice [+/-]
Levels of School Climate

- **Personal** (one to one interactions)
  - Adult ↔ Adult
  - Adult ↔ Student
  - Student ↔ Student

- **Classroom** (tends to have the *most positive* climate)

- **School** (tends to have the *least positive* climate)

- **Community** (tends *not to have enough systemic focus*)
Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI)
Individualized practices: systems of instruction and support for the 5% of students for whom both universal & targeted practices are necessary but insufficient

Targeted practices: systems of instruction and support for the 20% of students for whom universal practices are necessary but insufficient

Universal practices: systems of instruction and support across ALL (100%) settings and students

Adapted from OSEP Effective School-Wide Interventions
Safe School Climate Plans

◆ Part One: Legal Plan
◆ Part Two: Plan to Improve School Climate
  1) Assessments
  2) Rubric Aligned with Standards
  3) Action Steps / SMART Goals
◆ Suggested Implementation Timeline
Safe School Climate Rubric

5 Standards
Vision, Policies, Practices, Environment, Community

4 Levels
Pre-Awareness, Awareness, Emergent and Maintenance
National School Climate Standards

Present a vision and framework for a positive and sustainable school climate. They compliment national standards for Content, Leadership and Professional Development and the Parent Teacher Association’s National Standards for Family School Partnership Standards
Standard One

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

The school community sets *policies* specifically promoting (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 reengage students who have become disengaged.
Standard Three

The school community’s *practices* are identified, prioritized and supported to (a) promote the learning and positive social, emotional, ethical and civic *development of students*, (b) enhance *engagement in teaching, learning*, and school-wide activities; (c) address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage those who have become disengaged; and (d) develop and sustain an *appropriate operational infrastructure* and capacity building mechanisms for meeting this standard.
Standard Four

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

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

In your school group, explore the Safe School Climate Rubric.

With the information you currently have about your school climate, where would you rate yourself in each area?
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Suggested Implementation Timeline</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Development &amp; submission of “Safe School Climate Plan”</td>
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<td>Completion of Student, Staff &amp; Parent Assessments</td>
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<td>Completion of Safe School Climate Rubric</td>
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<td>Identification of Action Steps / SMART Goals</td>
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<td>Publication of Safe School Climate Plan: Website, School Rules, Student Handbook</td>
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<td>Appointment of District “Safe School Climate Coordinator”</td>
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<td>Appointment of “Safe School Climate Specialist” for each school</td>
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<td>Establishment of “Safe School Climate Committee”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion of CALI “Improving School Climate Training”</td>
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Suggested Implementation

- Details in following slides are recommended for optimal implementation
Development & Submission of Safe School Climate Plan

Part One: Legal Plan

Part Two: Plan to Improve School Climate
  1) Assessments
  2) Rubric Aligned with Standards
  3) Action Steps / SMART Goals

There is no form or formal template
Completion of Student, Staff & Parent Assessments

- Target availability as of November 1
- Data compiled & reviewed at school level
- Data submitted to CSDE; mechanism to do so to be announced
Completion of Safe School Climate Rubric

- Completed by Safe School Climate Committee
- Complete after receiving assessment data
- Necessary for Action Steps / SMART Goal formation
Action Steps / SMART Goals

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Reasonable
- Time Oriented
Publication of Safe School Climate Plan

- School Rules
- Student Handbook
- School Website
Appointment of District “Safe School Climate Coordinator”

- Advanced training in Improving School Climate (CALI ISC Basic & Certification)
- Investigative Experience
- Skills & Experience to train staff and provide presentations
- Time & ability to coordinate school-based climate specialists
Appointment of “Safe School Climate Specialist” for each School

- Advanced training in Improving School Climate (CALI ISC Basic & Certification)
- Investigative Experience
- Skills & Experience to train staff and provide presentations
Establishment “Safe School Climate Committee” at each School

- Advanced training in Improving School Climate (CALI ISC Basic & Certification)
- Skills & Experience to lead positive school climate change
- No ideal number - varied perspectives (i.e. counselor, teacher, administrator) encouraged
- Consider teams that are already in place and how they might work together before adding a new committee
- Parent member must be included
Completion of CALI ISC Trainings

- Improving School Climate Basic
- Improving School Climate Certification
- Ideally, all personnel involved with Safe School Climate will be trained
- Several dates to choose from or in-district training can be arranged
Your Timeline

As a school / district team, consider your timeline for development & implementation of a Safe School Climate Plan
Break

When you return sit at the table that indicates your grade level focus:

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- Central Office
School Climate Assessments

- Lower Elementary School
- Upper Elementary School
- Middle School / High School
- School Staff
- Parent
Why Assessments?

School
- Data to improve school climate

State
- Collect state-wide information to identify school & district training & technical assistance needs
- Provide information on global trends
- NOT to single out specific schools
Your Assessment Feedback

What do you like about the assessments?
What would you add?
What would you change?
Lunch
Legal Requirements
Thomas B. Mooney
Shipman & Goodwin
10 Most Frequently Asked Questions about Implementation

1. Is there a difference between bullying and protected class harassment?
10 Most Frequently Asked Questions about Implementation

2. Should meetings regarding verified cases of bullying include the perpetrator’s family, the target’s family or both?
3. What does the public list of verified bullying cases look like?
4. Can a single act be labeled bullying?
5. Are schools allowed to implement different climate assessments?
6. What training is required for all school staff? For climate committee members? What are the options for meeting these requirements?
10 Most Frequently Asked Questions about Implementation

7. Why is it so important in practice to NOT focus on “Bullying” when the law is a “School Bullying law”?
8. What is the best way to document incidents of mean-spirited behavior that may become verified acts of bullying?
10 Most Frequently Asked Questions about Implementation

9. How do we choose which programs, curricula, practices to implement?
10 Most Frequently Asked Questions about Implementation

10. How do we submit our “Safe School Climate Plans” and other required information to the State Dept. of Education?
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