
October 16, 2025

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Relationships matter.

Our relationship with the families that we serve is of the utmost importance. To that end, throughout the past two school years, the District has developed multiple opportunities for parents and families to communicate with the District. That work resulted in a new website with updated contact information for your children's teachers and support professionals, as well as multiple examples of regularly scheduled information for you to obtain that meets your comfort level.

Our belief in relationships has led us to develop a baseline understanding of the school climate in our three schools. The District is partnering with Rutgers University School of Applied Psychology and the New Jersey School Climate Initiative ("NJ SCI") to engage in this vital work and develop our pathways in school climate and social-emotional learning for the future.

What is school climate?

School climate is how it feels to be part of the school community from an individual's point of view. Students, staff, and families all experience the school's climate. School climate can also be thought of as the "conditions for learning." Climate refers to the overall conditions over a long period of time, and changing it can take time and deliberate interventions.

How do schools know what their climate is like?

Every child deserves to go to a school with a safe, supportive, and inclusive climate. To gather everyone's perceptions on school climate, schools can use an established school climate survey. School climate surveys are like a "temperature check" to understand how participants are feeling at a given time. They can help a school identify areas of strength and opportunity.

How can I talk to my child about school climate?

Getting kids to talk about their school experiences may be a challenge, especially as they get older. It is vital to keep the lines of communication open at all times (not only during the survey or when challenges occur), to listen to your child's perspectives and experiences, to validate their feelings about school, and to make checking in a regular practice.



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Preparing for the NJ SCI Survey

In November, you will receive information from the District regarding the NJ SCI survey administration from “A to Z” and, specifically, how to prepare to participate.

The NJ SCI Survey can be a good entry point for talking about your child’s experience in school. The survey asks about various aspects of school climate, including how students get along with one another, their feelings about schoolwork, and opportunities to get involved in activities. For younger students, you can invite them to talk with you about how they feel about school in general. For older kids, let them know you are taking the survey seriously and want to make sure you understand how they think before you give your answers.

We fully anticipate administering the survey before Winter Break and have organized a District Climate Team to partner with each School Climate Team. The experience of all of our partners is of the utmost importance, and we will execute this project to obtain relevant, actionable data while developing planning and responses that speak to our unique opportunities in Somerset Hills.

I thank you in advance for your partnership and encourage you to participate once you receive formal survey administration information from the District.

Relationships matter.

Sincerely,

Brian Brotschul, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools