

Ansonia Public Schools



SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Ansonia Middle School

2025-2026

Ansonia Public Schools Vision of the Graduate

The Vision of the Graduate is a shared framework for educators, students, and stakeholders to ensure graduates develop the skills, mindsets, and attributes needed for success in an evolving world. These competencies, with the VOG rubrics, are the north star that we use to align instructional practices, assessment strategies, and student learning experiences to support well-rounded growth.

Purpose

- Set clear expectations for student growth across key competencies.
- Serve as a tool for self-reflection, goal-setting, and continuous improvement.
- Support educators in designing meaningful learning experiences.
- Align with district goals for student success.

Guiding Assumptions

- Developmental: Students grow and improve over time.
- Descriptive: Provides flexibility across disciplines and learning environments.
- Multidimensional: Encompasses cognitive, social, and emotional growth.
- Lifelong Learning: Competencies extend beyond graduation into career and personal development.

Competency	Summary
Communicator & Collaborator	A successful communicator and collaborator effectively expresses ideas, actively listens, and works with others to achieve common goals. They demonstrate perseverance, adaptability, and problem-solving in collaborative efforts. Communicates effectively by expressing ideas clearly, listens actively, and engages in meaningful discussions while valuing different perspectives. Collaborates effectively by using feedback to refine ideas, improve teamwork, and achieve shared goals.
Critical Thinker	A critical thinker evaluates information, applies problem-solving strategies, reflects on learning, and makes informed decisions. They persist through challenges, seek diverse perspectives, and apply knowledge innovatively. Critical thinkers take initiative in learning, stay curious, and analyze all available information to make informed decisions. Critical thinkers apply knowledge to solve real-world problems, adapt to challenges, and learn from mistakes.
Responsible Citizen	A responsible citizen recognizes the impact of their actions, considers the well-being of others, and actively contributes to their community (classroom, school, local, national, global). They demonstrate accountability and problem-solving when addressing community challenges. Responsible citizens take responsibility for actions, engage respectfully in the community, and contribute to positive change. Responsible citizens demonstrate empathy and work collaboratively to build relationships and support others.
Emotionally Intelligent	An emotionally intelligent individual embraces the growth mindset by recognizing and regulating their emotions and by understanding how emotions influence behavior. They navigate social situations effectively, regulate emotional responses, and foster positive relationships. Emotionally intelligent individuals recognize, regulate, and reflect on emotions to make thoughtful decisions and respond effectively. Emotionally intelligent individuals demonstrate empathy, build strong relationships, and navigate challenges with resilience.

SCHOOL CLIMATE VISION

Ansonia Public Schools is dedicated to creating a learning environment where every student feels supported, valued, and empowered to succeed academically, socially and emotionally. Our schools are safe and welcoming spaces where positive relationships and a strong sense of community are at the heart of everything we do.

Guided by our Vision of the Graduate, we nurture critical thinkers, responsible citizens, effective communicators and collaborators as well as emotionally intelligent individuals who are prepared for lifelong success. We are committed to fostering a love of learning and helping students grow into skilled individuals who are prepared for life after high school.

Together, we build joyful, engaging, and supportive schools where every member of our district can reach their full potential. Through student-centered learning, high-quality teaching, and a focus on best practices, we inspire academic growth while cultivating the skills, habits and mindsets our students need to make meaningful contributions to their communities and the world.

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 sound school environment that develops and sustains academic, social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual skills; and
 - 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:
 - promote learning and the positive academic, social, emotional, ethical, and civic development of students;
 - enhance engagement in teaching, learning, and school-wide activities;
 - address barriers to teaching and learning; and
 - 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.

DISTRICT GOAL: Work collaboratively to create a plan that will allow us to develop and implement a consistent, districtwide framework that defines behavior expectations, categorizes tiered behaviors (Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3), and outlines aligned responses across all schools.

Action Steps

1. Complete district climate self assessment to gather all necessary documents, information, etc. as it pertains to the following:
 - Student discipline
 - Attendance
 - Safety and crisis response
 - Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
 - SEL skill development (RULER, Restorative Practices, Educate2B, Second Step)
2. Draft a unified behavior expectations matrix for PK–12
3. Develop a Tiered Behavior Response Protocol that includes:
 - Clearly defined examples of Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 behaviors
 - Required and optional responses at each tier
 - Conditions for restorative vs. disciplinary actions
 - Required documentation and parent/guardian communication steps
 - Publish the completed District Behavior Framework & Tiered Response Guide for all staff

Ansonia Middle School GOAL: Establish a school wide climate where students and adults feel a sense of belonging through proactive and consistent practices and expectations that foster connection, community, and accountability.

Action Steps

- Provide ongoing professional learning for staff focused on integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) through restorative practices (RP), RULER, and executive functioning (EF) into daily instruction and routines to promote belonging, focus, and engagement.
- Create common language and establish schoolwide structures and expectations that support consistent use of SEL across all classrooms (e.g., Restorative Practice, RULER, Executive Function, VOG, etc.)
- Model practices with staff including but not limited to circles, charter check ins, mood meters, meta moments.

District Climate Coordinator: Sara Crooks, Director of Social and Emotional Learning

School Climate Specialist: Robert Durand, Assistant Principal

Climate Committee Members: Bob Durand, Jess Lanza, Pat Palmer, Michael Shortell, Amanda Craig, Breon Sanders, Student Representative, Parent Representative

School-Wide Behavioral Expectations:

As A School We Would Like To Feel	In Order to Have These Feelings, We Will
Safe	● Be mindful of our surroundings and of things that can impact our safety ● Speak up when others are not being safe ● Follow ALL school safety protocols, rules, and building security expectations.
Valued	● Actively listen and give full attention when interacting with others ● Be aware of the “tone” with which we speak to others ● Show respect and interest by our words – use positive language ● Give positive feedback / praise
Productive	● Set realistic goals ● Be respectful of others’ time (i.e. starting and ending meetings on time) ● Be prepared for all meetings
Supported	● Offer assistance to others ● Have an “open door policy” ● Shared celebration of success (team, grade, and school)
Involved	● Work hard to positively engage parents/guardians in the school community ● Involve yourself in the school community beyond the walls of the classroom
Happy	● Be welcoming to others – be inclusive ● Maintain a work/life balance
We Will Handle Conflict By	● Sharing emotions using “I-statements” ● Consider the perspective of others when discussing issues ● If necessary, take a “time out” to prevent further escalation of issues

How Tier 1 Strategies Support a Positive School Climate:

- Promote safety and consistent procedures
- Build strong relationships between students and staff
- Increase student voice, belonging, relationships and engagement
- Reduce need for reactive discipline
- Support the district’s Vision of the Graduate competencies: collaborator, communicator, critical thinker, responsible citizen, emotionally intelligent individual

Tier 1 Strategies	Structured Learning Environment ● Co-create classroom expectations with students and review/revise regularly ● Teach, model, and practice routines and behavioral expectations (reinforce expectations regularly, not just at the beginning of the year) ● Use visual supports (charts, posters, schedules, agenda and objectives) SEL Classroom Practices ● Follow the 80% Proactive and 20% Restorative Rule (relationship building, academics, celebrations, conflict resolution) ● Remember to be in the WITH BOX (Social Discipline Window) ● Embed SEL monthly “focus skills” and/or executive functioning skills into learning environment and utilize strategies that are shared ● Emotions Matter Mindset ● Proactive and/or Restorative Meta- Moments ● Use affective statements/I-Messages and restorative questions/reflections ● Provide calm-down spaces or mindful moments as proactive supports ● Focus on repairing harm rather than assigning blame Explicit SEL Instruction ● Through flex and support staff push in using RULER, VOG Competencies and SEL Monthly Theme ● Teach, model and practice: ○ RULER Tools- Charter, Mood Meter, Meta Moment, BluePrint ○ Restorative Practices- circles, affective statements, restorative questions ○ VOG Competencies- Critical Thinker, Responsible Citizen, Effective Collaborator, Effective Communicator and Emotionally Intelligent Individual Consistent, Positive Reinforcement ● Acknowledge positive behaviors through classroom and schoolwide systems ● Strive for a 3:1 ratio of positive to corrective interactions
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Tiered Response

The school climate policy defines a specific subset of challenging behavior that requires districts to respond with certain tiered interventions. Pursuant to C.G.S. Sec. 10-222hh(b)(6), a tiered response (as detailed in the table below) is required for an incident of challenging behavior that meets any of the following criteria:

- requires temporarily clearing a classroom or removing a majority of students to reduce the likelihood of injury;
- indicates a credible intention to cause bodily harm to self or others; or
- results in an injury requiring medical attention beyond first aid (or less severe injuries caused by the same person on more than one occasion, as verified by a school nurse or other medical professional).

The law goes on to provide that, if a district determines that conduct meets the above criteria, school climate improvement plans must include the following responses:

Occasion Number - Tiered Response Incident	Tiered Intervention Required
First Offense	Admin or designee must notify the parents/guardians of each student involved in a manner that complies with FERPA
Second Offense	Admin or designee must invite the parent/guardian of involved students to a meeting (virtual or in person) to discuss supports and interventions applicable to each student - including, but not limited to, restorative practices
Multiple Subsequent Offenses(or single incident that causes severe harm)	Admin or designee must notify the parents/guardians of involved students of other resources for supports and interventions, including, but not limited to the following: the 2-1-1 Infoline Program; services/programs available through the Behavioral Health Partnership, or other resources for professional services, support, or crisis