

Meaningful discipline sets the tone for how peaceful the learning environment will be for a school. When students feel safe they are more likely to take chances, participate in activities and flourish academically. When students feel uneasy, the building will be chaotic and in the end, learning time can be compromised. Meaningful discipline can be defined in many different ways, yet have commonalities. Respect, trust and open communication are a few that must be integrated in order for discipline to be successful. Moving past typical discipline procedures of detentions and suspensions will create an environment in which all can succeed. In today's classroom with such high stakes on the line in terms of APPR, we cannot afford to have students out of the classroom consistently. We need to teach them about their mistakes in order for them to learn, enabling them to become successful adults that can achieve their personal dreams. In the end, students will be grateful for being held accountable and being encouraged instead of scolded and unheard.

Students are likely to model their behaviors based on any number of role models they have in and out of school. Whether it be the athlete who is at the top of their game or a popular music artist, role models come from all different backgrounds. We see regularly in our schools a student mimicking a behavior they saw on television over the weekend. It can often be looked past that we, as educational professionals, can serve as that role model as well. Think back to your school days and how many teachers influenced you to be in the position that you are in today. With respectful relationships come less conflicts and less incidents that come to our attention. Discipline referrals are reduced and we can focus on the more severe cases. In these instances, something such as detention means something when it becomes less of a one-size-fits-all model. Modeling this appropriate behavior can be tough. With instances where co-workers have tension between one another, for example, students can pick up on these types of issues. We have all had a bad day at work, or something is on our mind that might bother us, but how we handle difficult situations like these can set the tone for how students deal with difficulties of their own. Students will not follow through when they see adults doing the exact opposite of what they are told. If an adult gets loud and argumentative in a tough situation, then a student will do just the same, even if we told them not to because it is not respectful.

Trust shows students that they can confide their feelings in us. Students generally have at least one teacher, counselor or administrator they can share their thoughts and feelings with in the school environment. They feel safe in our care because we listen and treat them well. We all know that school is a great escape for our students and their problems at home. Whether it be an argument with their parents or fear of safety in the neighborhood, students enjoy school because of the consistency and routines. Meaningful discipline is important in this aspect so students understand what to expect. Sometimes those problems at home turn into unwanted behaviors in school. Students can feel relieved that when they make a mistake in the classroom, we will be there to hear them out, help them but ultimately hold them accountable. Our students need that outlet and they need to know they can trust us if they are to truly reach their potential. They need to know it is alright to make mistakes but they must show growth in how they handle making those mistakes.

Open communication is more for the school faculty. When teachers and administrators are on the same page, students notice. Students need consistent boundaries and most importantly, need to be held accountable for their actions. It is important to have a solid plan in place, such as, updated policies that fits today's classroom. Faculty, students and parents need to be informed of these policies. They should also have the ability to offer their thoughts as to set policies. Stakeholders are more likely to follow through when they are involved in the

process. Issues can arise when we attempt to discipline a student and neither they nor parents understand. Another concern that can arise in this area is dealing with difficult student behaviors. There can be days where students go about their business, meet expectations and have a successful day. Other days, that same student could be giving teachers a hard time and become a disruption. Open communication ensures that teachers can prepare for these types of days. Administrators can make sure they are there to back teachers up during daily rounds of the building. Overall, when school faculty are on the same page and know what is going on in the building, we can be successful in our mission of educating students.

There is no one size fits all for discipline, but when students know what to expect they will be the students we know they are capable of being. All of these traits wrapped into being firm, fair and consistent will make the building operate at an efficient level. We need to move past the typical discipline procedures and truly meet the needs of our students. All behaviors have meaning. Our responsibility will be to dig to the root of that meaning and truly assist our students. When we build positive relationships with our students, then we can start to understand their actions. We can solve an issue before it becomes an issue and most importantly, avoid having to dole out meaningful discipline. When we are at the front door in the morning while students are coming into school, we can notice whether or not they will have a good day. Meaningful discipline should come after meaningful relationships. When we have meaningful relationships, we have all of the above mentioned traits. Respect, trust and open communication come with the territory. For new administrators, the task is large and students will be looking to test boundaries. For administrators who have been in the position for awhile, the task might be to reach further and expand those relationships. Overall, meaningful discipline is not something that can be followed from a manual. Different situations call for different measures of discipline. In the end, we want our students to learn from their mistakes and ultimately define their success in their own words.

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