

## School Climate

In June 2013, New Canaan Public Schools administered a pilot school climate survey in accordance with state law and our district school climate plan. Reflection on the feedback we received from students, staff and parents informed our plan for the next iteration of this process. The outcome was a commitment to engaging in a school climate assessment that would: increase student voice, ownership and leadership, provide an opportunity for learning for students, faculty and parents and allow for meaningful dialogue about school climate over time. These commitments led to our partnership with Dr. William Preble, executive director of the Center for School Climate and Learning.

Dr. Preble and his team are training our middle and high school staff and students in the SafeMeasures™ process. This is a student-led, collaborative research process that provides for team development, school climate data collection and analysis, goal setting based on the data analysis, action project planning and evaluation. Our partnership with Dr. Preble and the Center for School Climate and Learning will continue next year as part of our on-going evaluation of continuous improvement efforts. We also anticipate providing our elementary students with training in the SafeMeasures™ process during the 2015-16 school year.

So far this year the student leadership teams at the middle and high schools have selected names as a part of their team development training, Saxe is SWAG (Saxe Will Achieve Greatness) and NCHS's student leadership team is IMPACT. SWAG and IMPACT have met to create presentations for peers and faculty, including videos introducing themselves and their mission. They have also created videos to be used as introductions to the next phase of the process, data collection through an online survey hosted by the Center for School Climate and Learning.

The survey will be administered in early December to all students in grades 3 through 12 and their parents. Teachers, administrators and support staff across the district will also be invited to participate in the survey. Although it is a voluntary survey we hope all invited will participate in this important opportunity.

NCPS will be using the SafeMeasures™ School Climate Survey as one of our data collection tools. It has been used in hundreds of schools over the last 15 years, validated by the University of Massachusetts and generates valid and reliable school climate data that is aligned with National School Climate Standards. Participants will be asked to share their school climate perceptions through the anonymous online survey; no personally identifiable information is required. There are about fifty questions and it should take about twenty minutes to complete.

The Center for School Climate and Learning will complete a preliminary analysis of our school climate data and at the middle and high school, train SWAG and IMPACT to complete an analysis of their own. SWAG and IMPACT will generate goals based on the data and design action projects to meet their goals. They will share the school climate data with their school staff, who will in turn be given the opportunity to establish goals. Representatives from SWAG and IMPACT will also share the data with parents along side staff members and Dr. Preble. Students and staff will be working on their action projects throughout the remainder of the school year with on-going consultation from the Center for School Climate and Learning.

At the elementary level the preliminary analysis completed by the Center for School Climate and Learning will be provided to each building's school climate committee. These committees will share the analysis with staff, parents and students during the second half of the school year through assemblies, meetings and/or digital communication. This data will be used to inform next steps for ongoing school climate initiatives and goals for the future.

If you have a student in a grade designated to take the survey, you will receive an email with instructions and a link to the survey.

Please contact your principal or Darlene Pianka, District School Climate Coordinator at 230-954-4020 or [darlene.pianka@ncps-k12.org](mailto:darlene.pianka@ncps-k12.org), if you have any questions. We welcome your feedback on this process.