



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Lol Fearon, Chief, Bureau of Accountability and Improvement
Dr. Karissa L. Niehoff, Executive Director, Connecticut Association of Schools

DATE: July 1, 2012

SUBJECT: Climate Surveys

Enclosed please find the Student, Parent and Staff School Climate surveys that were developed by the State Department of Education (SDE) in collaboration with the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS). Pursuant to P.A. 11-232, each school district must administer these surveys biennially beginning in the 2012-2013 school year.

The three student surveys are labeled "Early Elementary," "Upper Elementary/Middle" and "Middle/High School" to accommodate the multiple grade level configurations of Connecticut schools. Surveys should be administered at one grade level within each category; for example, one grade level within the K-3 range, one within Grades 4-8 and one between Grades 9-12. We recommend surveying the parents of the chosen grade levels. The "Staff Survey" should be given to all school staff members. Districts may choose to survey additional grade levels and parents, but that is not a requirement. Districts may administer the surveys at any time during the school year. You may translate the surveys into an electronic format (i.e., Survey Monkey or Scantron, etc.), or administer them in hard copy.

Districts are responsible for collecting and reporting the survey data. P.A. 11-232 states, "Each local and regional board of education shall collect the school climate assessments for each school in the district and submit such school climate assessments to the department." To meet this requirement, we recommend incorporating the data into the District Safe School Climate Plan. The plan should explicitly address the themes emerging from the data.

An initial review of the Safe School Climate Plans that have been submitted to the SDE thus far has revealed that many districts submitted policies and regulations that address anti-bullying efforts but did not report other policies and or practices that address school climate in broader ways, such as advisory programs, faculty training, student leadership initiatives, etc. We are encouraging districts to revisit the Safe School Climate Plan documents that were originally submitted to the SDE, expand them to include other such practices and strategies to address the climate survey data, and resubmit them to the SDE by April 1, 2013. In the meantime, the SDE, in collaboration with CAS, is revising the Safe School Climate Plan Template and related rubric that are currently posted on the CAS Web site, among many climate resources. To review these documents, go to www.casciac.org and click on the School Climate Resources link on the left side of the home page. Safe School Climate Plans will be reviewed by a team of practitioners appointed by the SDE. Feedback will be sent to districts by July 1, 2013.

To assist districts with this important work, training in the development of a school climate plan will be provided by CAS and SDE professionals throughout the 2012-2013 school year.

Please direct any questions you may have to JoAnn Freiberg at joann.freiberg@ct.gov or Bill Howe at william.howe@ct.gov at the SDE, or to Dave Maloney at CAS, dmaloney@casciac.org.

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Enclosure