Griswold Middle School Climate Improvement Plan

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Griswold Middle School Climate Improvement Plan

Introduction

The vision of Griswold Middle School is to support and promote teaching and learning environments where all students thrive academically and socially, have a strong and meaningful voice, and are prepared for lifelong success. To achieve this vision, we are committed to fostering a positive, inclusive, and supportive school climate where all members of our community feel safe, valued, and empowered to thrive. Our School Climate Improvement Plan serves as a framework for creating and sustaining such an environment through an ongoing cycle of planning, evaluation, action, and implementation. Grounded in the Connecticut School Climate Standards, the Connecticut School Climate Policy (5131.911) and the Connecticut legislative expectations, this plan reflects our dedication to building strong relationships, fostering social and emotional learning, and using restorative practices to strengthen community connections and support students who may experience challenging behaviors.

The successful implementation of this plan relies on the leadership of the School Climate Coordinator at the district level and the School Climate Specialist at the school level. Their responsibilities include:

School Climate Coordinator (district-level)

- Provides leadership and support to each school in implementing the School Climate Improvement Plan.
- Collaborates with each School Climate Specialist to develop strategies for preventing, identifying, and responding to challenging behavior, including bullying and harassment.
- Ensures that strategies and expectations are communicated to the broader school community, including inclusion in the student handbook.
- Collects and maintains climate-related data, including climate survey results, discipline records, attendance, and the use of restorative practices.
- Meets at least twice per year with each School Climate Specialist to review progress, recommend revisions to the plan, and assist in completing climate surveys.

School Climate Specialist (school-level)

- Leads efforts to prevent, identify, and respond to challenging behavior, including handling reports of bullying and harassment.
- Implements evidence-based interventions, including restorative practices, to support a positive climate.
- Coordinates and leads the School Climate Committee, ensuring diverse representation from staff, students, families, and the broader school community.
- Oversees the day-to-day implementation of the School Climate Improvement Plan at the building level.
- Works closely with the School Climate Coordinator to analyze data and recommend updates to the plan.

Through this collaborative structure, our School Climate Improvement Plan not only meets state policy requirements but reflects our school's commitment to creating a culturally responsive, equitable, and restorative learning environment where all students feel safe, respected, and able to reach their full potential.

School Climate Committee

At each school, the School Climate Committee plays a critical role in supporting the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of the School Climate Improvement Plan. The committee is led by the School Climate Specialist and is responsible for ensuring that school climate efforts are informed by input from all members of the school community. The committee uses data from the school climate survey, along with other relevant information, to identify strengths and areas for improvement and to recommend strategies that foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students, families, and staff.

The School Climate Committee's responsibilities include:

- Assisting in the development, scheduling, and administration of the school climate survey.
- Analyzing survey results and other data to assess school climate strengths and challenges.
- Collaborating with the School Climate Specialist to draft, propose, and revise the School Climate Improvement Plan.
- Advising on and supporting the implementation of evidence-based strategies and restorative practices to improve school climate.
- Ensuring that the school community receives regular updates about the school's climate efforts.

The composition of the School Climate Committee ensures that diverse perspectives are represented. Membership includes:

- The School Climate Specialist (committee lead).
- A teacher, selected by the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees.
- A representative group of students, chosen to reflect the school's demographics (as developmentally appropriate).
- Families of students enrolled at the school.
- At least two additional members of the school community, selected by the School Climate Specialist (this could include other staff, community partners, or local stakeholders).

This broad representation ensures that the committee's work reflects the voices, needs, and experiences of the entire school community. Together, the School Climate Specialist and School Climate Committee work to promote equity, foster positive relationships, and ensure that the school climate is continually improving to support academic, social, and emotional success for all students.

Data for and Evaluation of School Climate

The School Climate Improvement Plan should be informed by a holistic review of data that reflects both the overall climate of the school and individual student behavior. Key data sources include the school climate survey, which gathers input from students, families, and staff about safety, relationships, and the learning environment. Schools should also regularly review discipline data (including reports of bullying, harassment, and other challenging behaviors), attendance trends, and academic performance data to identify patterns

that may indicate climate concerns. In addition, restorative practices data—such as the use and outcomes of restorative responses—provides insight into how effectively the school is building a culture of community, accountability, and repair.

This data should be shared transparently with the school community to ensure that students, families, and staff have opportunities to review, understand, and respond. The School Climate Committee should lead this process, sharing key data points and plan updates through regular updates, family forums, school websites, and climate committee meetings. Opportunities for families and students to offer feedback—through focus groups, listening sessions, or surveys—ensure that the School Climate Improvement Plan reflects the authentic experiences and needs of the entire school community. By making data review and climate improvement a shared responsibility, schools foster stronger relationships and build trusting, inclusive partnerships that strengthen school culture overall.

School Climate Improvement Plan Goals and Action Steps

To support the ongoing development and monitoring of the School Climate Improvement Plan, the School Climate Committee will use a structured School Climate Action Planning Table to document each identified climate goal and track progress over time. For each goal, the committee will outline the data sources that support the need for this focus area, the intended outcomes, and how the goal aligns with the Connecticut School Climate Standards. Each goal will be broken into specific action steps, with clear identification of whether each step involves professional learning, the creation of a procedure or protocol, or the development of new resources. The table will also indicate whether the action step is aligned to Tier 1, 2, or 3 supports, the person responsible for implementation, and ongoing progress and monitoring notes. This tool allows the School Climate Committee to set multiple goals if needed, ensuring that climate improvement efforts are comprehensive, data-driven, and responsive to the evolving needs of the school community. By embedding this table into the climate improvement process, schools can foster transparency, accountability, and collaboration while maintaining a clear focus on equity, restorative practices, and positive school culture.

Goal 1: Effectively implement a restorative system to promote and sustain a positive school climate emphasizing prevention, identification, and response to challenging behavior.						
Evidence/Data: Based on the 2026 spring climate surveys, there was a relative concern regarding respectful interactions between students.						
Intended Outcome: Support students in building self-awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.						
Standard	Action Steps	Action Type	Person Responsible	Tier	Progress	Monitoring Notes
Standard 1	Prevention: Implement Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions with fidelity to proactively establish behavioral expectations, promote positive relationships and interactions, and recognize/celebrate respectful and responsible behavior. Integrate empathy, communication, and problem-solving into daily lessons.	Procedure/Protoc...	-School Climate Specialist -Assistant Principal -PBIS Committee -All staff	Tier 1	In Progr...	-Conduct monthly PBIS Committee meetings -Review the "GMS Expectations Matrix" document with staff and students. -Share PBIS processes and protocols with staff during staff meetings, team meetings, PD sessions, etc. -Reflect and evaluate current practices during school level PLC meetings. -Meet regularly with students - "Pod Meetings". -Collect and analyze student behavioral data via Powerschool. -Communicate expectations to families. -Use survey data and feedback to refine practices and assess effectiveness.
Standard 3	Identification: Develop a schoolwide understanding of the behavioral tiers as outlined in the "GMS Behavioral Guidelines".	Professional Lear...	-School Climate Specialist -Assistant Principal -School Climate Committee -All Staff	Tier 1	In Progr...	-Discuss and refine the "GMS Behavioral Guidelines" with staff during staff meetings, team meetings, PD sessions, etc. -Collect and analyze student behavioral data via Powerschool. -Reflect and evaluate current practices during school level PLC meetings. -Meet regularly with students to review guidelines.
Standard 4	Response: Implement restorative interventions as outlined in the "GMS Behavioral Guidelines".	Professional Lear...	-School Climate Specialist -Assistant Principal -School Climate Committee -All Staff	Tier 1	In Progr...	-Utilize the Challenging Behavior Reporting Form. -Utilize the revised referral form. -Employ various restorative responses (IE. mediations, restorative circles, student reflection forms, etc.) -Track implementation of restorative efforts/interventions.

Goal 2: Establishing professional learning communities for educators to deepen their understanding: school climate principles, climate improvement process, restorative practices, relational approaches, strategies for preventing, identifying, and responding to challenging behaviors.						
Evidence/Data: Based on the 2026 spring climate survey staff results showed a relative need for professional development to support district policies.						
Intended Outcome: Educators actively participate in professional learning communities where they collaboratively enhance their knowledge and skills related to school climate principles, implement effective climate improvement processes, apply restorative and relational practices, and utilize strategies to prevent, identify, and respond to challenging student behaviors.						
Standard	Action Steps	Action Type	Person Responsible	Tier	Progress	Monitoring Notes
Standard 1	Staff will meet regularly throughout the year to review the findings in *The Restorative Practices Handbook* and discuss any new learning with each other.	Professional Learni...	-School Climate Specialist -School Climate Committee -All Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	-Engage in structured conversations in restorative practices
Standard 1	Professional development for 2026-2027 will continue to focus on school climate and restorative practices with respect to challenging behaviors to enhance teacher understanding and responsiveness.	Professional Learni...	-School Climate Specialist -School Climate Committee -All Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	-Attend all sessions -Actively participate in PD as needed
Standard 3	Continue to revise and refine the MTSS system.	Procedure/Protocol	-School Climate Specialist -MTSS Committee -District Admin	Tier 2	In Progress	-MTSS Committee reviews updated process -Track and analyze student achievement and behavioral data. -Conduct regularly scheduled MTSS meetings. -Share revised process with staff as appropriate. -Addition of Behavioral Guidelines to the MTSS Handbook

Goal 3: Continue to integrate differentiation strategies into Tier 1 instruction and effectively provide Tier 2 interventions within the Tier 1 setting, ensuring targeted support for all students' diverse learning needs.						
Evidence/Data: Building Initiative						
Intended Outcome: Educators will apply differentiated Tier 1 instruction and deliver Tier 2 interventions within the Tier 1 classroom, leading to improved student progress and targeted support for learners requiring additional assistance.						
Standard	Action Steps	Action Type	Person Responsible	Tier	Progress	Monitoring Notes
Standard 3	Continue the provision of professional development to implement differentiation strategies in Tier 1 and provide Tier 2 support within the classroom.	Professional Learn...	-School Climate Specialist -All Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	-Work collaboratively with interventionists -Create, implement, and differentiate lessons for all learners. -Department and Grade Level PLC's weekly/monthly
Standard 3	Enhanced teacher use of Magic School AI to create differentiated lessons for all learners.	Resource	-School Climate Specialist -All Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	-Meet with the Instructional Technology Facilitator to learn about AI and how to implement it into daily lessons as needed. -Receive training on Magic School AI as needed. -Department and Grade Level PLC's weekly/monthly
Standard 3	Refine the implementation of the co-teaching model.	Professional Learn...		Tier 1	In Progress	-Attend professional development opportunities related to co-teaching -Formal and informal observations of co-teaching in action -Consistent collaboration between regular education and special education teachers.

Appendix

Connecticut Legislation

The development and implementation of this School Climate Improvement Plan is grounded in the requirements set forth in Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-222h. This statute mandates that all schools in Connecticut establish and maintain a School Climate Improvement Plan designed to promote a positive and safe school climate, prevent and respond to challenging behaviors, and foster environments where all students feel valued, respected, and connected to their school community.

The School Climate Improvement Plan template used by our school aligns directly with the Connecticut School Climate Policy, which was developed to support compliance with C.G.S. Sec. 10-222h and the broader requirements established by Public Act 23-167. Each element of the plan—including the identification of climate goals, data sources, intended outcomes, climate standards alignment, action steps, and monitoring processes—reflects state expectations for building equitable, restorative, and culturally responsive school climates. This ensures that our school is not only meeting state requirements, but also embedding best practices that reflect the voices, needs, and experiences of our diverse school community. Below is a list of highlighted points from this legislation:

- C.G.S. Sec. 10-222hh requires each school to develop a school climate improvement plan, based on the results of the school climate survey, school climate committee recommendations, protocols and supports outlined in the law, and other relevant data.
- The school climate specialist, in collaboration with the school climate coordinator, is required to develop this plan and update it as necessary.
- The plan must be submitted to the school climate coordinator on or before December 31 each year and must be made available to the school community upon approval.
- Under the law, the plan is to be used in the prevention of, identification of and response to “challenging behavior”.
- C.G.S. Sec. 10-222hh(b) outlines that the plans must include protocols and supports to enhance classroom safety and address challenging behavior, and, must, at a minimum, include the components detailed below.
    - Contact information for an administrator to be notified when incidents of challenging behavior result in student discipline or removal of a student from the classroom.
    - The process by which this designated administrator will assess the facts, severity and intentionality of an incident of challenging behavior.
    - The designated location that students may be sent when removed from class for disciplinary reasons pursuant to C.G.S. Sec. 10-233b. In addition, protocols and supports must include the supports each student may receive in this location, including, among other things, interventions from trained school employees, therapeutic resources and mental health supports.
    - The ways to “address challenging behavior, enhance resiliency, increase the use of de-escalation strategies and improve social and emotional skills.”
    - Safeguards to ensure that supports, services or interventions are in compliance with the special education laws, including the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and a student’s IEP or Section 504 Plan.
    - A requirement that the Superintendent submit, at least annually, a report to the local or regional board of education concerning the number of tiered response incidents that occurred in the prior year.
    - A prohibition on discrimination or retaliation against individuals who report or investigate tiered response incidents.

School Climate Standards

1. The school district community has a shared vision and plan for promoting and sustaining a positive school climate that focuses on prevention, identification, and response to all challenging behavior.
2. The school district community adopts policies that promote:
    a. a sound school environment that develops and sustains academic, social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual skills; and
    b. a restorative school environment focused on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by building and supporting meaningful school-wide relationships, and intentionally re-engaging any disengaged students, educators, and families of students in the school community.
3. The school community's practices are identified, prioritized, and supported to:
    a. promote learning and the positive academic, social, emotional, ethical, and civic development of students;
    b. enhance engagement in teaching, learning, and school-wide activities;
    c. address barriers to teaching and learning; and d. develop and sustain a restorative infrastructure that builds capacity, accountability, and sustainability.
4. The school community creates a school environment where everyone is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities.
5. The school community creates a restorative system that cultivates a sense of belonging through norms and activities that promote social and civic responsibility, and a dedication to cultural responsiveness, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

School Climate Glossary (per policy):

The following definitions related to creating a positive school climate and the write of the school climate improvement plan are taken directly from the Connecticut School Climate Policy (5131.911)

School climate	means the quality and character of the school life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community, and which is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and that reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures within the school community
Positive Sustained School Climate	is the foundation for learning and positive youth development and includes: a. Norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, culturally, racially, intellectually, and physically safe. b. People who treat one another with dignity and are engaged, respected and solve problems restoratively. c. A school community that works collaboratively together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision. d. Adults who model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and e. A school community that contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.
Social Emotional Learning	means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

Emotional intelligence	means the ability to (A) perceive, recognize, and understand emotions in oneself or others, (B) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem solving and interpersonal communication, (C) understand and identify emotions, and (D) manage emotions in oneself and others.
Bullying	means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.
School Environment	means a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, including at a school bus stop or on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, and may include other activities, functions or programs that occur outside of a school sponsored or school-related activity, function or program if bullying at or during such other activities, functions or programs negatively impacts the school environment.
Cyberbullying	means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any other electronic communication.
Teen dating violence	means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.
Mobile electronic device	means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.
Electronic communication	means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.
School climate improvement plan	means a building-specific plan developed by the school climate committee, in collaboration with the school climate specialist, using school climate survey data and any other relevant information, through a process that engages all members of the school community and involves such members in a series of overlapping systemic improvements, school-wide instructional practices and relational practices that prevent, identify and respond to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to alleged bullying and harassment in the school environment.
Restorative Practices	means evidence and research-based system-level practices that focus on (A) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, (B) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and (C) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.
School climate survey	means a research-based, validated and developmentally appropriate survey administered to students, school employees and families of students, in the predominant languages of the members of the school community, that measures and identifies school climate needs and tracks progress through a school climate improvement plan.
Connecticut school climate policy	means the school climate policy developed, updated and approved by an association in the state that represents boards of education and adopted by

	the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, established pursuant to section 10-222q of the general statutes, as amended by this act, that provides a framework for an effective and democratically informed school climate improvement process that serves to implement Connecticut school climate standards, and includes a continuous cycle of (A) planning and preparation, (B) evaluation, (C) action planning, and (D) implementation
School employee	means (A) a teacher, substitute teacher, administrator, school superintendent, school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, school nurse, physician, paraeducator or coach employed by a local or regional board of education, or (B) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public school, pursuant to a contract with a local or regional board of education.
School community	means any individuals, groups, businesses, public institutions and nonprofit organizations that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school system and the community in which it is located, including, but not limited to, students and their families, members of the local or regional board of education, volunteers at a school and school employees.

School Climate Improvement Plan: Families

There are groups of students in the school who exclude others and not make them feel bad for not being a part of the group.

School Climate Improvement Plan: Students

There are groups of students who make others feel left out.

School Climate Improvement Plan: Staff

There are groups of students in the school who exclude others and not make them feel bad for not being a part of the group.