RICE LAKE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEW TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAM

2022-2023

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What is Mentoring?

People-driven! What do those two powerful words have to do with mentoring? They mean investing in supporting people with impactful mentoring, effective instruction, and, anchored in the knowledge that mentoring can be a challenging endeavor requiring significant time and energy, but oh so worth it!

In fact, research suggests that as many as 40% to 50% of new teachers leave the profession within the first 5 years (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Brown & Wynn, 2007; Hughes 2012; Simos, 2013; Watlington et al., 2010)

Mentoring requires:

- Respect first and foremost
    - Respect is earned on both sides of the mentoring team
- Listening and recognizing the needs of the mentee
- Challenging both themselves and their mentee, but are also willing to grow in new ways
- Collaborating often, as this is one of the most crucial aspects of a mentoring relationship along with improving teaching practices
- A safe place to vent, air, and allow things to be said confidentially without worrying about repercussions
- Modeling best practices while still appreciating differences in teaching styles
- Having the, "Knowing-How" skills so there is always the instructional component on the burner
- Celebrating successes! What may seem small to a mentor, may be a big step for the mentee

Mentoring should instill the importance of being a lifelong learner, continuing professional growth as well as offering strategies that mentees can immediately and effectively use in the classroom.

Quote from mentee… ***"The biggest positive that I have gained from being a part of the mentoring program is that not only did this program allow me to grow as a teacher, but it also provided me with a person who I trust and am able to call a friend. This program allows relationships to develop among staff as well as help them develop as teachers within the RLASD."***

Induction

Rationale

- Educators and their students benefit from a wide level of support
- Promoting collaboration and shared expertise builds instructional continuity and increases professional expertise

Components

- Ongoing orientation - relevant information shared throughout the year
- Support seminars - providing professional growth opportunities through the school district and/or mentoring program
- Qualified Mentors - the hand-chosen mentor is a facilitator of knowledge and skills.
    - The functions of the mentor will vary with the needs of the mentee
    - The task of the mentor is to integrate that knowledge and skill base of the new teacher

The program consists of sharing ideas and expertise, coaching and observation to provide every opportunity for the new teacher to become a confident and successful member of the Rice Lake School community.

Coordinator Roles

- Oversee and coordinate the new teacher mentor program
- In conjunction with the administration, recruit mentors and assign the mentor to a new teaching staff member
- Facilitate and implement the new teacher orientation seminar
- Plan and facilitate an annual mentor training
- Plan and/or facilitate support seminars
- Observe new staff and provide feedback
- Be readily available to both the mentors and the mentees
- Write articles pertinent to staff
- Provide and continue open communications with staff and administration
- Support classrooms

Meet your Mentor Coordinator

Belinda Cernick
Retired 5th Grade Teacher
cernickb@ricelake.k12.wi.us
715-651-5835

Mentoring Program Goals

- To increase retention of promising teachers
- To enhance student achievement
- To promote the personal and professional well-being of teachers
- To promote teachers to reflect on best teaching practices
- To promote school as a professional learning community

Collaboration within a trusting relationship of the mentee/mentor will advance teaching techniques of the teacher, which benefits the students by having stronger, more effective teachers.

Our foremost goal is to begin building long-term professional growth.

Mentee Responsibilities

Being a new staff member requires you to be part of the New Teacher Mentoring Program and with that comes responsibilities for you and your mentor. You will be responsible to participate in the expectations set forth by this program.

Expectations for the *Mentee*:

- Attend the New Staff In-Service held in August
- Meet formally each week with your mentor through December
- Meet formally with your mentor each month January until the end of the year
- Attend monthly seminars:
    - *Seminar reminders will be sent to you in advance*
    - *Attendee requirements will be shared, so please plan accordingly*
    - *Anyone is welcome to attend seminars*
- Participate in the observation phase of the program
- Be open to suggestions from your mentor
    - Your mentor is a veteran teacher and is familiar with the district's guidelines
- Along with your mentor, complete, sign, and return monthly checklists *(Your mentor is responsible for sending this sheet in each month)*
- Sign and return the Pledge of Confidentiality Agreement and all meeting documents* to Belinda Cernick @ the middle school

Expectations for the *Mentor*:

- You are responsible that your mentee meets the expectations of the program
- Attend the Mentor Training held in August (if you have not participated in the mentor training in prior years)
- Meet **formally** with your mentee **each week through December, then meet formally each month through the rest of the year**
- **Use the Monthly Checklist as your guide for discussion**
- Attend seminars (optional)
- *Seminars will be conveyed to you in advance*
    - *Everyone is welcome to attend any or all seminars*
- Participate in the observation phase of the program. (Pre. observe, post) Send notes to Belinda
- Provide suggestions/feedback/support for your mentee. As a veteran teacher, you are familiar with the district's guidelines
- **Along with your mentee, complete and sign the monthly checklists**
- You are responsible for sending in the monthly checklists by the 15th of the following month. ***(failure to do so will jeopardize your mentoring stipend of $500.00)***
- Sign and return the Pledge of Confidentiality Agreement and all meeting documents* to Belinda Cernick @ the middle school

Wisconsin Teacher Standards

The ten teacher standards for teacher development and licensure are:

1. **Pupil Development.** The teacher understands how pupils grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas. The teacher designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences for pupils.
2. **Learning Differences.** The teacher uses his or her understanding of individual pupil differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each pupil to meet high standards.
3. **Learning Environments.** The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
4. **Content Knowledge.** The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of each discipline he or she teaches. The teacher creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for pupils to assure mastery of the content.
5. **Application of Content.** The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage pupils in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.
6. **Assessment.** The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage pupils in their own growth, to monitor pupil progress, and to guide the teachers and pupil's decision making.
7. **Planning for Instruction.** The teacher plans instruction that supports every pupil in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, pedagogy, pupils, and pupils' communities.
8. **Instructional Strategies.** The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage pupils to develop a deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to develop skills to apply knowledge in a meaningful way.
9. **Professional Learning and Ethical Practice.** The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning. The teacher uses evidence to continuously evaluate the teacher's practice, including the effects of the teacher's choices and actions on pupils, their families, other educators, and the community. The teacher adapts the teacher's practice to meet the needs of each pupil.
10. **Leadership and Collaboration.** The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities in order to take responsibility for pupil learning, to collaborate with pupils, their families, educators, and the community, and to advance the profession.

First Impressions

- You are meeting many new people in our school district and community
    - First impressions are important
- Smile and look them in the eye
- Shake their hands if you feel comfortable and try to remember their names
    - That can be difficult as you will be meeting so many new people, but give it effort

Professional Dress

A teacher's appearance plays a role in conveying professionalism.

- How you dress and present yourself is important
    - You have a professional job so you need to dress the part

Punctuality

- Abide by the school's contracted hours for teachers and show up on time (even early) for all work functions such as IEP meetings and professional development events. If you do need to leave early, let your administrator know ahead of time. Most of the time they will be understanding, particularly if these absences are infrequent or if they are aware of an extenuating circumstance (i.e. sick child).

Communication

- Communicate with parents as often as you feel needed
    - Over communication is better than not enough or not at all.
- Work hard to get the parents involved from the beginning especially when a student has difficulties either academically and/or behaviorally
- Always have a plan before contacting the parents
    - Have a pad of paper at hand to write down what was said by the parent and how you answered. You may need to refer to this conversation at a later date. You don't want to trust your memory. If you send an email or letter, make sure that it is free of errors and states exactly what you want it to say.

Community

Teaching is a very public act. Teachers and schools are always on display; every day, all day. The things that we do and say here are discussed in homes, at parks and ball games, at dance recitals, and in churches. We need to make sure that our public face is professional. Whatever people may say or think about schools, they should not be able to wonder, or need to worry, about the level of professionalism that they see there.

- The community has its views on teachers and so we must uphold our professionalism
- Converse with a parent if you see them in public and build that relationship in and out of the classroom

- Be careful what you say in the community if talking about school (beauty salon, bank, grocery store)
- Use discretion when talking about students and anything confidential with teachers or others
    - There are situations where it's appropriate to discuss such topics, but it can be very easy to gossip
    - Don't fall into this trap

Media

- Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter
    - Be careful what you put on the media, a parent may see something that you don't want them to see
- There is nothing wrong with communicating with your fellow teachers on Facebook, Twitter, etc. However, it's important to keep school talk away from these public forums. Not only is it unprofessional, but you never know who may be reading them. If you post comments on your Facebook Wall and/or Twitter feed, be sure to keep them positive and fairly general.

Student Relationships

- When it comes to interacting with students, we need to understand there is a fine line between being a caring adult and being a friend
- Do not let your desire to be liked by students get in the way of enforcing classroom and school rules

Professional Relationships

- When working with other teaching staff, always be respectful of your comments, and your thoughts
- Be open to learning and soaking in all the information you receive
- Keep your relationships professional at school, yet have fun with your colleagues
- Be respectful of your mentor's and colleagues' time
- E-mail communication
    - All communication through school technology (phones, e-mail, etc.) with fellow teachers should be something that you should be comfortable with any administrator or technology staff member hearing or reading. If it isn't appropriate for the school environment, save it for personal communication (i.e. home email, personal cell phone). Aside from school sensitive topics, this includes communication such as inappropriate email forwards.
- Be prepared when you attend meetings
    - Have your documents updated and ready

Interacting with students, co-workers, parents, and community in a positive, professional manner is one step to being professional.

I realized if you can change a classroom, you can change a community, and if you change enough communities you can change the world.~Erin Gruwell

The Phases of a Teacher's Year

First-year teaching is a difficult challenge. New teachers move through several phases: from anticipation, to survival, to disillusionment, to rejuvenation, to reflection, then back to anticipation.

Anticipation Phase

The anticipation phase begins during the student teaching portion of pre-service preparation. The closer that student teachers get to complete their assignment, the more excited and anxious they become about their first teaching position. New teachers enter classrooms with a tremendous commitment to making a difference and a somewhat idealistic view of how to accomplish their goals. The feeling of excitement carries new teachers through the first few weeks of school.

Survival Phase

The first month of school is overwhelming for new teachers. They are learning a lot at a rapid pace. Beginning teachers are bombarded with a variety of problems and situations they had not anticipated. Despite teacher education courses and student teaching experience, the realities of teaching on their own catch new teachers off guard.

During the survival phase, most new teachers struggle to keep their heads above water. They become consumed with the day-to-day routine of teaching. It is not uncommon for new teachers to spend up to 70 hours a week on schoolwork. They have little time to stop and reflect on their experiences.

Particularly overwhelming is the constant need to develop curriculum. Veteran teachers routinely reuse excellent lessons and units from past years. New teachers, still uncertain of what will really work, must develop their lessons for the first time. Although tired and surprised by the amount of work, first-year teachers usually maintain a tremendous amount of energy and commitment during the survival phase, and they harbor hope that soon the turmoil will subside.

Disillusionment Phase

After 6 to 8 weeks of nonstop work and stress, new teachers enter the disillusionment phase. The intensity of the length of the phase varies among new teachers. The extensive time commitment, the realization that things are probably not going as smoothly as they would like, and low morale contribute to this period of disenchantment. Many new teachers fall ill during this phase.

Compounding an already difficult situation is the fact that new teachers confront several new events during this time frame: back-to-school night, parent conferences, and their first formal evaluation by the site administrator. Each milestone places an already vulnerable individual in a very stressful situation.

The first formal evaluation by the principal also arrives during the disillusionment phase. Developing and presenting a "showpiece" lesson is time-consuming and stressful. New teachers, uncertain about the evaluation process and anxious about their own competence, question their ability to perform.

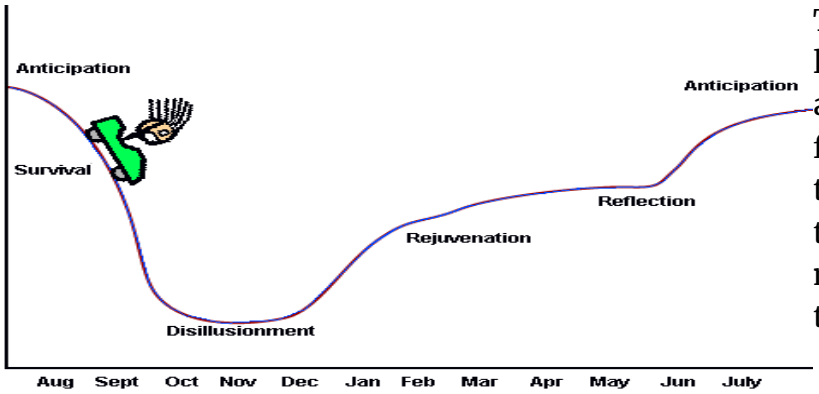
During this phase, classroom management often becomes a major source of distress. New teachers express self-doubt, have lower self-esteem, and question their professional commitment. Getting through this phase may be the toughest challenge they face as new teachers.

Rejuvenation Phase

The rejuvenation phase, which generally begins in January, is characterized by a slow improvement in the new teacher's attitude toward teaching. Having a winter break makes a tremendous difference for new teachers. This breathing space gives new teachers time for reflection and a chance to gain perspective.

They now have a better understanding of the system, more acceptances of the realities of teaching, and a sense of accomplishment at having made it through the first, and hardest, part of the school year. During this phase, new teachers focus on curriculum development, long-term planning and teaching strategies. The rejuvenation phase tends to last into spring, with many ups and downs along the way. Toward the end of this phase, new teachers begin to voice concerns about whether they can accomplish everything by the end of the school year.

Reflection Phase



The reflection phase begins during the last six weeks of school. These final weeks are a particularly invigorating time for first-year teachers. Reflecting back over the year, new teachers highlight events that were successful and those that were not. The end is in sight, which brings them to a new phase of anticipation.

It is essential that we assist new teachers and ease the transition from student teacher to full-time professional. Recognizing the phases that new teachers go through gives us a framework within which we can begin to design support programs to make the first year of teaching a more positive experience for our new colleagues.

"Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world." ~Malala Yousafzai

Observations

- Observations provide opportunities for guidance and support
- Mentors and mentees can learn from each other and fine-tune their craft
- Our ultimate goal is for both the new teacher and the mentor to learn so that all involved: the mentor, the teacher, and the students, will benefit
- Observers use compassion. Take in account their level of experience
- Mentors have knowledge and expertise to guide new teachers throughout the year
- Beginning teachers have new ideas that can inspire mentors
- It is an opportunity to identify positive teacher behaviors and its effects on students
- It is an activity that provides practice in identifying cause/effect relationships
- **Observations for initial educators should be completed by November 1st**

Observation Phases

Pre-observation:

- Meet to discuss the focus for the observation
- Arrange a time for the observation. Contact Belinda if you need a sub
- Select an observation tool

Observation:

- Focus only on what was discussed in the pre-observation
- Use strict confidence. This is ***NOT*** a part of the teacher evaluation process
- Performance is not discussed with anyone except the mentee
- Focus on what you as an observer can do to support the teacher

Post observation:

- Be prepared when meeting
- Provide valuable and positive feedback. This is to be a learning experience
- Always begin with asking the mentee to reflect on their lesson
- Discuss what you observed. This is essential for your mentee to learn
- Offer insight, resources, and new strategies
- Refrain from making judgments to your mentee or in your notes
- Discuss what steps to take next. Take in account their level of experience
- Give positive feedback. This is an opportunity to learn
- **Please send your notes to Belinda**

Pre-Conference Visit Planning Form

Date of the visit: _____ Name: _____

The goal of the lesson will be:

_____

_____

_____

Brief description of the lesson:

_____

_____

_____

Particular things to watch for:

_____

_____

_____

What observation tools did you use:

_____

_____

ENCOURAGEMENT-FEEDBACK-PRAISE

Tools of Observation

Seating Charts:

By using a seating chart format, you will be able to record a large body of information in a small space. It enables you not to only keep track of the students but the teacher as well. The best reason of all, they are easy to use and interpret.This technique is good for such times when you want to observe: teacher/student questioning patterns, reinforcement and feedback, or classroom movement patterns.

A copy of the classroom layout needs to be prepared and provided at the time of the observation.

Cause-and-Effect Records:

With this form, the observer is able to collect information pertaining to how the new teacher's actions influence the students.

This would be good to use if your goal is to observe the teacher's classroom management, questioning strategies, direction giving, or other behaviors that expect a student response.

The aim of this tool, to give a visual to teachers on what techniques he or she relies on most often to manage students during a whole-class instruction. The key is to be using the low-profile control techniques more often.

Low-profile control techniques are ways teachers respond to "surface behaviors" without losing the rhythm and momentum of the lesson. They include:

- **Anticipation**: scanning, picking up the pace, removing temptation, boosting interest, changing seating arrangements
- **Deflection**: proximity control, eye contact, prompting, name dropping, peer recognition

Cause/Effect Observation Tool

Name:_____

Observation Elements: 1. 2.

I saw...	I heard...	I think...

Observation Form

Name of Mentee: _____

Date and time of the observation: _____

What observation tool did you use?

_____

_____

_____

What was the focus of the observation?

_____

_____

Date of post-conference meeting with mentee:

_____

_____

This observation may not be used for evaluation purposes.

This is for the mentor to support the mentee and give positive feedback.

******* This must be sent to the coordinator within 2 weeks of the observation. Thank you.**

QUESTIONS THAT PROMOTE TEACHER THINKING

- What do you need to do next?
- Based on what you know, what can you predict about…?
- How do you decide…?
- How does… tie in with what we have discussed before?
- What might happen if…?
- How about…? What if…?
- Tell me what you mean when you…?
- What do you think causes…?
- What do you think the problem or issue is?
- Can you think of another way to do this?
- Why is this one better than that one?
- How can you find out?
- Can you tell me more?
- What else do you see?
- How does that compare with…?

REFLECTIVE CONFERENCE QUESTIONS:

- How did you decide what instructional strategies to use?
- Why do you think it worked or did not work in this lesson?
- When you teach this lesson again, what will you do differently?
- Does informal assessment of your students' work provide you with a clear picture of what they have learned?
- How do you explain students' success or lack of success?
- To what extent were the students actively involved?
- What did you observe that caused you to…?
- As you reflect on the lesson, how do you think it went? What happened to make you think this way?

Post Reflective Conference:

Name: _____

***Send copies of post observation documents to Belinda at the middle school within two weeks of the feedback meeting of the mentee.**

- Discuss focus with your mentee before the observation
- Take notes during the observation
- Document the post-observation reflections
- Meet formally with mentee with constructive feedback
- Have concrete suggestions ready to support the mentee
- Make a plan and date to follow-up with the mentee on discussed areas of the observed lesson
- Send paperwork to Belinda

Post Conference Reflections:

Reflective Practice for Educators

Our profession is a rewarding, but challenging one. It requires us to regularly look back (reflection) at what has worked with our lessons and what hasn't. Each day our experiences form ideas to try in new and fresh ways. Research has pointed to the fact that regularly reflecting leads to transforming teaching skills in a positive manner and transforming teaching skills for the better.

When you look up the word reflection in the dictionary you will find multiple meanings for the word. The one that pertains to us as educators is: a thought, an idea, an opinion formed as the result of meditating or consideration of an idea.

Reflective practice is grounded on the research about learning that has been cited in educational journals for many years on what creates effective learning. The following are truisms about learning that are the keystones for supporting the strategy of reflective practice as an effective professional development activity:

- Learning is most effective, most likely to lead to behavioral change, when it begins with an experience.
- Learning is most effective when people (and students) become personally engaged in the learning process and engagement is most likely to take place where there is a need to learn.
- Learning happens when it takes place as a **collaborative** rather than an isolated activity.

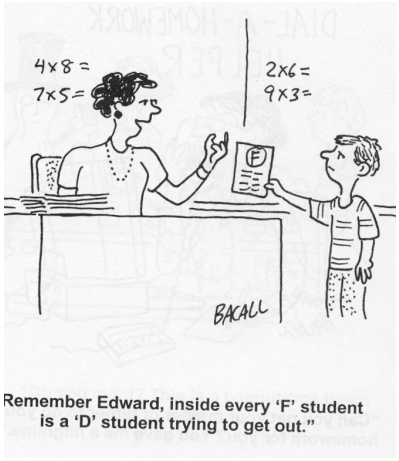
The intent of reflective practice is to improve the quality of professional performance. Professional performance is threatened if we don't accept the fact that teaching is lifelong learning.

For most teachers, reflection is instinctive. It is something that is hard-wired in. It is a process that we do continually throughout the day. *Oh, that worked great! Next time, I'm going to try using a different form of media to get more students involved. I think a small group would be a better way to present that idea.* Reflection enables teachers to remain fresh for new ideas. We have to be reflective at all times.

Take time to reflect on your lesson, your day, your week, semester or year, so you will continue to be an effective teacher. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI)

realizes the importance of reflection so it has created the Educator Effectiveness Plan (EE).

Reflection comes in many forms. It is most often done in the mind daily as we survey the students. Later those thoughts can be jotted down in a notebook or on a computer. When a teacher is preparing to mark the report card grades for students, a time of reflection occurs. Some use video journals to see class work in action and then make reflections based on what they see. Other times reflections are made during data team discussions, peer observation conferences, or teacher evaluations.



Remember Edward, inside every 'F' student is a 'D' student trying to get out."

Through regular writing and reading of your reflections, you will start to see patterns of thought and ideas about teaching. You will become more aware of your habits and have a clearer understanding of your daily teaching practice. You'll become more aware of how you organize your teaching, recognize your teaching strengths, and determine those skills that require more learning and practice. You will identify how your students influence your teaching, and discover ways to adapt, modify, and respond to their behavior to increase their success in the classroom. You will see patterns of emotional highs and lows and begin to identify factors related to them. Eventually, you will use this valuable resource to create a professional growth plan to improve your professional practice. Reflection is a tool that can lead to lifelong learning for you, and to greater learning for your students.

Each year brings its own special problems or issues but luckily for us, we can look forward to a new school year. To be able to start a new year where we can use our inspiring reflections from the year prior is a great way to begin teaching at the beginning of the year. This new year provides us with another chance to be the best teachers we can be!

It is a common experience that a problem difficult at night is resolved in the morning after the committee of sleep has worked on it.
~John Steinbeck

Educator Effectiveness

The Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness System uses multiple measures to promote educators' professional growth and improve student learning. The system has two main components:

- Teacher practice measures
- Student outcome measures

The Rice Lake Area School District uses the CESA 6 Teacher/Educational Specialist (T/ES) Performance Evaluation System developed by Dr. James Stronge.

Each new educator will be assigned either the teacher or educational specialist role based on their jobs duties. Teachers are educators who directly work with a classroom of students. The term Educational Specialist includes non-administrative education professionals who provide a multitude of support services to students, teachers, and parents. Educational Specialists include school counselors, nurses, librarians/media specialists, school psychologists, instructional coaches, and others who have specialized training and offer a broad range of services to students.

Clearly defined professional responsibilities for teacher or educational specialists are the foundation for the T/ES Performance Evaluation System. The CESA 6 Effectiveness Project focuses on 6 research-based standards for Teachers. The standards are uniquely aligned to the roles and responsibilities of each position.

Performance standards define the criteria expected for educators. You will be evaluated and receive feedback on these performance standards. The six standards for teachers are: **Professional Knowledge, Instructional Planning, Instructional Delivery, Assessment of and for Learning, Learning Environment, and Professionalism.**

The T/ES practice measures include:

- Observations
- Documentation Log – educator provides artifacts showing evidence of work toward goals, related to area of focus.
- Student surveys – educator gathers information from students to help educator reflect on practice

- Professional goal setting. In the RLASD, all staff will have an SLO and a PPG - focused on one standard. In 2022-2023, our focus will be on Standard 3: Delivery of Instruction. Professional goal setting includes:
    - Student Learning Objective (SLO)
    - Self-Assessment
    - Professional Practice Goal

The student practice measures are:

- Use of a balanced assessment framework to support the SLO process
- Student learning objectives (SLOs)
    - Beginning of the year – set the SLO
    - Mid-year – review the SLO
    - End-of-the year – evaluate the SLO

New T/ES will have 6 observations in order for principals to provide feedback. After three years in the district, new T/ESs will move to continuing teacher/educational specialist status. Continuing T/ESs year 1 and 2 are not summative years, and T/ESs need to only complete the professional goal setting (including the SLO), student/client surveys, information observation, and continue to add artifacts to their documentation log. Continuing T/ESs 3 is the summative year (every 3rd year). During the summative year, the T/ES will complete all of the components, including the 6 observations.

Your principal will meet you and the school staff to review the expectations for Educator Effectiveness and support you throughout the process. Keep in mind that this is a growth model, and the goal is to provide feedback and support to help you meet your goals and improve your professional practice. For more detailed information regarding the Teacher/Educational Specialist Performance Evaluation System please refer to the Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness System User Guide.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

One of the hardest experiences a teacher has to go through is when he or she suspects one of their students has been abused. Everyone in a school district is required by law to report any *suspected* times when you feel a child has been physically abused, sexually abused or is suffering neglect.

The Rice Lake Area School district recognizes the serious local problems of child abuse and neglect. To combat this problem, any school district employee is a mandatory reporter. If you have reason to believe a child in your care has been abused or neglected or you believe the child has been threatened with abuse and that abuse will occur, you should immediately contact the county social services department, the county sheriff, or the city police. When doing so, you will need to explain the facts and circumstances which lead you to file this report.

You also need to share this report with your principal and if he or she is not available, the report needs to be made known to the Director of Special Services.

To help you organize your information, the school district provides a form found on the district website. You will need to provide your name, address, age of student, nature and extent of the injuries or description of neglect or abuse and any other information that might help discover the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect.

It is not your job to prove that the child has been abused or neglected nor is it your job to decide if the child is in need of protection. You are not to contact the child's family or any other person to figure out the cause of any suspected abuse or neglect.

As stated in the school district policy, "No district employee shall be discharged from employment for making such a report. In addition, state law guarantees immunity from any civil or criminal liability that may result from making a report on child abuse or neglect. State law also provides for the protection of the identity of any individual who makes such a report."

It is hoped in the course of your teaching career that you may never be witness to such instances but it is comforting to know that if you do, there is something you can do to prevent the continuing of such actions against a child.

Legal Ref: 48.02, 48.981 WSS; Section 118.07(5) WSS Cross Ref: 456 Rule School Report of Suspected Abuse or Neglect; 456 Exhibit School Report of Suspected Abuse or Neglect

Psychological and Behavioral Impact of Trauma

Consider Amy: Amy has been constantly in trouble in school. She hits, kicks, and scratches other students, and bangs her head on the table when she is frustrated. Amy's behaviors are most difficult when transitioning from one activity to another. When the teacher meets with Amy's father, the father reports that Amy's mother uses drugs, that Amy has seen her mother being arrested by the police, and that Amy's mother often does not come home at night.

Consider Joe: Joe has been an outgoing and model student, but lately he is not paying attention or completing his work. He has become quiet and withdrawn and his teacher was very concerned. The teacher pulled Joe aside and he admitted that his parents had been constantly fighting and he overheard them talking about getting a divorce. He is worried about what will happen next.

What do these two have in common? They have both been exposed to trauma, defined as an experience that threatens life or physical integrity and that overwhelms an individual's capacity to cope.

Generally, *traumatic events evoke feelings of extreme fear and helplessness. Reactions to traumatic events are determined by the subjective experience of the child, which could be impacted by developmental and cultural factors.*

What is extremely traumatic for one student may be less so for another.

- Some traumatic experiences occur once in a lifetime, others are ongoing.
- Many children have experienced multiple traumas, and for too many children, trauma is a chronic part of their lives.
- Some children show signs of stress in the first few weeks after a trauma, but return to their usual state of physical and emotional health.
- Even children who do not exhibit serious symptoms may experience some degree of emotional distress, which may continue or even deepen over a long period of time.
- For reasons that are basic to survival, traumatic experiences, long after they are over, continue to take priority in the thoughts, emotions, and behavior of children.
- Fears and other strong emotions, intense physical reactions, and the new way of looking at dangers in the world may recede into the background, but events and reminders may bring them to mind again.

- *We need to be aware of both the children that act out AND the quiet children who don't appear to have behavioral problems.*
- Children who have experienced traumatic events may experience problems that impair their day-to-day functioning

Children who have experienced traumatic events may have behavioral problems, or their suffering may not be apparent at all.

It is difficult to understand trauma-related anxiety, when many behaviors seen in children who have experienced trauma are nearly identical to those of children with developmental delays, ADHD and other mental health conditions. That is why it is imperative as teachers to try our best to take the children's traumatic experiences into consideration when dealing with acting out behaviors.

The Rice Lake School District brings awareness of the scope and serious impact of child traumatic stress on the safety and healthy development of America's children and youth.

NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

For more information and where we found our information is:
The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) NCTSN.org

NCTSN Information

FACT: One out of every 4 children attending school has been exposed to a traumatic event that can affect learning and/or behavior.

FACT: Trauma can impact school performance.

- Lower GPA
- Higher rate of school absences
- Increased drop-out
- More suspensions and expulsions
- Decreased reading ability

FACT: Trauma can impair learning.

Single exposure to traumatic events may cause jumpiness, intrusive thoughts, and interrupted sleep and nightmares, anger and moodiness, and/or social withdrawal—any of which can interfere with concentration and memory.

Chronic exposure to traumatic events, especially during a child's early years, can:

- Adversely affect attention, memory, and cognition
- Reduce a child's ability to focus, organize, and process information
- Interfere with effective problem solving and/or planning
- Result in overwhelming feelings of frustration and anxiety

FACT: Traumatized children may experience physical and emotional distress.

- Physical symptoms like headaches and stomachaches
- Poor control of emotions
- Inconsistent academic performance
- Unpredictable and/or impulsive behavior
- Over or under-reacting to bells, physical contact, doors slamming, sirens, lighting,
- sudden movements
- Intense reactions to reminders of their traumatic event:
- Thinking others are violating their personal space, i.e., "What are you looking at?"
- Blowing up when being corrected or told what to do by an authority figure
- Fighting when criticized or teased by others
- Resisting transition and/or change

FACT: You can help a child who has been traumatized.

- Follow your school's reporting procedures if you suspect abuse
- Work with the child's caregiver(s) to share and address school problems
- Refer to community resources when a child shows signs of being unable to cope with traumatic stress
- Share Trauma Facts for Educators with other teachers and school personnel (www.nctsn.org)

This project was funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The views, policies, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA or HHS.

What can be done at school to help a traumatized child?

- Maintain usual routines. A return to "normalcy" will communicate the message that the child is safe and life will go on.

- Give children choices. Often traumatic events involve loss of control and/or chaos, so you can help children feel safe by providing them with some choices or control when appropriate.

- Increase the level of support and encouragement given to the traumatized child. Designate an adult who can provide additional support if needed.

- Set clear, firm limits for inappropriate behavior and develop logical—rather than punitive—consequences.

- Recognize that behavioral problems may be transient and related to trauma. Remember that even the most disruptive behaviors can be driven by trauma-related anxiety.

- Provide a safe place for the child to talk about what happened. Set aside a designated time and place for sharing to help the child know it is okay to talk about what happened.

- Give simple and realistic answers to the child's questions about traumatic events. Clarify distortions and misconceptions. If it isn't an appropriate time, be sure to give the child a time and place to talk and ask questions.

- Be sensitive to the cues in the environment that may cause a reaction in the traumatized child. For example, victims of natural storm-related disasters might react very badly to threatening weather or storm warnings. Children may increase problem behaviors near an anniversary of a traumatic event.

- Anticipate difficult times and provide additional support. Many kinds of situations may be reminders. If you are able to identify reminders, you can help by preparing the child for the situation. For instance, for the child who doesn't like being alone, provide a partner to accompany him or her to the restroom.

- Warn children if you will be doing something out of the ordinary, such as turning off the lights
  or making a sudden loud noise.

- Be aware of other children's reactions to the traumatized child and to the information they share. Protect the traumatized child from peers' curiosity and protect classmates from the details of a child's trauma.

- Understand that children cope by reenacting trauma through play or through their interactions with others. Resist their efforts to draw you into a negative repetition of the trauma. For instance, some children will provoke teachers in order to replay abusive situations at home.

- Although not all children have religious beliefs, be attentive if the child experiences severe feelings of anger, guilt, shame, or punishment attributed to a higher power. Do not engage in theological discussion. Rather, refer the child to appropriate support.

- While a traumatized child might not meet eligibility criteria for special education, consider making accommodations and modifications to academic work for a short time, even including these in a 504 plan. You might:
    - Shorten assignments
    - Allow additional time to complete assignments
    - Give permission to leave class to go to a designated adult (such as a counselor or school nurse)
    - if feelings become overwhelming
    - Provide additional support for organizing and remembering assignments

When should a referral be made for additional help for a traumatized child?

When reactions are severe (such as intense hopelessness or fear) or go on for a long time (more than one month) and interfere with a child's functioning, give referrals for additional help. As severity can be difficult to determine—with some children becoming avoidant or appearing to be fine (e.g., a child who performs well academically no matter what)—don't feel you have to be certain before making a referral. Let a mental health professional evaluate the likelihood that the child could benefit from some type of intervention.

When to seek self care?

Seek support and consultation routinely for yourself in order to prevent "compassion fatigue," also referred to as "secondary traumatic stress." Be aware that you can develop compassion fatigue from exposure to trauma through the children with whom you work.

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10 Things About Childhood Trauma Every Teacher Needs To Know

For children who have experienced trauma, learning can be a big struggle.

February 28, 2022 Brought to you by Starr Commonwealth

With grief, sadness is obvious. With trauma, the symptoms can go largely unrecognized because they mimic other problems: frustration; acting out; or difficulty concentrating, following directions, or working in a group. Students are often misdiagnosed with anxiety, behavior disorders, or attention disorders rather than understood to have trauma that drives those symptoms and reactions. However, learning can also be a big struggle for children who have experienced trauma, and trauma-informed teaching can help.

Here are 10 tips for understanding kids who have been through trauma, plus strategies to help them build resilience so they can bounce back and overcome their challenges.

1. Kids who have experienced trauma aren't trying to push your buttons

If a child is having trouble with transitions or turning in a folder at the beginning of the day, remember that children may be distracted because of a situation at home that causes them to worry. Instead of reprimanding students when they're late or forget homework, affirm and accommodate them by establishing a visual cue or verbal reminder.

"Switch your mindset and remember the kid who has experienced trauma is not trying to push your buttons," says Caelan Soma, PsyD, chief clinical officer with Starr Commonwealth, an organization that offers resources to help schools build trauma-informed, resilience-focused communities.

These positive interactions might seem small, but they can build resilience in students, rewiring areas of their brains that have been impacted by trauma. On the other hand, starting the day with a reprimand can cause a child to shut down.

2. Kids who have been through trauma worry about what's going to happen next

A daily routine in the classroom can be calming, so try to provide structure and predictability whenever possible. Since words may not sink in for children who go through trauma, they need other sensory cues, says Soma. Besides explaining how the day will unfold, have signs or a storyboard that shows which activity—math, reading, lunch, recess, etc.—the class will do and when. Knowing what to expect lets kids feel secure enough to focus on learning. With time, that can show kids that they have the resilience and power to do well in school.

3. Even if the situation doesn't seem that bad to you, it's how the child feels that matters

Trauma is highly individual. A situation that one person can easily recover from can cause trauma for another person. As caring teachers, we may unintentionally project that a situation isn't really that bad, but how the child feels about the stress is what matters most, says Soma.

For some children, it may not be a singular event but rather the culmination of chronic stress. For example, a child who lives in poverty may worry about the family paying rent on time, keeping their jobs, or having enough food.

"Anything that keeps our nervous system activated for longer than four to six weeks is defined as post-traumatic stress," says Soma.

The good news is that the opposite is true, too: small positive interactions, like greeting a student in the hall, might seem insignificant to you but can foster resiliency in your students.

4. Trauma isn't always associated with violence

Trauma is often associated with violence. Yet, kids experience trauma from a variety of situations—like divorce, a move, or being over-scheduled or bullied.

“All kids, especially in this day and age, experience extreme stress from time to time,” says Soma. “It is more common than we think.”

You never know which student—or how many—can benefit from trauma-informed teaching.

5. You don’t need to know the cause of trauma to help

Instead of focusing on the specifics of a traumatic situation, concentrate on the support you can give children who are suffering.

“Stick with what you are seeing now—the hurt, the anger, the worry,” Soma says, rather than getting every detail of the child’s story.

Privacy is a big issue in working with students suffering from trauma, and schools often have a confidentiality protocol that teachers must follow. You don’t have to dig deep into the trauma to be able to effectively respond with empathy and flexibility. Instead, focus on trauma-informed teaching to create a classroom community that builds connections with students and lets them know you’re there to help them succeed.

6. There’s a direct connection between stress and learning

When kids are stressed, it’s tough for them to learn. Create a safe, accepting environment in your classroom by letting children know you understand their situation and support them.

“Kids who have experienced trauma have difficulty learning unless they feel safe and supported,” says Soma. “The more the teacher can do to make the child less anxious and have the child focus on the task at hand, the better the performance you are going to see out of that child. There is a direct connection between lowering stress and academic outcomes.”

7. When kids feel they're good at something and experience success, it builds their resilience

Find opportunities that allow kids to set and achieve goals, and they'll feel a sense of mastery and control, suggests Soma. Help build resilience by assigning classroom jobs students can do well or letting them help peers.

"It is very empowering," says Soma. "Set them up to succeed, and keep that bar in the zone where you know they are able to accomplish it and move forward."

Rather than saying a student is good at math, find experiences to let them *feel* it. Because trauma is such a sensory experience, kids need more than encouragement—they need to feel worth through concrete tasks.

8. Self-regulation can be a major challenge for students suffering from trauma

Some kids with trauma grow up with emotionally unavailable parents. The result is the inability to self-soothe. They may develop distracting behaviors and have trouble staying focused for long periods. To help them cope, you can schedule regular brain breaks and promote social-emotional learning. Tell the class at the beginning of the day when there will be breaks for free time, to play a game, or to stretch.

"If you build it in before the behavior gets out of whack, you set the child up for success," says Soma.

A child may be able to make it through a 20-minute block of work if they know there will be a break to recharge before the next task.

9. It's OK to ask kids point-blank what you can do to help them make it through the day

For all students with trauma, you can ask them directly what you can do to help. They may ask to listen to music with headphones or put their head on their desk for a few minutes. If a child isn't able to name what will help them, try offering options: having a snack, going for a walk, or taking deep breaths, for example.

“We have to step back and ask them, ‘How can I help? Is there something I can do to make you feel even a little bit better?'” Soma says.

10. You can support kids with trauma even when they’re outside your classroom

Loop in the larger school, creating an ecosystem of trauma-informed teaching. Share trauma-informed strategies with all staff—from bus drivers to parent volunteers to crossing guards. Tell them how small interactions, like complimenting a student or offering a smile, can help kids with trauma build resilience.

Remind everyone: “The child is not his or her behavior,” says Soma. “Typically, there is something underneath that’s driving that to happen, so be sensitive. Ask yourself, ‘I wonder what’s going on with that kid?’ rather than saying, ‘What’s wrong with the kid?’ That’s a huge shift in the way we view kids.”

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences

STRESS & EARLY BRAIN GROWTH
Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

What are ACEs?

ACEs are serious childhood traumas -- a list is shown below -- that result in toxic stress that can harm a child's brain. This toxic stress may prevent child from learning, from playing in a healthy way with other children, and can result in long-term health problems.

Adverse Childhood Experiences can include:

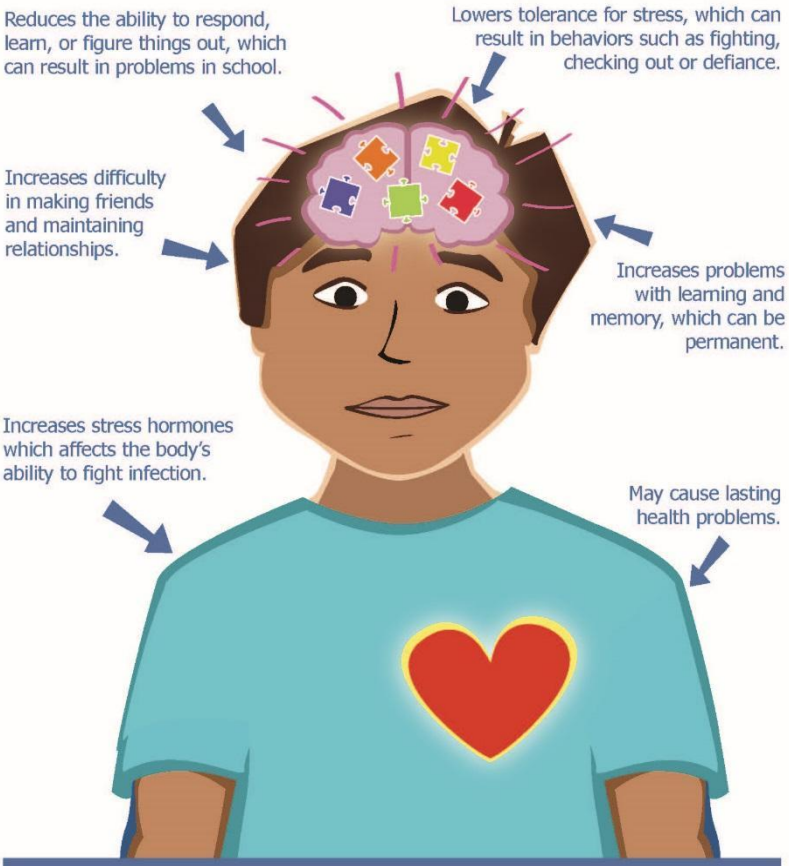
1. Emotional abuse
2. Physical abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Emotional neglect
5. Physical neglect
6. Mother treated violently
7. Household substance abuse
8. Household mental illness
9. Parental separation or divorce
10. Incarcerated household member
11. Bullying (by another child or adult)
12. Witnessing violence outside the home
13. Witness a brother or sister being abused
14. Racism, sexism, or any other form of discrimination
15. Being homeless
16. Natural disasters and war

Exposure to childhood ACEs can increase the risk of:

- Adolescent pregnancy
- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Depression
- Illicit drug use
- Heart disease
- Liver disease
- Multiple sexual partners
- Intimate partner violence
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts
- Unintended pregnancies

How do ACEs affect health?

Through stress. Frequent or prolonged exposure to ACEs can create toxic stress which can damage the developing brain of a child and affect overall health.



A Survival Mode Response to toxic stress increases a child's heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and muscle tension. Their thinking brain is knocked off-line. Self-protection is their priority. In other words:
"I can't hear you! I can't respond to you! I am just trying to be safe!"

Teaching Children of Poverty

Each fall when the school bells ring in the new school year, we watch the children one by one walk into our classrooms. Most have new outfits, new school supplies and a new outlook for the coming year. But in the Rice Lake School District, approximately forty percent of those returning students do not have that sunny outlook, due to circumstances out of their control.

That forty percent may not have had breakfast that morning (unless they had school breakfast), may not have school supplies or even clean clothes. They bring into the classroom thoughts of years past where they felt out of touch with the rest of their classmates, belittled and made to feel they were dumb. With such a negative outlook, we are challenged to break that barrier by strategies to build up their self-worth.

After years of research, Paul C. Gorski, the author of *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty*, has found that the following strategies can begin to reach children from low-income backgrounds to produce deep learning.

- Incorporating art, music and theater throughout the curriculum: *Having access to these disciplines engages all students but especially low-income children. Parents of low-income children do not have the funds to provide for these opportunities outside of the classroom. Because these opportunities are engaging, children are more apt to attend school.*
- Having and communicating high standards: *When we have high expectations for our students, it creates a positive impact on each child's intellectual development. Whole group instruction is effective for initial skills but does not generate deep learning (ex: whole group instruction can teach children to read but is not efficient in teaching reading comprehension). When we expect more from them, students learn more deeply and begin to believe in their own abilities.*
- Adopt higher-order and student-centered activities: *Studies show that if low-income students are exposed to student-centered learning, they have a higher chance of staying in school. In math, it means instruction should be focused on reasoning and analytical skills. With literacy, it means cooperative and collaborative activities by working in pairs and in small groups (guided reading, lit circles).*
- *Making curriculum relevant to the lives of low-income students:* *Students learn better when curriculum is created so that it is related to their ways of life and the lives of those in the community (ex: creating ways to improve a park or playground in their area).*

- Teach about poverty: *Find ways to integrate talk about poverty into existing lesson plans. Find books that depict low-income people showing resilience in their day-to-day lives. Some suggestions are:*
    - *Amber Was Brave, Essie Was Smart by Vera Williams*
    - Somebody's New Pajamas by I. Jackson and D. Doman
    - Voices in the Park by Anthony Browne

- Promote literacy enjoyment: *Succeeding in bestowing a love of reading and writing within low-income children will go a long way into improving proficiency in literacy for these students. Creating literature circles or guided reading groups that students helped choose the books or provide books of great interest to the students is a start. Avoid teaching practices that cause students to be reluctant to participate in reading and writing activities.*
- Building trusting relationships with students: *Low-income students may have distrust for adults in authority due to recent incidents in the media. So it becomes a challenge for us to begin the process of finding ways to improve this misconception. Strategies to begin to do this are many of the ideas listed above. In addition, we need to learn about the whole student: their fears, hopes, and interests. As we build this trusting relationship with our students, we need to keep in mind that we need to build that relationship with parents too.*

We can't eliminate poverty in our community but we can begin to use practices within our curriculum to incorporate where we can "the strategies that work" to begin to make a difference for not only our low-income students but for all the children that enter our classrooms.

Classroom Management

We don't get to decide whether we have challenging students in our classes, but we can certainly decide how we want to respond to them

What is classroom management? Classroom management refers to all of the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials, so that student learning can take place. All well-managed classrooms have a set of procedures and routines that structure the classroom.

The single most important factor governing learning is classroom management. How you manage your classroom is the primary determinant of how well your students learn at any level.

From a mentee survey 2005-6: "I think I started off the year on a rough note. I was too nice and the students then walked all over me making for some very hard days in the classroom. I have since worked at regaining my position as a teacher in the classroom, but I know my teaching was hindered because of it. So I think that my lack of respect at the beginning of the year prevented me from having the type of class control in the classroom that would lead to success for all students."

Characteristics of an effective teacher:

- Loves to teach
- Demonstrates a caring attitude
- Can relate to his or her students
- Willing to think outside of the box
- Excellent communicator
- Proactive rather than reactive
- Strives to better oneself
- Uses a variety of media
- Challenges their students
- Know your content
- Procedures
- Model-Model-Model

Classroom management tips:

- Be calm
- Be aware
- Be fun
- Be confident
- Be forgiving
- Be unflappable
- Be consistent
- Be dependable
- Be charismatic

Tips for the first week of school:

- Build relationships – let students get to know you
- Pause – just wait and observe, let is play out, then respond
- Hide your disappointment – don't let them get under your skin-get to know them first
- Follow through - do as you promised you would right from the beginning
- Don't take it personally - deal with the behavior and move on

Try to handle the situation yourself - students need know you're in charge

Strategies for classroom management:

- Arrange seating for easy movement of teacher
- Post daily schedules and discuss
- Discuss student shared responsibility
- Establish routines
- Move around the room and attend to individual needs
- Provide step-by-step instructions
- Develop transition activities
- Continue to be aware of and plan accordingly of individual academic and emotional needs

Relationships:

- Positive connections with students
- One-on-one
- Reaching all students each week
- Call parents with positive comments
- Sent a positive note home – in the mail, email
- Spend time with a student or small group at lunch or recess
- Eat lunch with your students periodically

Holding Students Accountable:

Teachers don't because.....

- Too stressful
- Fear that they will make the students resentful
- Hasn't worked well in the past
- Ignoring the behavior seems easier
- Do not want the students to think they are mean

A student that misbehaves is about them, not you!

- Breaking classroom rules is a choice the students make
- The responsibility for making such choices lies solely with them
- You are the teacher and have set up your classroom management plan, so you need to follow through

- Holding students accountable is really an act of compassion
- Don't ignore the poor behavior because then you are taking a risk of harming your success as the teacher

Informing students of a consequence:

- How you give a consequence matters
- How you speak to your student matters
- How you react emotionally and with your body language matters

Your students must feel the burden of misbehaving poorly. If they don't, then the consequences will be ineffective.

Tell them why: When a student breaks a rule, tell them clearly and concisely why they broke that specific rule. This leaves no room for misunderstanding.

Keep your thoughts, opinions, and comments to yourself.

- Let your agreed-upon consequence be the only consequence
- Refrain from adding a "talking to."
- Too much talking can cause resentment and sabotage accountability.

Behave matter-of-factly. Your tone and body language enables you to hold students accountable without causing friction.

Influence: An influential relationship with students gives you the leverage you need to change behavior. So anything you do that threatens that relationship should be avoided at all costs.

Move on as soon as you have informed the misbehaving student of the rule that was broken and the consequence. Turn your attention back to what you were doing without skipping a beat.

Critical....TEACH-MODEL-PRACTICE your classroom management plan.