

School Climate Improvement Plan

School Name: Lewis Mills High School

School Year: 2025-2026

Date Submitted: 12/19/2025

- **School Climate Vision Statement:** Create an environment at Lewis Mills where every student has a strong sense of belonging and connectedness, so they can better engage in their learning and become inquisitive learners, innovative leaders, and responsible citizens.
- **School Climate Team**
 - School Climate Specialist: Rebecca Lewis Stoll
 - School Climate Committee Members:
 - Teacher representatives: Jenn Perez, Ryan Cerniglia, Jody Olander, Dennis Fowler, Katie Burke
 - Student representatives: Calleigh Lok, Alec Zeller
 - Family representatives: Bruce Mullen, Sana Kalra
 - School Community members: Chris Rau, Meridith Silver

Committee membership is reviewed annually and includes at least two meetings per year with the school community. The School Climate Team assists with survey administration and revisions biennially and advises on improvement strategies.

- **School Climate Assessment Data:** School climate surveys given to students, staff, and families in the spring of 2025 show multiple positive areas, especially around physical safety and relationships between staff and students. 79% of students and 95% of staff report feeling physically safe, and 89% of parents report their child feeling safe while at school. 83% of students say their teachers treat them with respect and 94% of staff report positively about the relationship between students and staff.

Areas of growth based on the survey data include how students treat each other and the way these behaviors are addressed by faculty and administration. Students reported that only 50% of students treat each other well, 48% said students respect each other's differences, and 39% said students will try and interrupt each other's challenging behaviors. Only 68% of parents said they are satisfied with how the school handles challenging behaviors, and only 27% of staff feel student discipline practices are fair and consistent.

Another area of growth was identified through our attendance data. Over the last three years, our number of chronically absent students has grown with a rate of 25% of students being chronically absent in 2024-2025.

• **Goals and Objectives:**

School Climate Improvement Goal	CT School Climate Standard	Supporting Data	Action Steps	Responsible Parties	Timeline
1: Increase Student Attendance Rate	4	Longitudinal schoolwide data depicts a pattern of increased tardiness and absenteeism over the past 3 school years	-Identify most prevalent barriers to attending - SST -Partner with families in emphasizing importance of attendance and connecting families with community supports when needed -Explore research-based programs for promoting school attendance -Bolster 'positive' messaging from school -Analyze quarterly attendance data	-Building leaders -Counseling dept (PD)	Sept '25 - June '26
2: Introduce restorative practices	2d & 5	The school is at the beginning of understanding and implementing restorative practices. Staff are still understanding the meaning and purpose of a restorative approach.	-Provide ongoing PD to staff -Use the EGP as a support of coaching staff with RP -Normalize community building throughout all spaces with an emphasis on prioritizing positive relationships	-Building leaders -RP expert (EdAdvance)	Sept '25 - June '26
3: Enhancing school community through inclusivity and school belonging	4	Data: <38% of students report feeling connected to classmates; 40% say students 'sometimes' treat each other well and 11% feel it 'rarely happens'	-Creation of student Leadership Council -Advisory program -Engagement student focus groups -Teach cohort on engagement -Opportunities for creating community with the whole school (pep rallies, assemblies)	-Building leaders	Sept '25 - June '26

- **Prevention and Intervention Strategies:**

Lewis Mills has a variety of prevention/proactive strategies as well as interventions to support a positive climate. There is an emphasis on building strong relationships and all adults investing in proactive measures to create a positive environment. These strategies are based in Restorative Practices and are in alignment with the district Restorative Practice Policy (Board Policy 5114.1). All prevention and intervention strategies are compliant with IDEA, Section 504, and IEPs. Many of these efforts are outlined below.

- **Adult Supervision** – Throughout the day there is adult supervision in the hallways and outside bathrooms and in the cafeteria. At the beginning of the school day, all doors are covered by adults to greet every student that walks into the building. This adult presence supports connection and is a proactive measure to prevent challenging behaviors.
- **Advisory** – Once per month during homeroom students build their cultural competence and awareness of differences by engaging in conversations and activities around Heritage months and other relevant topics like mental health and stress management.
- **Afterschool Sports and Clubs** – Over 90% of students participate in at least one sport or club throughout the course of the year. We also have high attendance rates at athletic events, concerts, and theater programs.
- **Homeroom** – Homeroom occurs every day, first thing in the morning for all students in grades 9-11. This time allows students opportunities to connect with teachers and peers, work on executive functioning skills to plan for the week and receive extra help.
- **Interventions** – As challenging behaviors occur, as well as academic and attendance concerns, there are a series of interventions including teachers contacting home, engaging the student in problem solving, collaborating with support staff, and bringing in an administrator to ensure the wholeness of every child is supported.
- **Link Crew** – Upperclassmen support the transition to high school for freshmen through an orientation at the beginning of the year and continued mentorship through homeroom throughout the school year.
- **Professional Positions:** Support dealing with student discipline, coach and assist teachers in behavior response strategies, and help develop and implement strategies to build a positive student climate and culture.
- **Recognition Program** – Once a month each department nominates one student who embodies the Vision of the Graduate, and we have a celebration during homeroom where they are honored. Families are also notified of this honor. It is called Star Spartan.
- **School Spirit** – We have multiple events throughout the year that promote school spirit including spirit weeks, pep rallies, homecoming. These events are organized and run by students for students.
- **Student Leadership Opportunities** – There are multiple student leadership groups that promote students having a voice within the school and creating an environment that is welcoming and supportive of all students. These groups include Student Council, NHS, NFLHS, and Leadership Council.

Our school encounters a wide variety of challenging behaviors, including bullying and negative interpersonal interactions. Incidents are addressed based on their severity and nature. Lower-level negative interactions are managed directly by the supervising faculty or staff member (e.g., classroom behavior management by the teacher). For students who are temporarily removed from class, the main office is the designated location. The support that students may receive include but are not limited to, intervention from a trained school employee, therapeutic resources, available mental health supports, instruction materials and technology, or other resources to address students' temporary needs. More serious issues are referred to building administration, which investigates and involves the appropriate staff or faculty to address the issue.

The foundational approach to discipline at Lewis Mills is based on education, consequences, and restoration. Ensuring that students understand their actions, the school's expectations, and how their actions did not meet these expectations is critical to helping them succeed behaviorally. When appropriate, disciplinary consequences reinforce that the behavior was unacceptable within our school community's expectations. In accordance with Regional School District 10 Board of Education Restorative Practice Response policy P1554.1, restoration is a thoughtful process that heals any harm caused by the behavior and restores the student who committed the harm to the community in a positive manner, helping them succeed moving forward. When appropriate, counseling and student support services may implement support programming for both the student(s) who caused the negative interaction and the student(s) on the receiving end. Restorative practices are used for non-violent, non-criminal behavior. Law enforcement is not involved unless behavior escalates.

Any member of the school community can report challenging behaviors. All members have access to the "Challenging Behavior Form." This is available on the website as well as hard copies provided in the main office. In any situation, we determine the level of behavior and major or minor. Depending on the severity, teachers may address these behaviors at a classroom level, and we support students in working out their peer conflicts with each other when the behaviors are minor. In these situations, informal conferences, communicating with home, and using support staff such as school counselors. If issues persist or for major offenses, there are increasing consequences that are paired with restorative practices. Through all of our discipline practices the concept of consequences, education, and restoration are used. The hope is to support students in taking accountability, learning from their actions, and reintegrating in the school community to best access their education.

Tiered Response Practice

Beyond the above protocols and supports, the new school climate policy defines a specific subset of challenging behavior that requires districts to respond with certain tiered interventions

(referred to hereinafter as “tiered response incidents”). 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:

- a. requires temporarily clearing a classroom or removing a majority of students to reduce the likelihood of injury;
- b. indicates a credible intention to cause bodily harm to self or others; or
- c. 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	Principal must notify the parent/guardians of each student involved in a manner that complies with FERPA.
Second offense	Principal 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)	Principal 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, established through C.G.S. Sec. 17a-22h; or other resources for professional services, support, or crisis intervention.

In addition, for tiered response incidents, there must be a meeting between an administrator and the school employee who witnessed the incident. The purpose of the meeting, which must occur within two days of the incident, is to determine the supports and interventions required to address the needs of students and school employees, although supports and interventions for special education students must be determined by the student’s Planning and Placement Team (PPT).² In addition, protocols and supports must include a process by which a teacher may request a behavior intervention meeting.³

The Superintendent submits an annual FERPA-compliant report on tiered response incidents to the Board of Education.

² For special education students, notice of the incident must be submitted to the PPT no more than two days after the incident occurred.
³ C.G.S. Sec. 10-236c(b) permits any teacher of record in a classroom to request a behavior intervention meeting with the school’s crisis intervention team “for any student whose behavior has caused a serious disruption to the instruction of other students, or caused self-harm or physical harm to such teacher or another student or staff member in such teacher’s classroom.”

Please contact the administrative team with any concerns around challenging behavior.

Chris Rau – Principal – RauC@region10ct.org

Jen Otte – Associate Principal – OtteJ@region10ct.org

Rebecca Lewis Stoll – Dean of Students – StollR@region10ct.org

Designated administrators assess the facts, severity, and intentionality of incidents of challenging behavior before deciding upon any corrective action necessary. All responses comply with IDEA, Section 504, and students' IEP or 504 Plans. Discrimination or retaliation related to reporting or investigating incidents is prohibited.

Challenging Behavior Form

- **Family and Community Engagement:**

Families are engaged throughout the school year through an Open House night where families can come into the building to meet with teachers and parent-teacher conferences. There is also a Senior Citizen Prom community event run by the National Foreign Language Honors Society that invites senior citizens from the community into the building to engage with students as well as a Veterans Day program that engages the community's veterans and other local organizations. There is consistent communication that goes out to families through the School Messenger system, and a High School Headlines newsletter that goes out every other week. The High School Headlines is one avenue for sharing progress around different goals and initiatives as well as two community meetings per year specific to the climate improvement plan. Families are also surveyed annually around topics of school climate and culture. These results are shared and reviewed with the climate committee to inform our work.

- **Data Collection and Analysis:**

We will use the following data points:

- a. Daily absence data
- b. Focus groups with students
- c. Office Referrals/discipline records
- d. Survey data

Data will be analyzed on a weekly basis during the Student Success Team meeting. This data analysis will include absences, grades, office referrals, student meetings, and teacher comments.

This data will be used to identify student needs, plan interventions, and determine the effectiveness of these interventions and next steps to support the wholeness of each child.

Data will also be analyzed quarterly by the leadership team to determine the effectiveness of systems and determine any shifts that may be needed.

The climate committee will have the opportunity to analyze absenteeism data quarterly and survey data annually to evaluate the effectiveness of the current action steps and adapt the school climate plan as needed.

- **Evaluation and Revision:**

This plan will be reviewed at a minimum every other month by the climate committee to evaluate progress and effectiveness of the plan and action steps. At these meetings, there will be the opportunity to request additional data and revise action steps to ensure progress towards our climate goals.

Goal 1: Attendance – This goal will be reviewed quarterly with the most recent attendance data and strategies to address student absenteeism and obstacles to consistent attendance for these students.

Goal 2: Restorative Practice Professional Development – This goal will be reviewed every other month throughout the school year with the committee hearing updates about professional learning and an opportunity to discuss effectiveness and next steps to continue to progress our adult capacity around restorative practices.

Goal 3: Enhance Community through Inclusivity and Belonging – This goal will be reviewed every other month throughout the school year with the committee hearing and helping co-create opportunities for enhanced community within the school. There will be opportunities for different stakeholders to share out about initiatives such as the students on Leadership Council and on the committee will be able to discuss their efforts around the school and determine necessary next steps.

- **Professional Development and Support:**

A focus of professional development for all staff members this year is gaining a deep understanding for the foundations of restorative practices. We are partnering with EdAdvance to support the building of capacity for all staff as well as continued discussion and engagement of the leadership team to build the leadership team's capacity and support next steps in professional development. Teachers also have the opportunity to dive deeper into restorative practices through MyPL.

There are multiple state sponsored resources and webinars that members of the leadership and counseling team attend throughout the year. These resources are discussed at a leadership level and during the Student Success Team that meets weekly as well as shared with the entire staff when appropriate.

As a school we partner with community supports including McCall Behavioral Health, ICAPPS and local mental health professionals to support students and staff.

- Approval

School Climate Specialist Signature: Rebecca L. Shell Date: 12/23/25
School Climate Coordinator Signature: Deludly Date: 12/23/25