

COLUMBIA SCHOOL SYSTEM/HORACE W. PORTER SCHOOL
Safe School Climate Plan
January 2012

INTRODUCTION

Connecticut has defined school climate as “the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.” The National School Climate Standards provide a vision and framework for a positive and sustainable school climate. Through the implementation of appropriate prevention and intervention strategies Columbia School System/Horace W. Porter School will sustain school environments where all members are welcomed, supported and feel safe in school; socially, emotionally and physically. In response to the need to establish these positive school climates, Columbia School System/Horace W. Porter School has developed the following Safe School Climate Plan.

Early in the 2011-2012 school year, the Superintendent and the Columbia Board of Education revised the district mission and vision to address the definition of school climate. The laconic and thoroughgoing mission statement is delineated by the vision.

THE COLUMBIA BOARD OF EDUCATION MISSION:

The Columbia Board of Education provides an educational experience that inspires lifelong learning and prepares students to contribute positively to the local and global communities.

THE COLUMBIA BOARD OF EDUCATION VISION:

To accomplish the Mission, the Board of Education establishes a learning environment to provide a high quality education that is safe, respectful and creative through:

- Actively recruiting, training and maintaining educational professionals;
- Developing effective policies;
- Preparation and execution of a responsible budget that maximizes the greatest educational return;
- Sharing of resources among civic and community organizations for the benefit of the Columbia School System;
- Authentic communication with members of the Columbia community;
- Maintain a clean, healthful, attractive and productive environment; and,
- Acquisition of materials to advance the desired instructional program.

Horace W. Porter School Administration, using Connecticut’s school climate definition, worked tirelessly to lay the foundation to author the school mission and vision statements. While those statements have not yet been completed, the School Administration, facilitated

and supported by the Superintendent, drafted the following ranked list related to school climate¹:

1. Protection of what is important (important is defined as student success or student achievement)
2. Trust and confidence
3. High expectations

At the same time, the Administrative Team also determined the most essential characteristic of an educator to be “high levels of intrinsic motivation” (Muhammad, 2009).

With the Administrative Team’s school culture characteristic list and the essential characteristic of an educator made clear, the COLUMBIA SCHOOL SYSTEM/HORACE W. PORTER SCHOOL Safe School Climate Plan was the next logical step. The tables below indicate the components of the plan along with the actions associated with those components. Additionally, the tables define the person or persons responsible for the actions and the timeline by which those actions must be taken.

¹ This is a “top-three” list of the Characteristics of Powerful and Positive School Cultures (Butler and Dickson, 1987, per Muhammad, 2009, p. 31) as ranked by the Horace W. Porter School Administration.

COLUMBIA SCHOOL SYSTEM/HORACE W. PORTER SCHOOL SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE PLAN

Legend: Connecticut State Department of Education = CSDE
 Columbia Board of Education = CBOE
 Safe School Climate District Coordinator = DC
 Safe School Climate Specialist = S
 Safe School Climate Committee = C

COMPONENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
Bullying Policy	Continue to implement and enforce already approved Anti-Bullying Policy which includes:	Board of Education and Superintendent	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student codes of conduct that are defined and prohibit bullying in accordance with state law. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying is prohibited on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the CBOE, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the CBOE. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying is also prohibited outside of the school setting if such bullying results in any of the following: (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school. 		
Reporting Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any form of discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is also strictly prohibited. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orally notify the Safe School Climate District Coordinator or Specialist after being witness to acts of bullying or receiving reports of bullying. 	All school employees	Within one school day after witnessing or receiving report
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File a written report with the Safe School Climate Specialist after being witness to acts of bullying or receiving reports of bullying 	All school employees	Within two school days of oral notification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any student who believes s/he has been the victim of bullying/cyberbullying may report the matter to any school employee, either in writing or anonymously. 	All Students	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent(s)/guardian(s) may file written reports of suspected bullying/cyberbullying. 	All Parents		

COMPONENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
Notification Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the Columbia School System/Horace W. Porter School Safe School Climate Plan. 	DC	Annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify students and the parents or guardians of students of the process by which students may make reports of bullying. 	DC	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide students with notice of the definition of bullying, cyberbullying and the potential consequences of engaging in such acts by the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying. 	DC and S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish the Columbia School System/Horace W. Porter School Safe School Climate Plan on the district's website and ensure that such plan is included in the school's publication of the rules, procedures, and standards of conduct in the faculty and student handbooks. 	DC	By Feb 1, 2012 and Annually
Investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and disseminate investigation procedures for use by safe school climate specialists. 	DC	Upon receipt of report
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports. 	DC and/or S	Promptly
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. 	DC	Upon completion of investigation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the alleged conduct occurred and whether such conduct constitutes bullying as defined in the district policy. 	DC and/or S	Upon completion of investigation

COMPONENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
Response to Verified Acts of Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify the Superintendent, the School Principal or designee that an act of bullying has been verified. 	DC and/or S	Upon determination that bullying has occurred
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take prompt corrective action that is reasonably calculated to stop the bullying and prevent any recurrence of such behavior, if it is determined that bullying has occurred. 	DC and/or S	Upon determination that bullying has occurred
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of student(s) who commits any verified acts of bullying and parent(s)/guardian(s) of student(s) against whom such acts were directed. This notification shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. 	DC and/or S	48 hours after the completion of the investigation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite the parent(s)/guardian(s) of students who engage in any verified acts of bullying after the completion of the investigation to a meeting at which the following will be shared: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A description of the verified act(s). A description of the school's interventions in response to the act(s). Any consequences that may result from the commission of any further acts of bullying. 	DC and/or S	Upon determination that bullying has occurred
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any student against whom an act of bullying was verified after the completion of the investigation at which the following information will be shared: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A description of the verified act(s). A description of the school's interventions designed to keep the student safe & prevent any further acts of bullying. The content of the student safety support plan. 	DC and/or S	Upon determination that bullying has occurred
	<p><i>Except in rare circumstances, such meetings with parents and guardians should be held separately.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a student safety support plan for any student(s) against whom an act of bullying was directed. The plan shall address safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying. 	S	Upon determination that bullying has occurred
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop case-by-case interventions to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline. 	S	Upon determination that bullying has occurred
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when Superintendent, School Principal, or designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct. 	DC and/or S	As appropriate

COMPONENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
Safe School Climate Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint District Safe School Climate Coordinator 	Superintendent	By July 1, 2012
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint Safe School Climate Specialist 	Superintendent	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Safe School Climate Committee in accordance with the law, (including at least one parent/guardian of a student at Horace W. Porter School) 	DC and S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish roles, responsibilities and procedures for Safe School Climate Committee including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying; • Identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school; • Review and make recommendations to amend school policies relating to bullying; • Review and make recommendations to the district safe school climate coordinator regarding the district's safe school climate plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school; • Educate students, school employees and parents and guardians of students on issues relating to bullying; • Collaborate with the district safe school climate coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying, in accordance with the law; • Perform any other duties as determined by the school principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying for the school. 	DC and S in collaboration with C	
Prevention and Intervention Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify effective evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies approved by CSDE. Strategies may include, but are not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will participate in an evidence-based approach, program or process approved by the State Department of Education that is designed to ensure a positive school climate & prevent bullying. • Students will be made aware school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts; • Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur; • Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school; • Individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees; • School-wide training related to safe school climate; • Student peer training, education and support; • Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions. 	DC, S and C	By July 1, 2012
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the prevention and intervention strategies identified by the Safe School Climate Committee 	All School Employees	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with access to evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies 	All School Employees	Ongoing

COMPONENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
Assessment of School Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an assessment using the school climate assessment instruments including surveys, approved and disseminated by the CSDE 	C	By July 1, 2012, and biennially thereafter
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit assessment results to the CSDE 	DC	By July 1, 2012 and according to CSDE guidelines
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and analyze data obtained from climate surveys/ make necessary modifications to the Columbia School System/Horace W. Porter School Safe School Climate Plan 	C	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast survey results with the National School Climate Standards and best practices 	C	Ongoing
Documentation and Record Keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a procedure for each school to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in the school. Maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school and make such list available for public inspection (this public list must not contain any personally identifiable information about any student or information that might reasonably lead to the identification of any student). 	DC and S	By July 1, 2012
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report the number of verified acts of bullying to the CSDE in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education 	DC	Annually based on timeline established by CSDE
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide all certified school employees training on the prevention, identification and response to bullying and the prevention of and response to youth suicide (the training will be provided to teachers, administrators, and pupil personnel who hold the initial educator, provisional educator or professional educator certificate as well as non-certified paraeducators, Guest Teachers (substitutes), Interns, and Volunteers in Porter (VIPs) via in-service training. 	DC and S	Annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide all other school employees training provided by the CSDE. 	CSDE with DC and S	

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EASTCONN. (2011, November). Safe School Climate Plan. Hampton, Connecticut: EASTCONN.

Muhammad, A. (2009). *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division*.
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