



Teen Dating Violence Prevention: Why Middle School Matters

Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships Communities - Atlanta GA, Austin TX, Boston MA, Bridgeport CT, Bronx NY, Idaho, Indianapolis IN, Los Angeles CA, Oakland CA, Rhode Island, Wichita KS in collaboration with the Interagency Workgroup on Teen Dating Violence

Department of Justice,
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School Climate Reform & Teen Dating Violence: Strategies to mobilize the “whole village” and coordinate prosocial education, violence prevention and health-mental health efforts

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I Goals:

1. To appreciate how many K-12 students feel unsafe and how social norms contribute to this.
2. To consider how school climate reform is a data driven strategy that recognizes the social, emotional and civic as well as intellectual aspects of student learning and school improvement efforts.
3. To consider a school climate improvement model and implementation strategy that prevents relational violence and promotes upstander behavior.
4. To highlight how the school climate improvement process recognizes the bully-victim-bystander behavior and can be used to prevent bully-victim behavior and promote upstander behavior.

II. On our need to feel safe:

- Bully-victim is a serious public health problem.
- Over 25% of U.S. students are bullied each year. As many as 160,000 students stay home on because they are afraid of being bullied
- Over 35% of students report being afraid of being bullied (Quaglia)
- Social norms: bully-victim-witness behavior: bystander or upstander.

III. School climate reform:

- Recognizing the social, emotional and civic as well as intellectual dimensions of school life.
- *Current understandings:* A growing focus of attention at the school, district, state and federal levels

“School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of people’s experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices, and organizational structures.”

“A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributing and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate includes norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, intellectually 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 and satisfaction from learning.

Each person contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.”

- *Essential dimensions:*

- 1) *Safety:* Rules & Norms, Physical Security, Social-Emotional Security
- 2) *Relationships:* Respect for Diversity, Social Support – Adults, Social Support - Students
- 5) *Teaching and learning:* Support for Learning, Social and Civic Learning, Professional Development, Leadership
- 4) *Environmental:* School Connectedness/Engagement, Physical Surroundings

- *Research:*

- *Academic Achievement:* Positive school climate is strongly correlated and/or predictive of high quality teaching and student academic achievement.
- *Risk Prevention and Health Promotion:* Effective risk prevention and health promotion efforts are positively correlated with safe, caring, participatory and responsive school climate settings.
- *Individual Experience:* A positive school climate affects student’s self-esteem and self-concept in positive ways.
- *Teacher Retention:* Positive school climate is associated with greater teacher retention.

IV. Anticipating, preventing and addressing teen dating violence: A School Climate Improvement Model, Implementation Strategy and Resources/Tools that support this effort

- *National School Climate Standards* (www.schoolclimate.org/climate/standards.php):

1. The school community has a shared vision and plan for promoting, enhancing and sustaining a positive school climate.
2. The school community sets policies specifically promoting (a) the development and sustainability of social, emotional, ethical, civic and intellectual skills, knowledge, [and] dispositions and engagement and (b) a comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage students who have become disengaged.
3. The school community's practices are identified, supported and prioritized 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.
4. The school community creates an environment where all members are welcomed, supported, and feel safe in school: socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.
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 improvement model:* A five-stage school improvement process that integrates research and best practices from pro-social education (e.g. school reform, character education, developmental assets, community schooling and 2 out of three sets of “21st Century Learning skills) risk prevention and health-mental health promotion)



Stage One: Preparation and Planning

- Forming a representative school climate improvement leadership team and establishing ground rules collaboratively
- Building support and fostering “Buy In” for the school climate improvement process
- Establishing a “no fault” framework and promoting a culture of trust
- Ensuring your team has adequate resources to support the process
- Celebrating successes and building on past efforts
- Reflecting on Stage One work

Stage Two: Evaluation

- Systematically evaluating the school’s strengths, needs and weaknesses with any number of school climate as well as other potential measurement tools
- Developing plans to share evaluation findings with the school community
- Reflecting on our Stage Two work

Stage Three: Understanding the findings; Engagement & developing an action plan

- Understanding the evaluation findings
- Digging into the findings to understand areas of consensus and discrepancy in order to promote learning and engagement
- Prioritizing goals
- Researching best practices and evidence-based instructional and systemic programs and efforts
- Developing an action plan
- Reflecting on Stage Three work

Stage Four: Implementing the Action Plan

- Coordinating evidence-based pedagogic and systemic efforts designed to (a) promote students’ social, emotional and civic as well as intellectual competencies; and (b) improve the school climate by working toward a safe, caring, participatory and responsive school community
- The instructional and/or school-wide efforts are instituted with fidelity, monitored and there is an ongoing attempt to learn from successes and challenges
- The adults who teach and learn with students work to further their own social, emotional and civic learning
- Reflecting on Stage Four work

Stage Five: Reevaluation and Development of the Next Phase

- Reevaluating the school's strengths and challenges
- Discovering what has changed and how
- Discovering what has most helped and hindered furthering the school climate improvement process
- Revising plans to improve the school climate
- Reflecting on Stage Five work

- *An implementation strategy and tools*

- ✓ Roles and responsibilities
- ✓ Professional development, consultation and coaching
- ✓ Building capacity and sustainability:
 - School Climate Resource Center
 - School Climate Implementation Road Map

VI. Implications for preventing relational violence: The role of the witness and transforming a culture of bystander to a culture of upstanders

Resources that support school climate reform:

The Center for Social and Emotional Education and the National School Climate Council have developed the following school climate policy and practice resources to support your school mobilizing the “whole village” to support students’ social, emotional, ethical and civic as well intellectual learning.

Policy resources:

- *National School Climate Standards*: CSEE and the National School Climate Council (www.schoolclimate.org/climate/council.php) have developed School Climate Standards to support schools, districts, and states in effectively aligning education policy with practice. The National School Board Association and the Character Education Partnership have endorsed these standards.

Related publications:

- National School Climate Council (2007). *The School Climate Challenge: Narrowing the gap between school climate research and school climate policy, practice guidelines and teacher education policy*. On www.schoolclimate.org/climate/policy.php

Research resources:

- Cohen, J, McCabe, E.M, Michelli, N.M & Pickeral, T. (2009). School Climate: Research, Policy, Teacher Education and Practice. *Teachers College Record*, Volume 111: Issue 1: pp. 180-213. (Available on: <http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=15220>)
- *School Climate Research Summary: January 2010* (available on: www.schoolclimate.org/climate/research.php)

Measurement Resources:

- *Comprehensive School Climate Inventory* (CSCI) – The CSCI is one of the most recognized and comprehensive school climate measures today that assesses to what extent students’, parents’ and school personnel feel safe, “connected’ and engaged in school life. Developed over seven years of research and field-testing, the CSCI is a scientifically sound survey tool that thousands of schools, districts and networks of schools have used. The CSCI is yoked to a web-based portal system that supports school teams to effectively administer the survey and use the resulting data as a springboard for school improvement efforts. (www.schoolclimate.org/programs/csci.php)

School Improvement Resources:

- *The School Climate Guide for District Policymakers and Educational Leaders* –This guide is designed to support superintendents and school board leaders in understanding how important and possible it is to measure and

improve school climate. (To download this guide go to www.schoolclimate.org/climate/process.php). The National School Board Association has endorsed this Guide.

- *School Climate Implementation Road Map* –This Road Map is organized around a series of tasks and challenges that define each of the five stages of the school climate improvement process. The Road Map includes information, guidelines and, most importantly, tools designed to support school leaders and community members addressing these tasks and challenges. (To learn more about this Road Map, see: www.schoolclimate.org/climate/process.php)
- *Breaking the Bully-Victim-Bystander Tool Kit: Creating a climate for safety and responsibility* – This tool kit is organized around a series of modules that support school leaders and school communities ~~in~~(add) understanding ~~what~~(delete) ~~how~~(add) a school ~~looks like~~(delete) that has developed this programmatic effort ~~looks like~~(add); a series of team building exercises that build trust and collaborative working relationships: the foundation for effective school improvement efforts; a six step implementation process; and, scores of activities that support sustainability. (To learn more about this Road Map, see: www.schoolclimate.org/climate/process.php)
- *BullyBust*: This is a nationwide bully prevention awareness campaign designed to reduce bullying in our schools. In addition to providing a range of information and guidelines for students, parents/guardians and school personnel about bully-victim behavior and the importance of becoming an upstander (rather than a bystander), this site encourages students to show how they are “standing up” to bully-victim behavior in their own communities. (www.schoolclimate.org/bullybust/)
- *Professional Development Offerings that create a climate for learning* –Based on our learning and work over the last decade, CSEE has developed professional development (PD) offerings for schools, districts and States that support schools being places that are safe, “connected” (or relationally healthy) and engaged. (www.schoolclimate.org/programs/pd.php).

CSEE’s 13th annual Summer Institute (July 6-8, 2010) *Creating the Foundation for Comprehensive School Climate Reform* includes a keynote from Kevin Jennings (Assistant Deputy Secretary of the US Department of Education, Office of Safe & Drug-Free Schools) and is designed to support school teams, districts and states, as well as other school, family and community leaders, in developing school climate improvement plans to promote safe, caring and civil schools that support positive youth development, democratic school communities, student learning/achievement and "up-stander" behavior (or the inclination and ability to say "no" to bully-victim behavior). The institute is grounded in the notion that effective and equitable school reform needs to honor and support the whole child and the whole school community. For details see: www.schoolclimate.org/programs/si.php

Additional and related publications:

Beland, K. (2003). *Eleven Principles Sourcebook: How to Achieve Quality Education in P-12 Schools*. Washington, DC: Character Education Partnership.

Cohen, J. (2006). Social, emotional, ethical and academic education: Creating a climate for learning, participation in democracy and well-being. *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 76, No. 2, Summer, pages 201-237. (www.hepg.org/her/abstract/8)

Cohen, J., Shapiro, L., & Fisher, M. (2006). Finding the Heart of Your School: Using School Climate Data to Create a Climate for Learning. *Principal Leadership* (The journal of the National Association of Secondary School Principals), Vol. 7, 4, pages 26-32.

Cohen, J., Pickeral, T., & McCloskey, M. (2008). The challenge of assessing school climate. [Online article]. *Educational Leadership*, 66 (4). Available at: www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/dec08/vol66/num04/toc.aspx

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Cohen, J., Pickeral, T., & Levine, P. (2010). The Foundation for Democracy: Social, emotional, ethical, cognitive skills and dispositions in K-12 schools. *Inter-American Journal of Education for Democracy*, Vol 3, No 1, pg 74-94. <http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/ried/>

Comer, J. P. (2005). *Leave no child behind: Preparing today's youth for tomorrow's world*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Deal, T.E. & Peterson, K.D. (2009). *Shaping school culture: Pitfalls, paradoxes, & promises* (second edition). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Devaney, E., O'Brien, M.U., Resnik, H., Keiter, S. & Weissberg, R. (2006). *Sustainable school-wide social emotional learning (SEL): Implementation guide and tool kit*. Chicago, IL: CASEL

Elbot, C. & Fulton, D (2008). *Building an intentional school culture: Excellence in academics and character*. Corwin Press

Freiberg, H. J. (Ed.). (1999). *School climate: Measuring, improving and sustaining healthy learning environments*. Philadelphia, PA: Falmer Press.

Gangi, T.A. (2009). *School climate and faculty relationships: Choosing an effective assessment measure*. A doctoral dissertation in school psychology, St. John's University New York.

Preble, W. & Taylor, L. (2008-09). School Climate Through Students' Eyes. *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 66, No 4, pgs 35-40.

Quaglia Institute for Student Aspiration (2010). *Data from My Voice™ Student Survey*. Unpublished raw data, found at www.qisa.org

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Jonathan Cohen is a clinical-educator and author. He has worked with K-12 students, educators, and schools since 1974. He was a middle school teacher with learning disabled students. And, for more than thirty years he has been a practicing clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst. In 1996 he co-founded the Center for Social and Emotional Education in NYC. In partnership with Terry Pickeral and the Education Commission of the States, he co-founded and co-chairs the National School Climate Council. Jonathan is an Adjunct Professor in Psychology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University; an Adjunct Professor in Education at the School of Professional Studies, City University of New York, and the founder and series editor of the Teachers College Press *Social Emotional Learning* book series. He is the author of many papers and books including *Educating Minds and Hearts: Social Emotional Learning and the Passage into Adolescence* and *Caring Classroom/Intelligent Schools* (both published by Teachers College Press and awarded the American Library Associations "Best Academic Book" in 1999 and 2001 respectively) and *Making our school safe: Strategies to Protect Children and Promote Learning* (co-authored with John Devine; Teachers College Press, April, 2007).