

2009 ANNUAL REPORT



Promoting a Better Climate for Learning



CSEE

CENTER FOR SOCIAL AND  
EMOTIONAL EDUCATION



**CSEE is an organization that helps schools** integrate crucial social, emotional, and ethical learning with academic instruction to enhance student performance, prevent drop outs, reduce violence, and develop healthy and positively engaged adults.

**Our vision is that all children will develop** the essential social, emotional, and intellectual skills to become healthy and productive citizens.

**Our mission is to measure and improve** the climate for learning in school to help children realize their fullest potential as individuals and as engaged members of society.

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## Dear Friends,

I look back at 2009 with great pride in all that we were able to accomplish. We not only achieved our mission of helping students feel safer, more supported and engaged in their schools, but we also grew our core programs and supports in ways that truly improve the school climate in thousands of schools nationwide.

A growing number of State Departments of Education and for the first time, the U.S Department of Education, have begun to confer with us about school climate reform efforts.

Building on seven years of work, we released a detailed set of school climate improvement guidelines and tools including *The School Climate Implementation Road Map: Promoting Democratically Informed School Communities and the Continuous Process of School Climate Improvement*. This *Road Map* includes information, guidelines and most importantly, tools designed to support teams of adults and students understanding and addressing the tasks and challenges that shape the school climate improvement process. In 2009 we began to field test this resource.

Additionally, we published a new resource— *Breaking the Bully-Victim-Bystander Cycle Tool Kit: Creating a Climate for Safety and Responsibility* – that grows out of years of bully prevention/pro-upstander work with schools, districts and State Departments of Education. The single most common finding that we have discovered from our school climate assessment work is that although adults (parents, guardians and school personnel) recognize that bully-victim-bystander dynamics are a problem that undermines everyone feeling safe in school, the adults tend to rate this a “mild” to “moderately severe” problem. Students, on the other hand, consistently rate this a “severe” problem. As a result, we have launched a new awareness raising and advocacy campaign – BullyBust. This campaign is aimed at raising awareness about bully-victim-bystander problems for students and parents/guardians as well as educators. A primary aim for the campaign is to support student leadership around the range of ways that students can stand up to bullying. We are also developing new resources to support classroom leaders – teachers – understanding how we can all “fall into” the role of bully when we are frustrated. Our professional development and resource development work here will support teachers recognizing and using



these times as “teachable moments” that support students preventing bully-victim behavior and becoming upstanders.

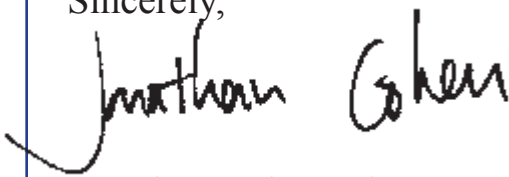
We continue to work closely with our colleagues in the National School Climate Council: An extraordinary group of policy and practice leaders devoted to narrowing the gap between school climate research, policy and practice. In partnership with the Council, we released *National School Climate Standards: Benchmarks to promote effective teaching, learning and comprehensive school improvement*. A growing number of national educational, school-based health and mental health and school board associations have endorsed these standards. We also released the *School Climate Guide for District Policymakers and Educational Leaders*. This guide is designed to support superintendents and school board leaders understanding how important and possible it is to measure and improve school climate.

We were able to continue with our Professional Development work both locally and nationally reaching out to over 1,500 faculty members through consultations and workshops. Our annual summer institute was attended by over 110 people from across America and around the world. We continued to implement our nationally recognized and empirically sound *Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI)*. Even when schools and districts were cutting budgets, 69 schools in 12 states understood the importance of using this tool to measure their school’s climate.

This report highlights some of our greatest achievements over the past year. As you will see, we have been able to achieve so much because of the support and dedication of all of you.

Our work is as critical as ever and I look forward to growing as an organization and continuing to improve the lives of thousands of students annually.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Cohen, Ph.D.  
President and Co-Founder

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## Breaking the Bully-Victim-Passive Bystander Toolkit

Last year, with the incredible support of the Florence V. Burden Foundation, the Ohio Department of Education and our Board of Trustees, we were able to create and field test a toolkit to help empower schools to tackle the prevalent and critical problem of bully-victim-passive bystander behavior. This tool kit was piloted in one Bronx middle school last year in order to refine the activities

and supports that would be included in the final kit. This past year, we were able to test this further with schools that are working to measure and improve school climate, specifically focusing on the need for a school-wide bully prevention strategy. The completed 'first edition' is now ready for wider distribution and use by schools in need of targeted bully prevention supports.

*Breaking the Bully-Victim-Bystander Cycle: Creating a Climate of Safety and Social Responsibility is a rich toolkit that is comprehensive in scope and application.*

*It addresses bullying in a fresh way by offering practical suggestions for a wide range of protective and sustaining activities. It is filled with practical suggestions and effective, research-based, time-tested practices. This toolkit will be a standard resource in this very important and evolving field!*

*- Joakim Lartey, Director of Training for the New York State Center for School Safety.*

healthy development of K-12 students. School communities can use measuring and working to improve school climate as a data driven strategy that promotes the skills, knowledge and dispositions that provide the foundation for democratically informed school communities and engaged citizens.

*This Road Map is an invaluable tool for building and district leaders. It provides practical suggestions and most importantly, tools (e.g. learning activities and rubrics) that support school teams and citizen leaders who are doing the important work of addressing the tasks to shape and support the school climate improvement process. School climate contributes to the relationships adults and youth have in schools - the better the relationship - the more engaged youth and adults become contributing to higher student achievement and connection to the community. The school climate improvement process recognizes and powerfully supports the social and civic as well as intellectual student learning and whole school improvement efforts. The strong school climate found in the Greendale Schools help make the Greendale School District the highest ranked school district in the Milwaukee metropolitan area since 2007.*

*-William H. Hughes, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools*

*This practical well written, toolkit, will be of immense immediate value for schools. I believe this book is a major contribution if not the modern landmark in the field combining interesting resources with the freedom for schools to design their own program, which our research has found to be an essential bedrock for change.*

*-Stuart W. Tremlow, MD. Professor of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, Menninger Dept. of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, Baylor College of Medicine, Co-founder, Peaceful Schools Project, Houston, TX*

## School Climate Implementation Road Map

With the support of the Leon Lowenstein Foundation, the Ohio Department of Education and our Board of Trustees, the Road Map was created to provide the foundation for our school climate improvement efforts with schools, districts, networks of schools and State Departments of Education. This Road Map is a resource designed to support school leadership teams and school community members to measure and improve school climate in ways that support student - and adult - learning and the

## 12th Annual Summer Institute:

CSEE's 12th Annual Summer Institute was our highest attended event to date with over 100 educators, researchers, parents and state and district-level administrators from all across the country, as well as representatives from Mexico and Guam.

*"I brought what I learned at the Summer Institute back to my work. I speak with people in learning institutions every day. I always try to have them look at learning techniques with a social emotional aspect. It always changes the conversation and their outlook on things."* – Parent Leader

This year's theme was Comprehensive School Climate Reform and Bully Prevention: Promoting Healthy and Democratic K-12 School Communities.

### Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI):

The Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI) is CSEE's empirically validated survey instrument designed to help schools and districts measure their climate for learning. The CSCI measures student, staff and parent perceptions of the 12 core dimensions of school climate.

In 2009, the CSCI was administered to 23,000 students, 21,000 parents and 3,500 school personnel in 12 states across the U.S.

*The substantial and focused results [in the CSCI report] allowed us to create a targeted action plan. In the past 2 years we've seen a decrease in student behavior referrals and suspensions, substantial gains on state tests and overall student achievement, improvements in staff and student morale, and a decrease in teacher turnover.*

- Vanessa Camilleri

Social Emotional Learning  
Coordinator, The Arts and Technology  
Academy (PCS) (CSCI 2006, 2007,  
2009)

*"The Summer Institute was a useful experience. Now I try to keep in mind the difference between intent and impact as I work with teachers. As a teacher, I'm sure to greet students each morning with a smile... even if they were inappropriate the previous day. Throughout the day, I greet everyone with a smile and model the behavior that I would like them to mirror."* – Teacher

*The CSCI is a scientifically-based set of measures that provides a comprehensive picture of a range of school climate dimensions, from students, staff and parents. It is web-based and user-friendly and the best school climate measure on the scene today.*

Marvin W. Berkowitz, Ph.D. - Sanford N. McDonnell Professor of Character Education; Co-Director, Center for Character and Citizenship, University of Missouri-St. Louis



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In January, CSEE supporters, board members and staff gathered together at New York's Spence School for our fundraising event, which highlighted the success of our work with Castle Hill Middle School in the Bronx. Over recent months, CSEE had worked closely with Castle Hill and their extremely dedicated leadership team to measure and improve their school climate through the CSCI and targeted school-wide bully prevention programs. One of the school's recent projects was an anti-bullying essay & artwork contest, and CSEE was delighted to congratulate the winners of the contest at the event.



*Your commitment to helping us raise awareness to bullying behavior and its negative effects have impacted our school in a variety of ways. It is because of organizations like yours that we are able to combine both academic achievement and social/emotional support for our students and staff. Your contributions are greatly appreciated, and we recognize the importance of our continued joint effort in creating a more positive learning environment.*

*-Harry Sherman, Principal, Castle Hill Middle School*



In November, CSEE threw another wonderfully successful event at the beautiful Helen Mills event space in NYC. With the incredible support of The Psilos Group, this event was the best attended and highest grossing in CSEE's history and helped us raise substantial funds for the BullyBust program. The event honored MS 258, a school in Manhattan where we worked on bully-victim-upstander themes. A few students gave an empowering and poignant presentation about being personally affected by bullying and positively impacted by CSEE.



## **BullyBust**

is CSEE's bullying awareness campaign designed to help students "stand up" to bullying and become part of the solution to end harmful verbal harassment, teasing and violence in our nation's schools. 173 schools and districts in 38 states have already signed up to be part of the BullyBust partner program. Through [www.bullybust.org](http://www.bullybust.org), students, parents and educators have the opportunity to:

- **Access Practical Supports and Resources:**

Bullybust.org is home to a wide selection of downloadable resources that empower students, parents and educators to "stand up" to bullying in (and out) of school, including: anti-bullying supports, suggestions on how to be an "upstander", articles from bullying experts, resources that explain bullying legislation nation-wide, and suggested activities for making a difference.

- **Sign the STAND UP Pledge and Join the Community**

Support for the cause begins with every student signing the Stand Up to Bullying PLEDGE on [bullybust.org](http://bullybust.org), which outlines everyday steps kids can take - as a bully, a victim or a bystander to prevent bullying in schools. Students are able to participate in the Bully Bust community and become "Bully Bust Ambassadors" or student campaigners promoting awareness in their schools. Leading the charge is Sammi Hanratty, teen actress and the face behind American Girl's Anti-Bully Doll.

- **Participate in a School-led Video Awareness Campaign**

In fall of 2009, CSEE rolled out a viral "Stand Up to Bullying" YouTube contest within schools nationwide wherein groups of students were able to share their video messages, stories and words of support. The school prompting the best video won a special symposium dedicated to bullying awareness. The winner was the Bethlehem Elementary School in Bethlehem, GA, a PreK-5 school with 850 students. Their video showed a community-based commitment for a positive learning environment and can be seen at:

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psV6npvodoQ&feature=Playlist&p=BA16839DC59A5EBF&index=0>).

- **Spread Awareness and Fundraise through the Bully Bust T-Shirt**

Supporters have been able to help fundraise for CSEE's anti-bullying programs in schools through the Bully Bust t-shirt (developed by Stacy Morgenstern-Igel, Creative Director/Founder of popular teen brand Boy Meets Girl®). When supporters make a donation, they also receive a free Bully Bust t-shirt or have the opportunity to donate their shirt to the Bully Bust Ambassadors.



## Spotlight on Queens:

Thanks to the incredible support of the Florence V. Burden Foundation, Professor Ann Higgins-D'Alessandro and her team of researchers at Fordham University and the work we did at Castle Hill Middle School in the Bronx in 2008, we were able to work with a cohort of seven schools in Queens to test and refine the *Breaking the Bully-Victim Bystander Cycle Tool Kit*.

With our guidance many of the schools have begun to develop new programs that seek to promote students' social, emotional and civic learning. Two of these schools, **PS 155** and **MS 72**, developed powerful community engagement programs drawing from their training with CSEE.

PS 155 used the Winter holidays as an opportunity to build school morale and connectedness by having their students create individual "Winter Wonderland" themed decorations. Not only did the students go above and beyond, they also collaborated among the different classrooms to create large displays that lined each floor. It brought the students together and gave them an outlet to be creative and involved in their school's activities.

Equally engaging, MS 72 worked with leaders of the community to create a program: The Real Talk With Teens which is an initiative that was developed to counter the negative social influences bombarding the students -- from the style of dressing and language in/outside the school, to the interactions between males and females. This school-wide initiative involved students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community organizations to address these prevalent issues.



## Looking ahead:

With BullyBust rapidly growing and proving to be a huge success, it is our goal to expand this program in 2010 and reach more students, parents and teachers on a national level.

## *Wicked the Musical*

Wicked, the highest weekly grossing musical of all time, has signed on as one of BullyBust's premier partners! Together, Wicked and CSEE are currently developing interactive activities and resources that empower students to become upstanders — like Wicked's own Elphaba. In addition to featuring fun activities and practical resources for students, we will also offer exciting opportunities for schools to get their students involved in bully prevention in a way that is engaging, rewarding and, most importantly, effective.

To further our outreach, CSEE and Wicked will be working with Newspapers in Education (NIE) to produce and distribute a 16 page educational supplement on bullying to be produced in February 2010. The newspapers will be distributed in more than 450 schools throughout Westchester, Putnam and Rockland counties and will reach over 50,000 students.



## 2009 Publications

Cohen, J., McCabe, E.M, Michelli, N.M & Pickeral, T. (2009). School Climate: Research, Policy, Teacher Education and Practice. *Teachers College Record*, Volume 111: Issue 1: pp. 180-213. (Available on: <http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=15220>)

Cohen, J. (2009). Transforming School Climate: Educational and Psychoanalytic Perspectives An Introduction to a special issue on school climate. *Schools: Studies in Education*, Vol. 6, No. 1: 99-103.

Cohen, J. & Hamilton, R. (2009). Caring for the individual student and the community of learners: Interlocking relationships and comprehensive school climate improvement. *Schools: Studies in Education*, Vol. 6, No. 1: 104-116.

This 2008 paper -- The challenge of assessing school climate, *Educational Leadership*, 66 (4) by J. Cohen, T.Pickeral, T., & McCloskey – has been reprinted in:

- *The Educational Digest* (2009), April 2009, Vol. 74, No 8, pages 45-48 ([www.eddigest.com](http://www.eddigest.com)); and,
- *The Marshall Memo*, a newsletter distributed to 18,000 school leaders ([www.marshallmemo.com](http://www.marshallmemo.com)).

In June 2009, by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Governor's Institute reprinted this 2008 paper and distributed it throughout the State: Cohen, J., Pickeral, T., & McCloskey, M. (2008). The challenge of assessing school climate. [Online article]. *Educational Leadership*, 66 (4). (Available on: [www.ascd.org/publications/educational\\_leadership/dec08/vol66/num04/toc.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/dec08/vol66/num04/toc.aspx))

Cohen, J., Fege, A., & Pickeral, T. (2009). Measuring and improving school climate: A strategy that recognizes, honors and promotes social, emotional and civic learning The foundation for love, work and engaged citizenry. *Teachers College Record*. Retrieved June, 25, 2009, from <http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=15698>

Cohen, J. (2009). Forward to *Raising children who soar: A guide to healthy risk-taking in an uncertain world* by S. Davis & N. Eppler-Wolff. New York: Teachers College Press.

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## Why Give?

Each year CSEE works with hundreds of schools to measure and improve their climates for learning. In 2009, we helped thousands of students feel safer and more supported in and around their schools.

We would not have been able to accomplish so much without the continued dedication and support of our friends.

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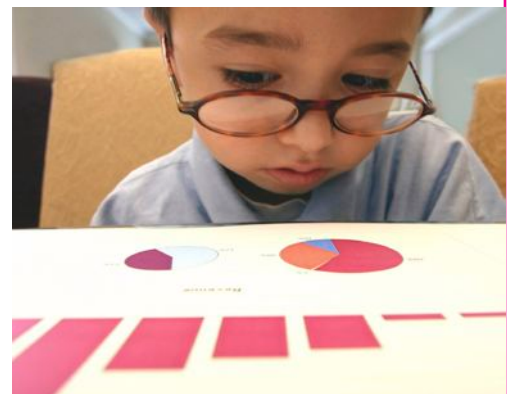
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The Council is involved with a range of educational, policy, collaborative and advocacy efforts. CSEE is honored to advocate and work with these members:

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The School Climate Council is grateful for the contributions of the following former council member:

**Victor Battistich (deceased)** Associate Professor, Center for Character & Citizenship, College of Education, University of Missouri, St. Louis

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CSEE's Professional Advisors have provided essential support to our educational and resource development projects. We are honored to have many of the nation's leading K-12 educational, health/mental health, social emotional learning and character education experts advising us. We are deeply indebted to their council and wisdom.

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