

The Special Extra!

Special Education Newsletter

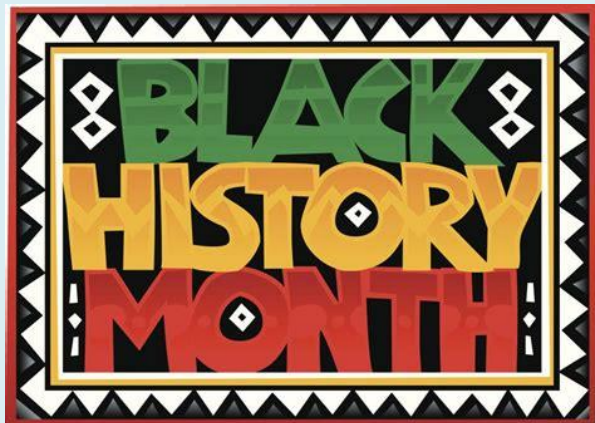
February 2023

From the Desk of Shirden Prince

Director of Special Education

“Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.” ~John Wooden~

If you haven't guessed it already, I'm pretty big on quotes, for several reasons. I have collected quotes that inspire me to be a better person, quotes that remind me about the important things in life and quotes that just make me laugh. Quite a few of my quotes come from John Wooden (if you do not know who he is you should take a moment to look him up). The quote above is one that I believe we should all take to heart, for ourselves and especially for our students. They have been and always will be underestimated for what they can do so it is our responsibility to consistently remind them of all the things they are capable of accomplishing. If we expect great things from them then they will work to make it happen.



THIS AND THAT

Gentle reminders:

- All IEP's need to be completed **3-5 days** prior to the meeting date for review by a site administrator.
- **All IEP's should be finalized and turned in to Ana within 5 days of when the meeting was held.**
- **RSP Teachers** – please monitor student schedules for any changes that might affect service delivery.
- Please make sure you are inviting all necessary personnel to your IEP meetings (nurse, psych, etc.) and giving them as much notice as possible so that they are able to attend.

Kudos!

Each month this section of the newsletter will be used to give kudos to one (or more) of our awesome staff members.

This month's Kudos go out to Mrs. Buchanan for sending out the "At a Glance" paperwork to her teachers right away once the 2nd semester started. Her attention to this is appreciated and it even prompted me to send out a reminder to everyone else.

Kudos!

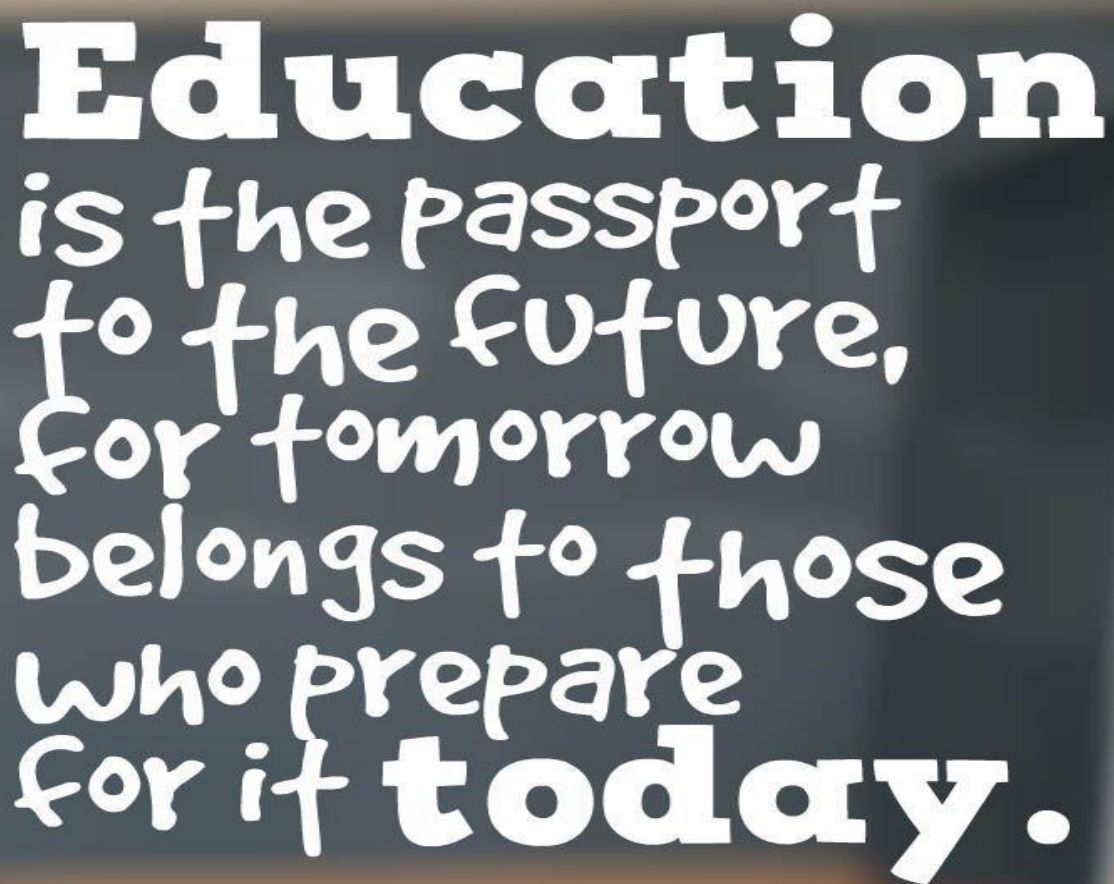


OUTSTANDING

WHO IS THE MOST AWESOME PERSON TODAY?



Quote of the Month

The quote is displayed on a dark, chalkboard-like background with a white border. The text is written in a mix of bold, sans-serif and casual, handwritten-style fonts. The word 'Education' is at the top in large, bold, white letters. Below it, the rest of the quote is in a white, handwritten-style font. The word 'today' is at the end in large, bold, white letters.

Education
is the passport
to the future,
for tomorrow
belongs to those
who prepare
for it **today.**

Malcolm X

Classroom *Hacks*

Avoiding Power Struggles with Students

A power struggle is a fight for control. Students who are defiant can be some of the most challenging to teach. They often interrupt instruction, usually do not do well academically and they typically show little motivation to learn. While there is no magic pill for managing defiant students, there are research-based strategies like the ones listed below that can help when working with a non-compliant student.

Strategies for the Classroom

Cool Down Break

Allow the student to take a “cool-down” break. Select a corner of the room (or an area outside of the classroom that has adult supervision) where a student can take a short break whenever they feel angry or upset. Be sure to make cool-down break available to all students in the classroom, to avoid singling out only those students with anger-control issues.

Questions

If you are dealing with a confrontational student and do not know what may have triggered the defiant response, you can ask neutral, open-ended questions to gather more information before responding. You might use “who”, “what”, “when”, “where” and “how” questions to better understand the problem and identify possible solutions. Avoid asking “why” questions (ex: “Why did you get in that fight with Joe?”) because these questions can imply that you are blaming the student.

Here are some sample questions:

- What do you think made you angry when you were talking with Andrew?
- Where were you when you realized that you had misplaced your backpack?

Disengagement

It is important to avoid being dragged into arguments or unnecessary discussions with defiant or confrontational students. When you must interact with a student to confront, command or discipline, be careful not to get involved in a discussion or argument with them. If you find yourself being drawn into an exchange with a student such as arguing, raising your voice or reprimanding the student, the following strategies can be useful in disengaging yourself:

- Move away from the student
- Repeat your request in a business-like tone of voice
- Impose a pre-determined consequence for non-compliance

Non-verbal

Non-verbal actions can be used to defuse potential confrontations. When interacting with defiant or confrontational students, you can reduce tensions by using non-verbal cues such as non-threatening body language, a soft tone of voice or strategic pauses during speech.

If a student is visibly agitated, try sitting down next to the student and speaking to them at eye level rather than standing over them. This is a less threatening posture.

Insert a very brief “wait time” before each response to the student. Micro pauses tend to signal calmness and can slow a conversation down which helps to prevent it from escalating into an argument.

Active Listening

You can demonstrate a sincere desire to understand a student’s concerns if you actively listen to and then summarize those concerns. Many student lack effective negotiation skills in dealing with adults. As a result, these students may become angry and defensive when they try to express their complaints, even if the complaint is unfounded.

Show that you understand the student’s concern by summing up the main points of that concern in your own words. Examples of paraphrasing comments include:

- Let me be sure I understand you correctly...
- Are you telling me that...?
- It sounds to me like these are your concerns...

Tone of Voice

Keep your responses calm, brief and business-like. Sarcasm or lengthy negative reprimands can cause defiant student behavior. Keeping responses to a non-compliant student brief will be more effective.

Short teacher responses give the student less control over the interaction and can also prevent teachers from inadvertently rewarding misbehaving students with negative adult attention.

Face Saving Opportunity

When confronted, offer the student a face-saving way out. Students sometimes inadvertently stumble into potential confrontations with their teachers. When this happens, we can help avoid a major conflict in a manner that also allows them to save face.

Trying using this de-escalation tactic:

Ask the student, “Is there anything that we can work out together so that you can stay in the classroom and be successful?”

This statement treats the student with dignity, models negotiation as a positive means of resolving conflict and demonstrates that the teacher wants to keep the student in the classroom. It also provides the student with a final opportunity to resolve the issue with the teacher and avoid more serious disciplinary consequences.

You should be prepared for the possibility that the student will initially give a sarcastic or unrealistic response. Attempts like this are designed to draw you into a power struggle and should be avoided by simply asking the student again if there is any reasonable way to engage the student’s cooperation.

When asked a second time, students will often come up with plausible ideas for resolving the issue. If the student continues to be non-complaint, however, the appropriate consequences for the behavior should be imposed.

CHECK THIS OUT!

A space to share websites that provide helpful information and ideas for your classrooms, students and families.

[edX](#)

edX is a website designed to engage high school students in an interactive, modular way. Covering subjects ranging from English language and composition to calculus, biology, statistics and computer science. Their courses give students access to quality courses and materials regardless of financial resources.

[How Stuff Works](#)

This website provides students materials ranging from science, art, animals, home, technology and more. It is a great website for those with an inquisitive mind and as the name implies, it shows you how stuff works.

[Duolingo](#)

Duolingo is a free website that students can use to learn languages such as Spanish, French, Italian and more. Duolingo uses games to make lessons fun and are personalized to the student's learning style to help them learn quickly.

[Wolfram Alpha](#)

Wolfram Alpha is an answer engine that allows you to search a question to find a step-by-step solution. This is especially helpful for students when they need extra assistance with those difficult math and science questions.

[Quill](#)

Quill is a nonprofit organization that has adapted research-based writing instruction into a free, open source digital platform. All of their content is free to use for students and teachers. The activities on the website help students develop their sentence construction and grammar skills and are designed as supplemental writing exercises that students complete over 10 to 15 minute sessions. Quill offers prompts and exercises and delivers instant feedback to help students write and revise their work.



Upcoming Events

February

1st – Late Start
13th – Lincoln's Birthday (No School)
15th – Late Start
20th – President's Day (No School)
21st – Board Meeting @ RFK
25th – Claudia Garcia 🍰
27th – ProAct Training @ CCHS
28th – ProAct Training @ CCHS

March

1st – Late Start
5th – Jackie Luna 🍰
7th – Luciano Flores 🍰
13th – ProAct Training @ RFK
14th – ProAct Training @ RFK
14th – Board Meeting @ RFK
15th – Late Start
16th – Joshua Mendoza 🍰
19th – Cristi Tallman 🍰
20th – Dulce Toralba 🍰
27th – Maria De Anda 🍰
28th – Elizabeth Magnia 🍰
29th – Clarissa Torres 🍰
29th – Late Start

