



WOODBIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

40 Beecher Road – South
Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525

Gaeton F. Stella, Ph.D. – Superintendent
Sheila Haverkamp – Special Services Director | Alfred Pullo, Jr. – Director of Business Services/Operations

The School Climate Project

April 6, 2011

Dear Parents/Guardians of 5th and 6th Grade Students:

As you know, one of the school district's foremost goals is to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for your children. Therefore, in addition to improving academic standards, the district's educational mission seeks to promote character education and the social/emotional development of students. An issue that has concerned us in this regard, as students progress from upper elementary school to the middle and high school levels, is the persistent nature of bullying. While we have approaches in place to respond to verified instances of bullying, we seek to provide a proactive approach that addresses bullying in all its aspects. We are pleased to have an opportunity to continue with the School Climate Project, which was piloted last winter at BRS in Grades 5 and 6. School-based administrators, teachers, psychologists, counselors and I have met extensively with the School Climate Project founders. We are enthusiastic about the potential this program offers to address bullying at the elementary and secondary levels.

The School Climate Project has the Following Mission:

"Our mission is to improve the academic performance of all students by lessening the impact of bullying on the culture of schools."

The Key Goals of the School Climate Project:

- To identify students who are being bullied and to empower these students to better handle their bullying situation.
- To teach and empower "the silent majority" - bystanders - to step in and help targets of bullying, thereby reducing the power of the bullies while sending a powerful message to targets of bullying that they "are not alone".
- To provide an early warning program capable of identifying emotionally distressed students and then intervening to help these students with the family psychologist-calling program.
- To provide succinct "School Climate" data analysis reports to the Superintendent and Principals so that they can take data-driven, tangible steps to address bullying.

How this Will Work:

During two classes in May, your child will:

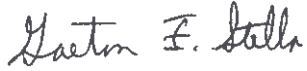
1. Watch a training video that describes how our program works.
2. Spend 30-45 minutes completing a series of strictly confidential online questionnaires concerning bullying. The questionnaires were selected together with the Yale University Department of Psychology, and have been validated over the past 20 years by leading research universities including Yale, Columbia, John Hopkins, University of Pennsylvania, and the National Institutes of Health. Your child's completed questionnaires will be scored by a computer.
3. If your child's score suggests that they are being bullied or are in emotional distress, you will be confidentially contacted by the School Climate Project team to discuss the results and options for addressing the issue.

You may select to have your child opt out of the School Climate Project (to opt out, please see the information in the box on the reverse side). If you elect to have your child opt out from the School Climate Project Program, your child will be provided with alternative activities during the project time.

Confidentiality:

Your child's information will not be released in an identifiable form outside of the School Climate Project team. Teachers and school administrators will be informed about individual student results of the survey and options you have selected for intervention only in cases where you grant permission for this information to be released.

Sincerely,



Gaeton F. Stella, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact the School Climate Project Team leaders:
Dickon Pownall-Gray at dickonpg@optonline.net or Kiki Cahn at ksdc@sbcglobal.net.

If you choose to **opt out** of the School Climate Project program, please log onto:
www.schoolclimateproject.com
and complete the parent opt out form. You may also contact your school to opt out.
If you have not done so by Thursday, April 14th,
we will assume your child is participating in the program.