



# Every School Should Have...

**A Good School Climate and  
Effective Behavioral Health Supports**



September, 2007

### **About PCCY**

Founded in 1980, Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) serves as the region's leading child advocacy organization and works to improve the lives and life chances of its children. Through thoughtful and informed advocacy, community education, targeted service projects and budget analysis, PCCY seeks to watch out and speak out for children and families. PCCY undertakes specific and focused projects in areas affecting the healthy growth and development of children, including after-school, child care, public education, child health, juvenile justice and child welfare. PCCY is a committed advocate and an independent watchdog for the well-being of children.

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# Children Do Not Begin School On A Blank Page



# Introduction

Children do not begin school on a blank page. They bring the totality of their experiences with them. Creating an environment that supports all children and provides ways to respond to those who have behavioral health needs is an increasingly recognized responsibility of today's schools. How to shape the role that schools should play in mental health, and the role that mental health should play in schools, is a subject of ongoing debate at the federal, state and local levels of government.

Districts and schools need a place to turn within the school and the community to help a child. But addressing a child's behavioral and emotional needs takes time and personnel away from the school's primary mission of instruction. As a major city school system with increasing budgetary and academic pressures, Philadelphia schools face challenges in this area and in others for enough time, enough staff and enough partners. This challenge is reflected in schools across the nation.

*“Being able to provide not only book learning but an environment that allows kids to adapt appropriately socially and emotionally makes a huge difference.”*

- Stephen Mayberg, Director California Department of Mental Health

In Philadelphia, where the majority of students come from families whose income is low, where nearly one-third of children are behind in reading preparedness when they start public school kindergarten<sup>1</sup> and where unstable communities and traumatic situations are not uncommon, the challenge of addressing behavior issues seems daunting. It is a challenge many staff in our schools feel unable to meet.

When Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth surveyed 27 of the District's 30 comprehensive neighborhood high schools for a 2006 report, “What Every High School Should Have,” many administrators described the need for help in responding to difficult student behavior.

Nearly one-half of respondents in that same survey specifically volunteered a comment on the need for additional behavioral and mental health supports that would yield better climate results: “Students need more psychological services,” one official insisted. Another called for “therapeutic counseling centers around health, grief and violence.” Some pointed to a deficiency in the assessment process itself: “The Comprehensive Student Assistance Program (CSAP) is completed,” one said of the first step in addressing behavioral and mental health issues. “But then what? Service is not forthcoming.”

*Education Week* (May 2, 2007) reported a similar concern from a school psychologist in Oregon: “Once we identify signs, we have to have someplace to go with them.”

In our interviews, we found a sense of emergency in some schools where disruption and disrespect had become commonplace. This year, following up on our surveys, PCCY explored issues around student behavior — and its impact on school climate. We conducted interviews and focus groups with teachers, nurses, counselors, social workers, Consultation and Education specialists (C&E's), principals, school climate managers, psychologists, art therapists, behavior specialists, and leadership of the school district's offices of Specialized Services, Climate and Safety, and Transitional and Alternative Education, as well as leadership of the City's Community Behavioral Health (CBH) managed-care system. Through these interviews and focus groups, the interplay of a healthy school climate and the need for mental and behavioral health services became obvious.

Schools need resources and skills to address students' social and emotional needs. Combining the worlds of education and behavioral health to develop a positive school climate and design appropriate interventions are ongoing challenges for the participating systems.

(Footnote)

<sup>1</sup> City of Philadelphia and Philadelphia Safe and Sound (2006). Report card 2006: “The Well-being of Children and Youth in Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA: <http://www.philasafesound.org/pdf/RCpercent202006.FINAL.6.12.pdf>.

## What Is A “Good” Climate?

*“School climate is more than an individual experience. It is an emergent group phenomenon.”*

- Jonathan Cohen & Terry Pickeral, “How Measuring School Climate Can Improve Your School,” Education Week, April, 2007

School climate has been defined and redefined over the years. Every school has a personality which is quickly recognizable to the visitor — the look and feel of the place, signs of respectful relationships, a sense of order. This all speaks to a school’s “climate.” Researchers agree that how students, teachers and even parents feel about being in a school will affect the learning and teaching that goes on there. When we walk in a school we notice if it is welcoming, if staff and students seem to feel safe, cared for and respected. In the best schools, we can sense a strong community because of a healthy climate.

For students with behavioral health issues – this climate should offer order, affirmation, motivation, empowerment and lessons on modeling good behavior within society at-large. For faculty and the whole school family, good school climate involves a united approach to problem solving, a sense of teamwork and mission. For all participants, a good school climate offers affirmation in knowing how to behave individually and within a group, because the rules are clear, consistent and fairly enforced and delivered in a setting that is clean, orderly and inviting. Academic success is much more likely in this environment. While violent incidents and disruptive behaviors are less likely in schools that pay attention to creating a good school climate it is not just to be thought of as violence prevention or treatment. It is an integral part of the learning environment.

Although it is easier to create a good climate in smaller schools where students feel safer, schools of all sizes must make an effort to focus not only on academics, but also on learning, practicing and reinforcing social expectations and good behaviors. Every student and school staff member can benefit from explicit teaching and modeling of desired behaviors.



## School Climate in Philadelphia

What would a school look like if it were designed from the bottom up to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of the students it serves – and the professional demands of the faculty who deliver that service?

- It would be small enough for everyone to know everyone by name (or wherever and whenever possible, foster an intimate, family atmosphere);
- Classes would have 17-22 students;
- Teachers would have time to meet with each other to plan instructional activities and address special needs of students needing help;
- The principal would be an inspiring instructional leader skilled at involving the whole school family in shaping and reinforcing the climate;
- Schools would assess the impact of their efforts and programs and regularly review them;
- Counselors and social workers, selected by the principal and faculty, would have caseloads well within professional standards and would be able to practice counseling with students;
- Adequate numbers of behavioral support staff and programs would be on hand or easily accessible;
- School support staff would function as a team that cultivates a valued collaborative relationship with the city and outside providers;
- The climate would exude positive reinforcement and include constant recognition of students, staff, faculty, parents and community partners who contribute to making it a happy family.

That’s the best design, with good school climate integrated into the whole school’s mission. But in the absence of some of these positive educational features, we must pay attention to creating the best school climate we can.

Unfortunately, school climate often gains attention in negative ways. Like many school districts, Philadelphia has traditionally accepted school climate as rule enforcement — addressing poor behavior largely through discipline strategies rather than countering or avoiding them with prevention or treatment programs. “Pink slips,” detentions, suspensions, metal detectors, security cameras, disciplinary transfers and expulsions are commonly used tools to deal with difficult student behaviors and attempts to create a “good climate.”

In recent years, Philadelphia has created many disciplinary schools; indeed the School District’s alternative disciplinary school system has grown to become the nation’s largest. Still many of the sending schools have been unable to improve or stabilize their school climate.

*“The School District tried to fix the problem about staff getting assaulted by putting more security in West (Philadelphia High School), but this is not a long-term solution. The long-term solution is to give us activities to keep our focus away from violence. We need more guidance counselors, and adults who care about students, not more punishment. What is needed is a complete change in school culture.”*

- Member, Philadelphia Student Union

Philadelphia has thus far not been able to adopt holistic school climate strategies in large part due to inadequate financial resources, although Philadelphia’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Children’s Behavioral Health in 2006 called for many more programs for children in schools and the community.

Internally, in spite of some advances, there are four different central offices with their different reporting relationships which deal with aspects of school climate. These separate offices illustrate the structural barriers between the system’s educational, clinical and safety functions. Further, the limited responsibility, accountability and resources vested in the regional offices in responding to school needs and improving and sustaining positive learning environments reflect missed opportunities to facilitate improvement. Finally, short-comings in communication and laws, regulations and funding streams have hindered necessary collaboration between the City’s social service agencies and its public schools.

In recent years, there have been many calls for, and task forces urging, more cooperation between the education system and social services that the city’s youth need. Advances toward a more comprehensive response to the needs of children in our schools have been made. But, there is much more to do.

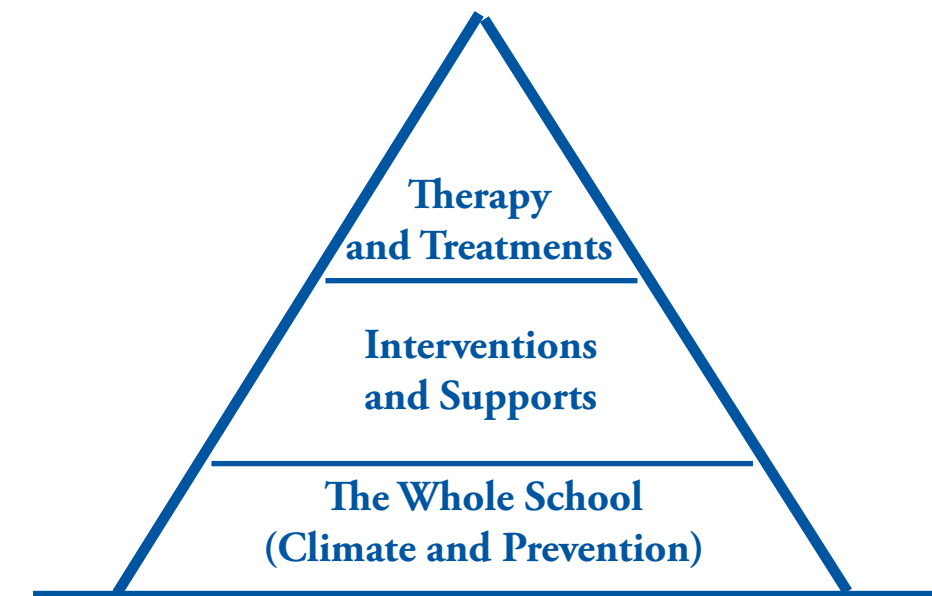


## What Is Needed To Create A Good Climate?

**“When positive behavioral supports are universally designed for all students, positive effects can also be achieved for individuals with severe difficulties.”**

- Stephen P. Safran, Karen Oswald, Ohio Univ., PBS: “Can Schools Reshape Disciplinary Practices?” Spring 2003, Council for Exceptional Children

A school’s social support structure can be construed as a pyramid, with all students in a school benefiting from an overall good climate at the foundation, those students who need some extra supports with behavior and social issues in the middle, and those few at the top who need more intensive behavioral health treatment and supports.



### 1. At the Base of the Pyramid – the Whole School (Climate and Prevention)



Each school should have a school-wide positive behavior support system (see Best Practices page 34) and clear rules that are agreed upon, understood, enforced and modified as needed. Much like the base of a pyramid, this whole-school climate is positioned to hold up the entire school support structure. Within it, every member of the school should find reflection of the school’s social ideal, as well as ongoing affirmation and resources to reach and maintain it – for their own social and emotional well-being, and for that of the group’s.

While this pyramid base has been more ideal than actualized in many schools and districts, its realization has been made even more difficult in recent years. High-pressure academic accountability from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law has fundamentally changed the ways in which schools and districts work – with increased focus on reading and math test scores, standardized curricula, and student performance data. Particularly in schools that serve large numbers of low-income children of color, the results of the new emphasis have impacted school climate.

Since what gets counted is often what ‘counts,’ (see page 15) schools have decreased focus, time, and expenditures on non-tested subjects – including art, music and athletics in schools – and other positive aspects of good climate. This re-emphasis has made schools less engaging and denied students and faculty a natural and previously school-based outlet for emotions, energy and creativity. Yet, attention to holistically building a school climate where both staff and students feel welcome and safe, where there is time enough and support enough to respond to individual and group need, is critical to building and strengthening the base of the pyramid. Although most of us recognize the relationship between school climate factors and academic performance, neither the accountability structure of the state or city emphasizes climate.

***“When we use evaluation of school climate as a springboard for school improvement, we are doing much more than promoting academic achievement. We are supporting the participation of students and adults alike in a democratic process. Doing this kind of comprehensive school climate work uses the same sets of skills and dispositions that under gird effective citizenship.”***

- Cohen and Pickerel, Education Week, April 18, 2007

## 2. The Middle of the Pyramid: Where School Climate and Behavioral Health Support Meet



While a positive climate can enhance every child’s capacity to thrive, some students need more. They may stumble when confronted with transitions to new academic settings or into adolescent life. They may experience traumatic situations or stressful changes in their family structure. They may just need more attention and more time to adapt to school and change. These students often do not have a clinical diagnosis, but they are in need of some intervention. They need support and monitoring as they continue to participate in regular school programming. When schools have lower adult-to-student ratios, with counselors and social workers available as needed, the individual needs of many of these students in the school can be met. But when school staff is stretched thin — as years of ongoing budget cuts have left many Philadelphia schools — the unmet needs of these youth can grow and negatively impact the whole school climate.

***“Without interventions, many vulnerable children can end up with serious behavioral health problems. Even children who appear to be on track for healthy social and emotional development can slip off that track if faced with significant stress.”***

- Philadelphia Blue Ribbon Commission on Children’s Behavioral Health, January, 2007

Services for these youth represent the bridge between general school climate and individual student behavioral health. While students in some districts receive an hour a week to talk with someone, and in others they receive group counseling, in Philadelphia like in many under-resourced, large districts, adequate options are lacking at this level for these students. In many of our schools, these children receive little support.

Teachers, counselors, psychologists, and social workers have significant roles to play in this area. But teachers are often frustrated and overwhelmed with the traditional needs of their classes; counselors are often unable to find the time to meet students individually or in small groups. There are few social workers on staff in schools, and educational psychologists although skilled and trained to provide support, generally only test students for placement in the Special Education program. They do not treat students for behavioral or emotional problems.

***“Many of these kids don’t need a therapist, they need more attention.”***

- School Based Behavioral Health (SBBH) worker

Staff from outside agencies can and currently do provide some service to this population. One such model — in 194 elementary and some middle and high schools — is the Consultation and Education (C&E) program (see page 27). The program provides short-term case management and referrals for a limited cohort of students. Philadelphia’s C&E’s are funded by a combination of the School District and the City’s Department of Behavioral Health and Department of Human Services (DHS). They are employed by social service agencies and work in schools to connect students and families with available social services.

School officials often point to the Philadelphia District’s Comprehensive Student Assistance Process (CSAP) (see page 26) as the identification and intervention framework for responding to all students in need of support.

According to the School District, this assessment tool was designed as a “collaborative process to identify and remove learning barriers by accessing school- and community-based resources.” Some schools have been able to use it that way successfully, collaborating through the use of structured grade group meetings in elementary schools, or in the case of one high school, carving common meeting time into the problematic high-school rostering schedule. Other school staff, however, complain that the CSAP process suffers from the same barriers that the schools experience – primarily lack of time and opportunities to attend meetings that would allow for collaboration as well as lack of adequate services to which they can refer students.

## 3. Providing Behavioral Health Treatment in Schools: The Top of the Pyramid



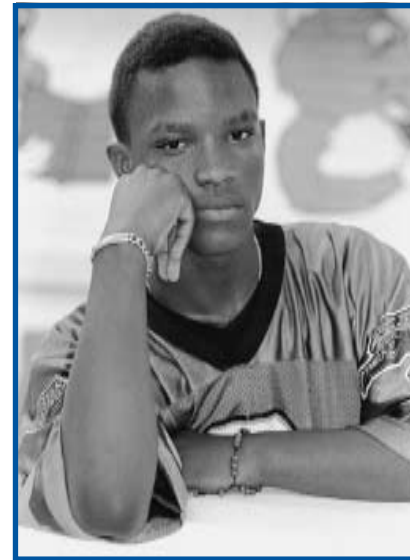
A 1999 Surgeon General’s report on mental health estimated that 21 percent of children in the U.S. were affected by a mental health disorder, including 11 percent who had a mental health condition that resulted in considerable functional limitations. That would translate to approximately 41,000 children and youth in Philadelphia.<sup>2</sup>

At this top level of the climate pyramid, there must be a strong bridge between general school climate and individual behavioral health. There are now more than 80 behavioral health programs in Philadelphia’s public schools, supported largely by Community Behavioral Health (CBH), Philadelphia’s behavioral health management organization for people whose health insurance is paid through Medical Assistance.

Some behavioral support programs serve few children while others serve many; some serve children who otherwise would not be able to attend regular schools, and some serve children with varying degrees of



needs. Many of the programs are designed to serve individual children with behavioral health diagnoses, but they are looked to by many of the school faculty for general support for improving school climate. Philadelphia is often viewed as a national model in blending school, City, state and federal resources to broaden access to students behavioral health services. Still, many programs are not able to meet all the needs of the young people attending the city's schools.



The most common school-based services provided these youth are Philadelphia's "wraparound" programs where individuals employed by behavioral health providers are assigned to care for individual children during the day. To provide one-on-one attention, these workers "shadow" individual children in classes in schools throughout the city. This program grew over the last decade as being the most easily accessible service for children needing special care; its effectiveness varies.

The behavioral health system recently developed other models which seem to be successful in providing care to some students in schools. In 28 schools, teams of professional behavioral health workers, known as School Based Behavioral Health (SBBH) or hybrid programs (see page 29), are assigned to assist a limited number of youth for a period of time.

Because the behavioral specialists in SBBH programs are assigned to work with specific students — and not to improve the general climate — their broad impact is often limited. There are exceptions to this

***"It is so important that we help build relationships. We can be an important bridge to help the student learn new social skills while talking with teachers about his/her efforts."***

- SBBH team leader

limitation, in which certain agencies' SBBH staff work more generally with the school staff. In these schools, where the full-time, on-site SBBH team has been fully integrated into the life of the school, the whole school has benefited. It is important, however, to note that this work stretches the limitations of the current funding sources.

There are also programs which draw students from several schools. These small programs for elementary-age students who have exhibited dangerous behaviors. They are located in special, regionally based Children Achieving through Re-Education centers. Middle- and high-school students in similar situations can be transferred to one of six alternative disciplinary schools, all privately run and publicly funded.

In spite of these programs, barriers remain. While the presence of outside providers is important, their addition to the school setting is not always easy. School staff often do not understand the eligibility requirements or the possibilities and limitations of the programs. Anxious for assistance with a particular problematic student, staff often want to turn over the youth to the behavioral health representatives, who in turn get frustrated by what they perceive as a lack of collaboration.

Because behavioral health workers are not "education regulars," some school leaders and staff overlook collaborative opportunities. There are instances in schools that can be held up as models of collaboration

with outside providers and where the school-based behavioral health specialists are able to help the whole school improve its atmosphere. These collaborative models should be repeated throughout the system.

With so many pieces in place and increased understanding of needs and hands-on experience, the stage should be set for improving general and specific services to youth in our schools and to improving school climate.

### Accountability for School Climate

Measures of school climate should be incorporated into the formula that determines schools' Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status under "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB). Such measures might focus on student safety, conflict resolution methods, problem-solving, staff attendance, teacher longevity and satisfaction, attitudes and connections with school and sense of belonging. Whether students attend school, and whether they put in the time and effort needed to be successful depends in large part on whether the school is a place where they want to be, where they feel wanted and safe.

Including measures of school climate in AYP requirements would give schools and districts a powerful incentive to improve the provision and coordination of services to students, and to implement prevention programs at a broad scale. Staff meeting time dedicated to spreading positive behavioral health models and experience could become commonplace. At present, these types of activities are marginalized because they fall outside of what is included in the accountability structure.

(Footnote)

<sup>2</sup> Satcher, David, "Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General" (1999), U.S. Public Health Service, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Institute of Mental Health, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/home.html>.

## What Would It Take To Build The Right Pyramid In Every School?

*“Just because some students don’t quality for Medical Assistance, there still needs to be a way of accessing services and creating proactive, preventative programs. Bottom line (of what’s needed): resources, access and less red tape.”*

- A Philadelphia regional superintendent



**For all our children to succeed,  
All levels of the School District need to work together to:**

- **secure adequate programming and support;**
- **provide enough staff time and services to respond to all children’s needs;**
- **recognize the importance of creating a positive school climate;**
- **increase collaboration and integration of offices responsible for all aspects of behavioral health and school climate;**
- **increase collaboration between the City’s social service and health agencies and schools.**

## Recommendations - All Levels

**In Order to Improve School Climate, Our Schools Need:**

- more resources to deal with all levels of need, including additional counselors, social workers, C&E’s and behavioral health services;
- smaller class sizes to better attend to student needs;
- leadership that sets a positive tone;
- staff training in, and collegial commitment to, creating positive school climate as a prerequisite to academic achievement;
- counseling time for students who need some extra help;
- clear expectations embodied in memoranda of understanding with outside providers and school-wide familiarity with these special programs;
- a “point person” with time to take responsibility for coordinating climate and behavioral response and collaborative efforts among individuals and agencies;
- time and scheduling for collaboration between educational and behavioral health providers;
- quicker response time for students who need intensive treatment;
- better understanding of protocols for dealing with students with special needs;
- time for the inclusion of children’s social and emotional needs in school scheduling, including the consideration of classes to help students learn conflict resolution or other positive behavioral approaches.

**In Order for Schools to be Successful, the Regions Need to:**

- have more power, authority and resources to support schools in developing good school climate, such as additional CSAP liaisons to provide training and support to schools;
- expand and coordinate resources with outside providers to improve training for school staff on issues of school climate and behavioral health/classroom management;
- replicate success by sharing positive experiences of schools with effective CSAP models;
- be a strong resource and advisor for schools and an advocate for them at the central office;
- have more authority and responsibility to assist schools in choosing and developing programs and to monitor their implementation.

### **In Order for the Regions to be Successful, the Central Office Needs to:**

- develop an agreed-upon reporting and assessment system (a school climate “AYP”) to track progress, increase the focus on, and support for, improving climate;
- secure flexible funding to enable behavioral health specialists to work more generally with school staff on positive behavioral models;
- consolidate programming and accountability for behavior, climate and safety efforts in a single office balanced between prevention/intervention, counseling/policing and zero tolerance/second chance programs;
- support the regions in improving, coordinating and expanding in-school services, including more strategic use of counselors and an expanded C&E program;
- support masters-level clinicians to provide direct service to students and consultation for staff as part of preventative care;
- help regions and schools plan positive school-wide climate initiatives which provide students opportunities to learn and practice positive behaviors;
- assist the regions in guiding schools and partnering agencies in developing and implementing memoranda of understanding to clarify roles and expectations of schools and outside agencies working in schools.

### **All Levels of the District Must Recognize that Greater Efforts are Needed to:**

- assure that paper compliance does not overwhelm or diminish the schools’ capacity to deliver or secure needed services;
- continuously work to develop a positive school culture and provide ongoing team training in knowing the legal and agreed upon procedures;
- share school successes;
- raise the importance of schools’ achieving good school climate as a necessary precondition to academic success.



## **Looking Closer**

## Looking Closer at the Central Office, Regional Offices and Schools



### Central Offices

The connection between creating good school climate and responding to behavioral health issues must be recognized at the central office level. It is at the central office level that the vision and needed resources are determined, requiring a unified approach and commitment to work with the behavioral health community in securing needed funding streams to implement effective programs. Efforts have been fragmented and divided among four different offices within central administration: Specialized Services, Transition and Alternative Education, under the Chief Academic Officer (CAO); School Climate and Safety, under

the Chief Operating Officer (COO); and Non-Instructional Managers, under Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

### The Office of Specialized Services

OSS is charged with providing a “seamless continuum of services that support students’ social, health and emotional well-being.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, it oversees CSAP (assessment of needed intervention), counselors, psychological services, Health Department-funded drug and alcohol assessment and referral (Student Assistance Program); school-based behavioral health teams (funded by Community Behavioral Health); the Keys to Success pilot program that provides behavioral health support in a number of high schools; and classrooms for specially diagnosed needs (Therapeutic Emotional Support classrooms and an alternative partial hospitalization model called Children Achieving through Re-Education — CARE — classrooms).

OSS also assigns and employs “CSAP/Behavioral Health liaisons” whom it based in the District’s regional offices. These individuals are important resources for schools dealing with crises and in need of guidance. Individual schools turn to these liaisons for behavioral health emergency consultation, support with school-based resource coordination, and assistance when the services and agency personnel originally assigned prove ineffective and need replacing or substitution. Liaisons also provide ongoing support to the region’s counselors through regular capacity-building meetings that include training and professional development, resource sharing, and cross-system networking and problem-solving.

The office also hosts regional monthly “summits” for behavioral health providers. Seeing the need for school personnel to better implement full climate support programs, OSS provided training for School-Wide Effective Behavior Support (SWEBS) for 28 elementary and middle schools last year, and to the remaining District schools this year. SWEBS requires a school-wide committee to develop interventions and supports needed to provide primary prevention and a common language and vision for the school as a whole.

### The Office of School Climate and Safety

With a 700-member (full- and part-time) school police force, this office reserves issues of security as its primary responsibility. That includes safety plans, procedures and emergency responses within each school. Despite its security focus, this office oversees contracts with outside services for drug and alcohol prevention programs, anti-bullying initiatives (Bullying Hot-Line) and community-based organizations (CBO’s) that provide climate assistance in 101 schools, as well as Parent Patrols and the Parent Help Desk, where incoming visitors can be welcomed and guided appropriately.

### The Office of Transition and Alternative Education

This office falls under the Office of School Management, and works with schools and partners to monitor student discipline and truancy. It deals with Code of Student Conduct matters, transitioning a student to school after juvenile placement, and disciplinary transfers to other schools, including alternative discipline schools. It also has responsibility for non-disciplinary alternative schools for students who are over-aged and under-credited. Many District schools view the transferring of disruptive students as an important element in controlling the climate in their own schools. However this office resists being viewed as a “relief valve” for regular schools, but rather sees itself as an option for students not served by traditional school settings.

### Non-Instructional Managers

Formerly known as Climate Managers, this position operates under the Chief Executive Office and is responsible for hiring and assigning personnel and supervising all programs in a school which are not directly related to curriculum and instruction. The position was created three years ago to help 10 schools transitioning to a K-8 structure. Currently, the District employs 42 non-instructional managers, with a few schools utilizing more than one. While principals are freed up to concentrate on issues of teaching, learning and administrative functions, the managers are tasked with reducing suspensions; serious incidents and truancy; improving attendance; establishing Home and School Councils; soliciting youth programs for their schools; and making sure that the CSAP process is being utilized effectively. Originally, the individual schools did not have to pay for them out of their school budgets, but 10 schools are now purchasing the positions.

### One School’s Effective Use of its Non-Instructional Manager

**This large elementary school was having a rough time, with large numbers of serious incidents and low morale among teachers and staff. A new principal decided to utilize the position of a Non-Instructional Manager, instead of an Assistant Principal. The two school leaders split their responsibilities between “climate” and “academics.” Things turned around in a relatively short amount of time, they report. How? In response to behavioral issues, the manager began arranging parent conferences, visiting classrooms to offer guidance and support for teachers, coordinating programs and networks to create a team-approach for students’ needs, instituting a positive rewards system of goodies distributed each Friday, working with families to remove the stigma of medication and most of all, developing a positive, respectful, working relationship with school leadership that has made a significant difference. The manager and principal both agree: “Building relationships. That’s what it’s all about.”**

There are a number of positions in the schools designed to address student behaviors without a good understanding of the schools plan for good climate. Without explicate clarity concerning roles and coordination of services, fragmentation and overlapping of services can occur.

Although communication in recent years and months has improved between these offices – even collaborating in weekly meetings on school-based plans that would boost responsiveness – structural disconnects currently undercut better service and clarity. Differing policies, philosophies, reporting arrangements and timelines create confusion and barriers for administrators, school staff, children and families. There is concern that further pressure to find a quick answer to safety concerns will increase the role of discipline or enforcement offices and hinder the desired development of a good school climate.

## Regional Offices

The regional staff have initial responsibility for school safety, discipline and truancy, psychological services (testing) and CSAP services. Schools typically look to the regional offices — often through the region’s Behavioral Health/CSAP Liaison — for problem-solving, assistance, and some programming that isn’t available in the schools. Academic regions however, have limited resources and are not equipped to fully handle this responsibility. While the regional offices are looked to for assistance and programming, they do not have sufficient resources or personnel to provide support and leadership to improve school climate and accountability.

The regional offices can be the place where responsibility and accountability come together. Seeds of this potential can currently be seen in regionally based monthly “summit” meetings, where providers (behavioral specialists, C&E coordinators and other behavioral health and community partners) gather to troubleshoot; and in quarterly summits, where top administrators from each of the offices that oversee safety and climate issues meet to exchange ideas and updates. However, these summits are not consistently focused or universally well attended and therefore achieve varying results. Additionally, monthly meetings with principals and superintendents are held where data related to climate issues are reviewed. All of these meetings offer the possibility of focusing on assessing and addressing all three levels of need: creating positive school climates, helping students who need extra support and streamlining the diagnosis and treatment of students with severe problems. In spite of the findings and strategies that emerge in these meetings, effective implementation of responses remain a challenge at the school and classroom level. The District recently completed a training of “teams” of school personnel on climate issues. How well the outcomes will be monitored and reviewed remains to be seen.

## Schools

The whole school staff should be engaged in developing ways to improve and sustain good school climate and to participate in the development of school behavioral rules and processes. Meeting time to address these issues in an ongoing, systemic way is essential. Some schools have recognized the value of working with behavioral health specialists and developed team approaches, know what the outside providers can and cannot do, and have developed coherent approaches to school climate (see page 34). But that is not uniformly the case.

Individual staff members are often overwhelmed with the intensity and scope of their jobs. The fragmented approaches exemplified in the District’s central offices are often mirrored in the schools — with limited personnel responding to demands and mandates of each office — made even more intense through the academic demands of the core curriculum. In schools where climate issues are being addressed successfully, usually a designated teacher or administrator understands behavioral health needs and takes charge of coordinating services. Nevertheless, the frustration of teachers, counselors, nurses and administrators is felt in many schools that have limited capacity to address the needs of their students and families. Coordinating added services for students becomes another job and, limited meeting time makes communication and effective coordination difficult. In the absence of this, schools react to difficult students by stepping up punitive responses.

Creating a healthy climate in all schools and being able to respond to behavior issues of our students is critically important to all of us.

*“On a systemic level, the counselor functions as a consultant to both administrators and instructional staff in developing school-wide and classroom systems of prevention and early intervention which serve to foster safe, secure, learning environments that employ consistent discipline methods and encourage social skill development and sound decision-making. These models provide the social skills component of the educational curriculum, a component which is essential in our schools.”*

- OSS “Counseling services”

(Footnotes)

<sup>3</sup> School District of Philadelphia, Office of Specialized Services, 2007, <http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/s/oss>, July 18, 2007

## Conclusion

The need for addressing behavioral health in our schools is greater than ever. While Philadelphia has made progress in connecting behavioral health services with students' needs, a stronger system-wide response is critical to creating schools that build relationships, teach and practice good behavior and provide needed support for students who can't or won't respond.

The seamless cooperation of educators with the behavioral health specialists is imperative; there are no boundaries here. With Philadelphia in a timely position of deciding change in both city and school district leadership, there is new opportunity to address this need.



## Spotlight on Intervention Programs

## The First Step in Intervention

For those students who have trouble meeting either academic or appropriate behavior expectations, the School District initiates a state-mandated assessment into the causes of the behavior. In Philadelphia this process is the Comprehensive Student Assistance Process or CSAP. Assuming that something is preventing the student from behaving appropriately or learning at a normal rate, CSAP seeks to identify and address that barrier. CSAP's lengthy, computerized form poses a series of questions that guides the school's response to the student and the situation. The negative behavior, which is disrupting the school's climate, hopefully will improve with appropriate attention, especially if offered at an early age.

*"When my own kids were acting out and not doing well, I had them see someone who could help them figure it out. Many of our students are not just having minor problems, they have faced serious trauma in their lives, yet they have no one to talk to about it."*

- DHS psychologist

**CSAP** consists of three tiers of responses and the collaboration of a number of parties. Tier 1 is the first effort to identify barriers to learning and often involves such broad issues as truancy, low literacy or excessive tardiness. Efforts are made to find solutions within the classroom. If interventions at this group-response level do not bring about improvement, Tier II involves focusing on the individual troubled student, and meeting with other support personnel (i.e. counselor, C & E, psychologist) as well as parents, to discuss more individualized, targeted interventions. If problems continue, Tier III usually involves requests for outside assistance, testing or perhaps placement in special settings. CSAP can lead to psychological testing which could result in a recommendation for Special Education services. Responses to CSAP's effectiveness vary:

*"CSAP's a great process. But who has time for all these meetings?"*

- Middle school teacher

*"CSAP is very useful in identifying the problems, but we come up short on resources for doing anything about them."*

- Elementary school principal

*"CSAP is bogged down and time-consuming. People hate it."*

- Elementary school nurse

[See an example of an individual school's modification of the CSAP process in the Appendix. For more on CSAP, go to [phila.k12.pa.us/offices/s/oss](http://phila.k12.pa.us/offices/s/oss)]

The School District's Office of Specialized Services coordinates behavioral health programs following Tier II conferences. Most services focus on the elementary years with the goal of addressing problems at

## Second Tier: What's Available As A Result of CSAP?

an early age.

**C&E's:** Referral to a Consultation and Education specialist is a common response to Tier II CSAP conferences. Most elementary schools have the service of one of these short-term, school-based case



managers – although in most cases the C&E splits his or her week between two schools. Generally well-regarded, the program has grown from nine C&E's in 1999 to more than 100 in the past year and provided case management services to 5,000 children and consultations to 18,000. Paid for jointly by the School District and the City's Department of Human Services, Prevention Services, personnel are contracted regionally through behavioral health agencies across Philadelphia. With a maximum full-time case load of 20 students at a time, C&E's are expected to visit homes and help families address those issues that prevent the student from succeeding in school.

The C&E may refer students to counseling, psychological testing, or other social services.

The program usually involves four months of care, though it can be extended. It is one of few outside services whose personnel already utilize a memoranda of understanding so that expectations are known and understood. While all schools seem to value having a C&E, the specialists' performance quality can vary by agency and school. Some providers seem better able to support and operate within a school setting, and some school leadership is better able to facilitate their being accepted as colleagues by the school faculty.

*"It's important to have a position 'outside' the school system — not a teacher or disciplinarian — who wants to talk to and hear what the student and parents have to say and can make home visits. Sometimes parents feel ganged up on, only hearing negative comments about their child. We can have a different, helpful relationship."*

- C&E worker

*"I've got a great school, but I still need my C&E. Families need help and she can make the connections they need. She's an important piece of the puzzle."*

- Elementary school principal

*"The problem is, if parents don't agree to having their child tested, or do not keep appointments we set up, there's little we can do. It's sometimes hard to get appointments at a time when a working parent can make it."*

- C&E worker

**“C & E’s need to be part of the whole school team. Effective coordination and trust-building among everyone in a school building should be a priority.”**

- C&E worker

**Student Assistance Program:** SAP workers, provided by a number of agencies contracted through Philadelphia’s Behavioral Health System, are available to 71 middle and high schools on an as-needed basis, to address issues of mental health, alcohol and drug use. The providers are masters’ degree level mental health professionals who work with a team of staff members from the school. SAP workers provide limited group counseling to students, but primarily assess and refer students to services.

**Psychological Services:** School psychologists do not see students for therapeutic services, but are primarily in charge of testing, participating in CSAP conferences and making recommendations for special education where appropriate. While the law allows schools 60 school days to respond to requests for testing, reports of timely psychological testing vary greatly across the District.

For the students who reach Tier III of CSAP, for whom traditional counseling, or other interventions do not help, further interventions have been designed:

## The Difficult Cases



**TSS:** Therapeutic Staff Support is a one-on-one “wraparound” service for students at risk of residential placement or hospitalization. The TSS worker spends the day with the student to provide individualized services, encouragement, behavior modification and crisis intervention. Philadelphia saw an explosion of wraparound services in the 1990’s. The workers are employed by different agencies; the program’s effectiveness varies.

**SBBH:** School-Based Behavioral Health programs are now in 28 elementary and middle schools, supported by Community Behavioral Health. SBBH replaces TSS in schools which have a significant number of students requiring TSS workers. In an additional nine elementary schools, the District utilizes an “SBBH-hybrid” model, the Nurture A-1 Program. SBBH offers an 11-member team housed in schools, composed of clinicians, mental health workers, behavioral specialists and a part-time psychiatrist. Students are referred through the CSAP process, with a limit of 21 students at a time – although some agencies allow their SBBH teams to respond to any behavioral issue in the school as well as guide teachers on effective classroom management. However, SBBH tends to service students with the most intense needs, dealing with issues such as depression, anger, obsessive-compulsive behavior and oppositional defiance disorder. Students are visited in the classroom and are provided individual and group counseling as needed during their time in the program. Direct and consistent contact with parents as well consultation with teachers is part of SBBH’s mandate.

**“When the staff buys in to our role in the school, we can support each other in working with students who have difficult behaviors.”**

- SBBH clinician

**“Having the SBBH program has changed the tenor of our school. Teachers feel more supported, that there’s someone to go to for help.”**

- Middle school teacher

**“We could use two more SBBH teams in our school. They cannot possibly meet the demand. Kids are angry, grieving, and need help.”**

- Elementary school principal



### **Specialized Program Touches An Entire School**

This middle school has had its share of disruptions and difficult behaviors in the past few years. A number of staff members speak highly of the role the SBBH program has played in helping change the tone of the school. “We’re here for the kids with the most intensive needs, but we know we have to develop a good relationship with the staff.” Besides meeting with individual students for counseling and therapy, team members also talk with teachers and other staff about their work. This often leads to conversations about classroom management issues and a comfortable collegial relationship. “The administration really supports our work here, too,” remarks an SBBH staffer. “We are included in everything that goes on so we’re part of the school, not ‘those folks over there.’”

to Children Achieving through Re-Education classrooms (CARE). Currently operating at eight sites, CARE has been established to serve these students who need a more intensive support system. Thirty students are served in each center, with a team of three adults in each classroom: teacher, clinician and mental health worker. The goal is for students to return to their home school after receiving counseling and more intensive personal attention to the problems presented, outside of the regular school setting. Students are expected to return within one year of referral, and the program is designed to support a successful return to the student’s home school via strategic transition planning.

*“We try to be very consistent in our daily routines with clear expectations, so that students will begin to establish and appreciate following procedures. We have to move instruction forward, but we spend a good deal of the day on counseling and in group discussions.”*

- CARE teacher

*“This is really a good place for these kids, but 10 sometimes seem like 30! We see progress, but wonder if it will be maintained when the student returns to his school, even with some follow-up service.”*

- CARE teacher

**Alternative Disciplinary Schools:** Middle and high school students who reach Tier III of CSAP — or are found to have violated the Zero Tolerance policy for carrying a weapon — can be referred to one of six alternative schools. All operated by private providers, the schools collectively have slots for 3,500 students determined to have violated the Code of Student Conduct. Students returning from court-ordered placement attend alternative schools briefly before re-entering their previous school. The alternative schools provide a highly structured environment, small learning communities, greater adult-to-student ratios and behavior modification programs. A number of schools view the alternative slots as a “relief valve” from the disruption and strain of troublesome students in their own schools.

But while the number of slots has tripled since 2002 – making Philadelphia’s alternative-schools program the largest in the nation – the impact has been minimally felt across the district. After students have attended 180 days in the alternative setting, their records are reviewed for possible return to sending

school. Whether the students are able to return to a neighborhood school is dependent on attendance, behavior and academic progress; much more work needs to be done to track the progress of returning students. Appropriate use of alternative schools and the services they offer students continues to be a topic of debate.

*“You have the kids who had no business being there in the first place, who are being disciplined for one incident and you have the ‘lifers’ who should never be returned to the regular school population.”*

- Former alternative school behavioral specialist



# Examples of Best Practices

## Examples of Best Practices



If conditions are in place to teach, model and reinforce positive behaviors, schools can be places that help prevent young people from developing and engaging in more serious negative behaviors. But that requires climate issues to be taken as seriously as academics, and a good climate does not necessarily result from the threat of punishment. Aligning the resources and putting into place plans which can successfully address needs is a difficult task. Students need to know how to be successful not just in reading, but in getting along with others and coping with difficult situations in an effective and appropriate manner.

For those who have barriers that prohibit them from developing these skills, assistance must be forthcoming, and sometimes special placements are needed. Schools must be places that work at creating a positive climate. There is, in fact, concern among many that over-

emphasis on academics has eliminated the creative and expressive side of school, where use of arts, music, and athletic activity can be alternative avenues of communication and building important relationships.

Many schools — with some success — are working at creating the right conditions. In spite of their accomplishments, their leaders often speak of fighting an uphill battle, where their effective work at calming down the school, preventing problems from occurring, “saving kids’ lives” and appealing for more help takes a seat behind test scores.

### A Neighborhood Elementary School is Transformed by ‘Engaging Kids in the World Around Them’

This school, located in a transitioning neighborhood familiar with gun violence, is working to bring more stability to its students’ lives, teach students “how we talk to each other” and engage students in the world around them. Initiated by a visionary principal who sought the help of grant writers from a local university, the school’s efforts have delivered resources to bring in guest artists to engage students in playwriting, music and visual arts projects, all of which focus on helping students to talk about themselves and their place in the world. Hallways are filled with murals, student art work and writing, as well as fish tanks and rocking chairs. Instructed by its university partner, the school uses circle meetings in classrooms to guide students on the importance of talking to and looking out for each other. Results are reflected in a dramatic reduction in problem incidences: “We’ve had one fight this year. We have had some set-backs, but that’s the ‘cost of doing business’. We can’t let it divert our attention from creating a place that expects good behavior, encourages it, and is a pleasant place to spend time in.” The more intense services for the 10 percent in need are essential, “but we’ve got to continue to focus on what everyone else needs.”

### Comprehensive High School Tackles Problems Before They Occur

Recognizing the potential for growing numbers of problems in a large and diverse student body, this comprehensive high school applied part of its budget to hiring a social worker, an expense many schools consider financially out of reach for their budgets. This social worker spends the summer reviewing records of incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students for indicators of potential problems and meeting with many of these students prior to the opening of the school year. The students are connected to an adult in the building with offers of assistance. Follow-up conferences take place through the first report period to determine if other interventions are needed. As a result, few of those involved in this process have been added to drop-out statistics. The social worker also coordinates his efforts with the Assistant Principal assigned to oversee support staff and outside services, thus preventing fragmentation of its many programs and services – including counselors, a C&E, nurses, psychologists, outside providers and parents. A CSAP Reference Guide was created so that all parties could agree on and understand the process. Additionally, a class which connects seniors as mentors for freshman was started this year. Despite its successes, the social worker insists, “We still need more in-house support staff to increase the amount of time available to discover and address the needs of students and build trusting relationships with parents.”

### A Charter and its Staff Invest in Teaching “The Whole Child”

This charter high school employs three assistant principals – one responsible for “culture.” Supplementing the mission of this AP is a staff consisting of a dean of students, a dean of behavior, a full-time social worker and part-time psychologist. Class scheduling makes room for monthly, circle meetings where students discuss incidents and respond as a group. Ninth graders attend a year-long “seminar” class on violence, bullying, sexuality, and drug and alcohol abuse. The school recorded six “serious” incidents, significantly less than most high schools of similar size. This intense commitment to social/emotional learning has hardly proven to be a trade-off for academic study. Ninety-seven percent of graduates from this school enroll in higher education. The staff admits to committing many volunteer hours; while costs for extra staffing is covered through fundraising initiated by the charter company. Staff holds fast to a school-wide belief in helping each child reach his or her own potential. “Our CEO is very committed to the social/emotional (learning) model,” says the AP of Culture. “It’s about teaching the whole child.”

## Restorative Practices

Growing out of its successful use in the juvenile justice system, the use of restorative practices (RP) creates a process that does not just punish, but provides the opportunity for students – perpetrator and victim — to hear and think about what harm has been done and to be part of a decision over what to do to correct the harm and “restore” the perpetrator back to the community. Through the use of conversation that takes place with students sitting in circles, key questions are asked: What happened? What was your role in the incident? Who was affected, and how? And, most importantly, how are you going to fix it? Everyone is held accountable for their actions. Circles take time, and those facilitating them must view them as an important investment for the over all efficiency of the school.

*“Sometimes students say, ‘Can’t you just suspend me?’ They don’t like being held accountable for their actions. But it is an important opportunity for schools to teach students their responsibility as a member of the community. The message is, ‘We expect more from you and need your help.’”*

- Administrator in a school using RP

*“Offenders talked about how they were able to express their remorse and their shame to the victim(s). Victims talked about their anger, grief and bitterness and how seeing and talking to the offender helped them move forward.”*

- Observer of Restorative Practices

## Responsive Classrooms©

The Responsive Classroom develops a set of core social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control. It uses seven basic principles:

1. The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
2. How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand.
3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. To be successful academically and socially, children need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
5. Knowing the children we teach—individually, culturally, and developmentally—is as important as knowing the content we teach.
6. Knowing the families of the children we teach and working with them as partners is essential to children’s education.
7. How the adults at school work together is as important as individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

Responsive Classrooms, in place in a number of the city’s top-ranked private schools as well as a few public charter schools, place a great deal of emphasis on helping students understand the consequences of

their actions, and making amends for inappropriate behavior. Classroom rules are agreed upon together. Peer mentors are chosen by the students. The entire school and their families are engaged in the process. Academically, the Responsive Classroom approach encourages choice, a clear divergence from Philadelphia’s core curriculum model. Nevertheless, the use of morning meetings, the development of a common vocabulary and facilitated interactions to deal with problems, build community and create a positive climate for learning.

*“The process seems to work for about 90 percent of the students. Some kids have difficulties that need more intervention or have home lives that negate the school’s efforts. But we have seen major changes in the school as we’ve stuck with this.”*

- Charter school administrator using Responsive Classroom

## Montessori and its Peace Curriculum

Montessori is based on the 100-year-old teachings of educator and psychologist Maria Montessori who is also considered one of the founding mothers of peace education. With features like an individualized curriculum, cross-age groupings and no grades, the Montessori model sees its goal as fulfilling child’s physical, mental, emotional and spiritual potential. An emphasis and integration of social learning is at the heart of the model’s mission: Maria Montessori believed a more peaceful world could be achieved if educating the child included developing ethical and socially conscious citizens. Research has consistently found the Montessori model effective academically and with behavior. Dr. Angeline Stoll Lillard noted, “Particularly remarkable are the positive social effects of Montessori education. Typically the home environment overwhelms all other influences in that area.”<sup>4</sup>

## Social Responsibility Training (SRT) ©

SRT grew out of a concern that too many young people were getting involved in correctional

### Montessori in Philly: Taking on the Battle Scars of Southwest Philadelphia

**It’s not often that a principal can walk through her school and identify student after student whom she knows to be grappling with grief issues. But murder in Philadelphia is on course to top a 10-year-high. Rates in this community rank among the city’s highest. - At the Southwest Philadelphia Montessori Charter School, in a notebook titled “Building a Peaceful School,” students journal their version of disagreements or disturbances and take turns writing responses on the incident until a resolution is reached. Although admittedly time-consuming, this process has transformed some students who could not learn because they were “so locked in constant conflict,” insists the school’s principal. The notebook and other activities, she says, give voice to their angst and anger. Meanwhile, an art therapist utilizes a variety of expressive tools to guide students through emotional issues. Many familiar elements of the Montessori model are also here – beads for math equations, mats for flexible seating arrangements, utensils for preparing food and individualized lessons. And with Montessori’s traditional focus on the child’s need, this charter school also provides students space to nap when they’re sleepy and food when they’re hungry. Faced with below-level literacy rates, the school “bombards” students with reading. The school proudly reports not suspending a child in more than a year and a half.**

systems and that schools were the logical place to catch them before they were swept up in that negative system. As a result, the program has been funded in many locations through Department of Justice, Safe and Drug Free monies.

SRT places kids who show risk factors for dropping out (high suspension rates and absences, low grades, a history of disruptions, parents already in the correctional system) into classes organized around 38 cognitive exercises which guide the students through reflection of their lives, considering what has happened, and developing problem-solving skills for the future. The program is being used in 23 states with good results, though not yet in the Philadelphia area.

The class is an opportunity for students to hear each other and find support among their peers. It puts responsibility on the student for his/her own behavior. As a result, teachers often become mentors for students. Students are required to give four presentations during the course on readiness to change, honesty, integrity, and a summary at the end.

*“It’s devastating to see how many kids end up in the justice system who don’t belong there. Lots of existing programs reward students for good behavior, but nothing but punishment for the negative. This is an attempt to help students figure out what’s good for themselves and the support system they need for success.”*

- SRT Administrator

### Help Increase the Peace Program (HIPP)

The HIPP program, originally designed by educators at American Friends Service Committee, was referred to in a number of interviews by those involved in helping students learn alternatives to violence. It focuses on teaching communication skills for conflict resolution, confronts prejudice and helps students learn ways they can become agents for positive social change. The training introduces alternatives to violence and bullying and allows participants to practice various options by modeling and role playing. Exercises include self-affirmation and discovery of how insensitivity can magnify problems. Often taking place in a workshop setting, the curriculum uses serious discussion of issues, activities that practice finding win-win solutions, and games that promote cooperation and communication. Its message is that there are choices, and just as we learn violence, so, too can we learn to respond with alternatives. The accumulation of skills leads to a focus on community action and social change.

### Peer Mediation

Peer mediation trains students to become leaders in resolving conflicts among fellow students and is credited with helping students learn more constructive alternatives to violence. The process is voluntary, though often used as an alternative to other disciplinary procedures. Once student mediators are trained, there is a need for on-going adult support for the process in school, providing space and time for the mediations to take place. In Philadelphia, peer mediation training is conducted by Good Shepherd Mediation Program.

### Bullying Prevention

Recognizing bullying as the first step toward future criminal behavior, as well as having a major impact on creating a positive school climate, Philadelphia Physicians for Social Responsibility, in collaboration

with the School District of Philadelphia, has been implementing the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) in over 40 K-8 public schools. The OBPP is a school-wide violence prevention program designed to create a school climate characterized by warmth, positive interest and involvement from adults and zero tolerance for bullying behavior. Training takes place for all school staff to look at bullying behavior and appropriate means of intervening. Efforts to reduce opportunities and rewards for bullying behavior are focused on increasing awareness, developing clear and consistent rules and policies against bullying behavior, and supporting improved peer relations.

**This report began by noting that children don’t begin school on a blank page. They bring their life and community experiences with them. Making sure our schools are able to respond to their needs is a good place for all of us to begin.**

(Footnotes)

<sup>4</sup> Montessori International Magazine, [http://www.montessorimagazine.com/images/MI\\_Science%story.pdf](http://www.montessorimagazine.com/images/MI_Science%story.pdf) January – March 2007.



# Appendix

(Sample)

## Northeast High School Comprehensive Student Assistance Process (CSAP)

### I. INTRODUCTION

The CSAP Meeting at Northeast High School combines the functions of Tier I and Tier II. When evaluating barriers to learning, there is a focus on individual instructional classroom issues, as well as individual student support.

Based on NEHS data, 65% of CSAP meetings concern traditional Tier I issues. They identify absences and lateness to school; cutting and lateness to class; poor academic performance; disruptive classroom behavior; and the paucity of parental support as the most important problems. Whereas, 35% of the meetings identify medical conditions or behavioral health issues, such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and/or family dysfunction, as the most significant barriers to learning.

### II. REFERRAL SOURCES

- Core CSAP Team Members: counselor, teacher, SLCC, parent
- Auxiliary CSAP Team Members: psychologist, nurse, school social worker, C & E worker
- Administrators
- Dean's office staff
- Teachers
- Selected school staff
- Parents

### III. RECOMMENDED CSAP MEETING PARTICIPANTS

- Administrator as Instructional Leader
- SLCC as Teacher Leader
- Teacher as Classroom Leader
- Student as Classroom Participant
- Parent as Home Support
- School Support Staff as School, Student and Family Support

### IV. SCHEDULING THE CSAP MEETING

The SLCC and assigned counselor act as a team in scheduling the CSAP meeting. Generally, the counselor schedules a date and time with parents and the SLCC procures teacher feedback or arranges for teachers to be present at the meeting. Either the SLCC or the counselor invites other core and auxiliary CSAP team members.

Prior to the Tier II meeting, the counselor reviews the pupil pocket and the nurse reviews the medical record for relevant information. The counselor and nurse share this information with appropriate CSAP staff before the meeting.

### V. BASIC NORMS OF THE CSAP MEETING

- Start on time. If that cannot occur, start when all principal parties arrive.
- Parent (s) and student must be in attendance. The student may be excluded from the meeting only on rare occasions.
- Counselor and nurse discuss the information gleaned from the pupil pocket and medical record.
- Information packets are made available for every participant.

Information packets include:

- Completed teacher feedback forms, e.g., pre-meeting checklist and student observation form
- Student demographic sheet
- Roster with teachers' names and room numbers
- Record of lateness, absences, suspensions
- Current grades and interims
- Archives of credits / grades
- SAP referral / authorization form
- C & E referral / authorization form

### VI. GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A CSAP MEETING

- Counselor / SLCC calls the meeting to order
- Introductions – names, roles
- Counselor / SLCC states purpose of meeting, e.g., "We are meeting this morning because STUDENT'S NAME is failing three subjects and cutting classes."
- Review and discuss information packet
- Identify the problem / barriers to learning
- Develop a response plan, discuss implementation of the plan
- Identify follow-up support person / case manager
- In closing the meeting, review agreements

**VII. IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM / BARRIERS TO LEARNING**

- Review and discuss the information packet making sure that the teacher, student, and parent give input.
- Discuss parent / student concerns
- Acknowledge that the student is on the “hot seat”, that is, the student might be feeling particularly uncomfortable because the discussion centers on negative behavior
- Discuss student / parent strengths
- Ask psycho-social questions that include family constellations, insurance, housing and income, and the existence / potential of support outside of school, such as counseling and / or case management
- **Out of this discussion emerges the problem identification / barrier to learning**

Typically identified problems include:

- Absences and lateness to school
- Cutting and lateness to class
- Poor academic performance
- Disruptive classroom behavior
- Absence of parental support
- Medical conditions
- Behavioral health issues: anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and / or family dysfunction

Often times the identified problem is a combination of the above issues.

**VIII. DEVELOP A RESPONSE PLAN, DISCUSS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN**

- Be concrete; avoid generalizations
- Promote measurable goals and establish timelines on which the student, teacher, parent, and support person can agree
- Discuss basic expectations and roles in the implementation of the response plan

<b>Examples of Basic Expectations by Role</b>			
<b>Student</b>	<b>Parent</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Support Person</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attend school daily</li> <li>- be on time for school / class</li> <li>- attend all classes</li> <li>- complete assignments</li> <li>- talk to teacher when there is a problem</li> <li>- attend tutoring when necessary</li> <li>- discuss school work with parents</li> <li>- see school support staff regularly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- support daily attendance and punctuality</li> <li>- ask about homework, projects, tests</li> <li>- sign daily report</li> <li>- stay in contact with teachers and school support person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provide tutoring, when possible</li> <li>- differentiate instruction</li> <li>- sign daily report, comment, when appropriate</li> <li>- stay in contact with parent and school support person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- case manage response plan</li> <li>- see student regularly</li> <li>- check daily report</li> <li>- contact teacher and parent periodically</li> <li>- make appropriate SAP/BH referrals</li> </ul>

- Solicit agreement from student, parent, and school team that basic expectations are reasonable
- Emphasize potential for success of response plan
- Identify CSAP interventions

<b>Examples of CSAP Interventions</b>	
<b>Excessive absences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daily Report with Agenda Book</li> <li>- Truancy Court</li> <li>- SMART Program</li> <li>- Transition / Twilight Program</li> </ul>
<b>Excessive cutting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daily Report with Agenda Book</li> <li>- referral to Dean</li> <li>- SMART Program</li> <li>- Transition / Twilight Program</li> </ul>
<b>Failing classes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- teacher tutoring</li> <li>- National Honor Society tutoring</li> <li>- differentiated instruction</li> <li>- Saturday School, Night School, Summer School</li> <li>- Transition / Twilight Program</li> <li>- multidisciplinary evaluation / 504 plan</li> </ul>
<b>Disruptive classroom behavior</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- progressive management techniques</li> <li>- referral to school support staff</li> <li>- referral to SLCC / Dean</li> <li>- SMART Program</li> </ul>
<b>Parent / Teacher communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daily Report with Agenda Book</li> <li>- phone contact</li> <li>- parent / teacher meeting</li> </ul>
<b>Behavioral health issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SAP and / or C &amp; E referral</li> <li>- regular contact with school support staff</li> </ul>



**IX. IDENTIFY FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT PERSON / CASE MANAGER**

- CSAP needs to identify at least one team member to follow-up with student, parent, and teacher
- Follow-up support person case manages the response plan; provides or arranges counseling / therapy / mentoring and monitors academic progress and attendance
- Contacts parents on a regular basis to report success

**X. IN CLOSING THE MEETING, REVIEW AGREEMENTS**

**XI. SET A REVIEW DATE TO MEASURE SUCCESS**



## Definitions, References and Acknowledgments

## Definitions

AYP - Adequate Yearly Progress  
CARE - Children Achieving through Re-Education  
CAO - Chief Academic Officer  
CBO - Community Based Organization  
CEO - Chief Executive Officer  
COO - Chief Operating Officer  
C&E's - Consultation and Education (specialists)  
CBH - Community Behavioral Health  
CSAP - Comprehensive Student Assistance Program  
DHS - (Philadelphia) Department of Human Services  
K-8 - Kindergarten through 8th Grade  
NCLB - No Child Left Behind (law)  
OSS - Office of Specialized Services  
OTAE - Office of Transition and Alternative Education  
SAP - Student Assistance Program  
SBBH - School Based Behavioral Health (worker)  
SDP - School District of Philadelphia  
SWEBS - School-Wide Effective Behavioral Support  
TSS - Therapeutic Staff Support

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