

Thoughts on the Creation of a Social and Emotional Learning School District Culture...

“Nothing would get done at all if a person waited until he/she could do it so well that no one could find fault with it ...” *Anonymous*

“The mere formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution ...”

Albert Einstein

“Criticism is something we can avoid easily by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing” ... *Aristotle*

In the last 500 years, we have moved from a world where everything stayed the same, nothing changed; to a world where everything changes, nothing stays the same.... *Anonymous*

Social and Emotional Learning Committed School Districts...

- What does your school district stand for...
- What does your administrative team stand for...
- What does it mean to be an employee in your school district (is it just a job or is it more?)...
- How clear is the district's mission and vision to you as leaders...
- What would you like to be able to guarantee about your school district...
 - What are your "for sures" ...
 - What are your shared values...

Social and Emotional Learning School District Characteristics...

- SEL committed school districts have leaders who lead...
- SEL committed school districts have an intentionally established culture...
- SEL committed school districts have preset standards...
- SEL committed school districts have established some sort of collective agreement of who they are...
- SEL committed school districts have Core Beliefs...

Social and Emotional Learning School District Core Beliefs...

- SEL Core Beliefs have strength when they are modeled by you and the district administrative team.
- SEL Core Beliefs have strength when you have personnel who are talented as well as honorable...
- SEL Core Beliefs have strength when there are consequences when Core Beliefs have been violated.
 - Are you prepared to do this?
 - Are you empowered to do this?
- *If not, it is better to not start the process of developing SEL Core Beliefs...*

Social and Emotional Learning School District - Final Thoughts...

- In a SEL environment, an educational leader does not seek consensus...
- In a SEL environment, a leader builds consensus by taking the time and the initiative to build, articulate, and live the school district's Core Beliefs...
- The success of SEL committed school districts is determined by commitment of the school district leaders to Core Beliefs...

**What Are The Core Beliefs
That Are Fundamental to the
Hellgate Elementary
Framework for Creation of a
Social and Emotional
Learning Culture...**



First...

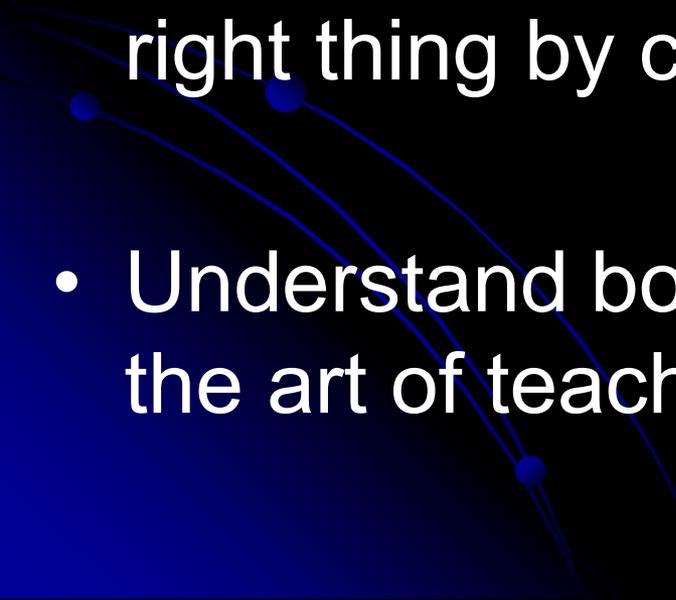
**Insist on Uniformity of
Acceptance for Shared
Mission and Vision...**



What Does That Mean for Our School District and Our Students...?

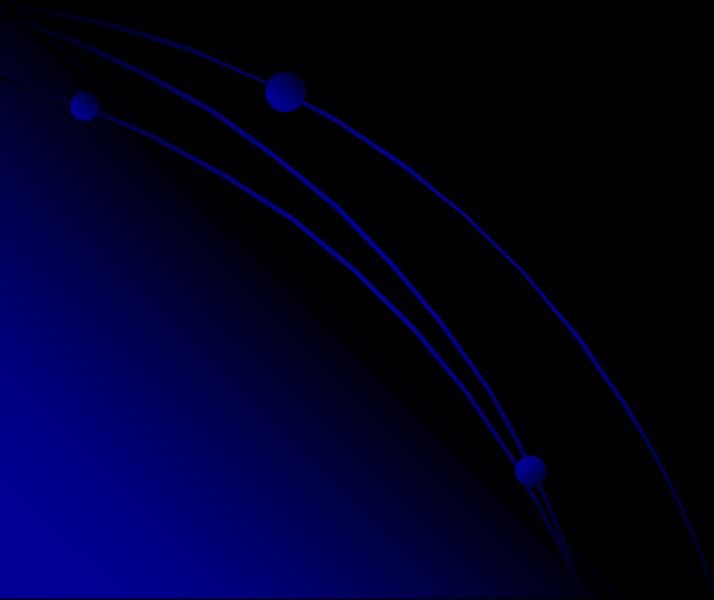


Teachers and Administrators (in partnership) must...

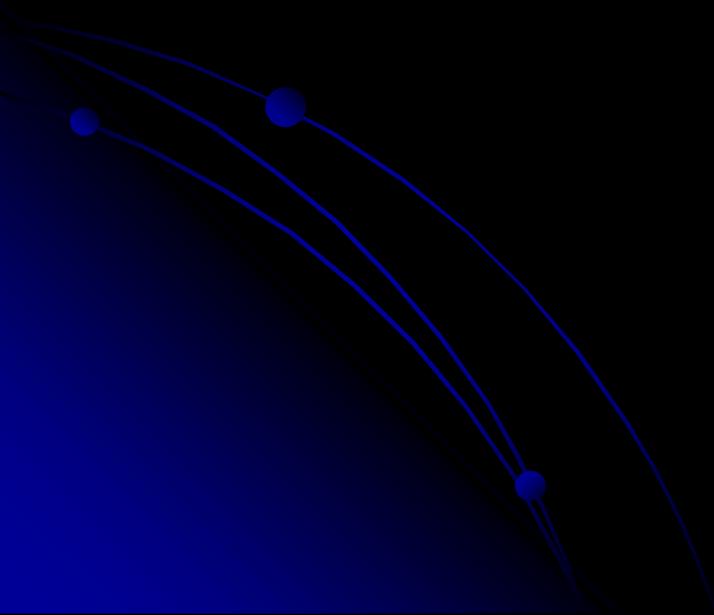
- Believe that equality of educational opportunity is a fundamental right for all children...
 - Demonstrate moral and political will to do the right thing by children, all children...
 - Understand both the science of teaching and the art of teaching...
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Second...

**We Hold High Expectations
for Teachers/Administrators...**



Expectations for Administrators...



Third...

**Expand Human Understanding,
Awareness, and Capacity ...**

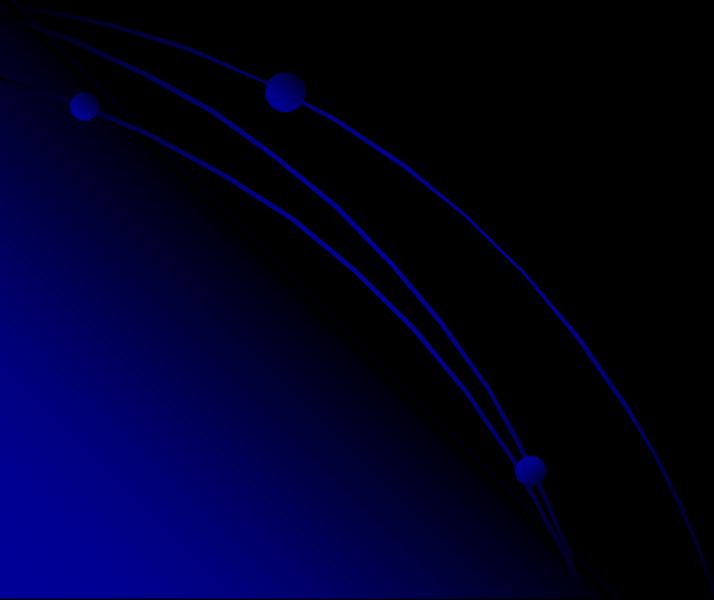
Five Key Components...



First...

Value Mentoring...

Why?



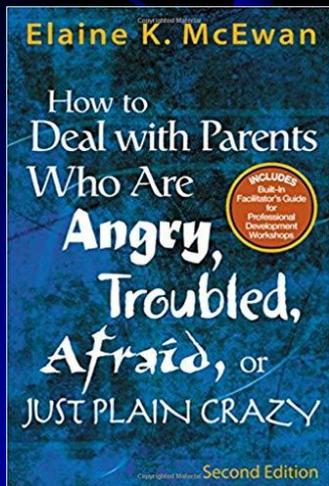
Key Point to Remember...

**Most schools and businesses
operate from middle-class
norms and values...**



Second...

Work to Understand the Parents of our Students...



Not Always Easy To Do...

McEwan. Elaine. How to Deal With Parents Who are Angry, Trouble, Afraid, or Just Plain Crazy. (2005)

Parents Have Personal Problems...

A significant number of parents arrive in your classroom with personal problems that are distressing and often disruptive.

Estranged, Separated, and Divorced Parents - Consider yourself most fortunate as an administrator and/or teacher if the parents in your school community who are having marital difficulties don't bring their disagreements to school.

School Groupies - These parents are on a power trip. Their life is centered in your school, and they won't go home. They want control, information, involvement, and more control. They act like spoiled children, demanding their own way at all costs. In the beginning, school groupies seem supportive and concerned, but just don't cross them or tell them "no." They will harass you, trash you, manipulate you, and are perfectly capable of carrying out a personal vendetta against you that could ruin your career.

Abusive Parents - These parents are abusing their children either psychologically or physically.

Parents Have Personal Problems...

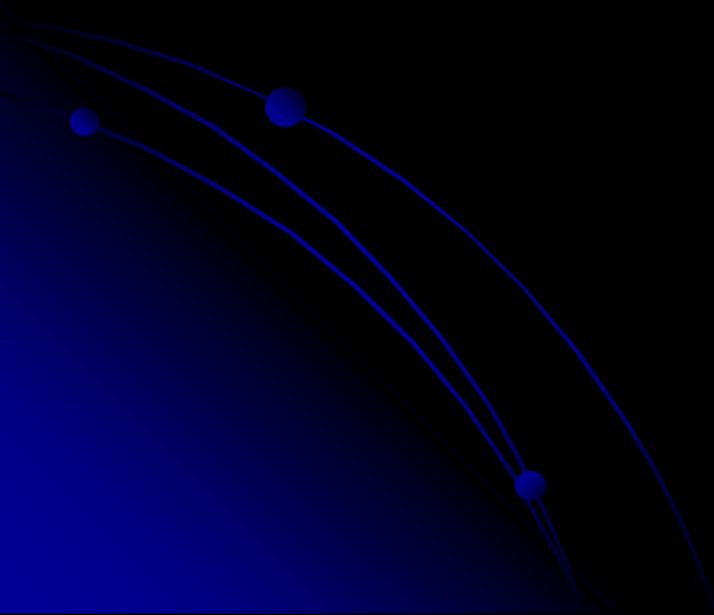
A significant number of parents arrive in your classroom with personal problems that are distressing and often disruptive.

Addicted, Dysfunctional, and Mentally Ill Parents -These parents consume mountains of time and energy as you attempt to help them and their children. They make promises they don't (or can't) keep, embarrass and humiliate their children, frustrate and clog up the system, lie, and frequently scare you to death with threats, harassment, and verbal abuse. Some are alcoholics, drug addicts, sexual predators, and criminals. Many have serious mental illnesses. This category of parent is quite rare, but just one can drain your time, energy, and resources.

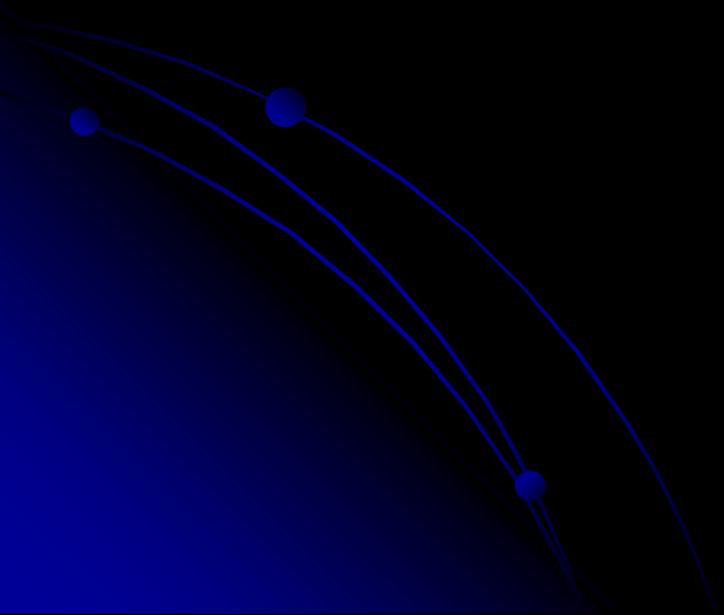
Complainers, Troublemakers, and Whiners -These are parents with multiple axes to grind. They prefer to attack people and not problems. They don't want anyone to do anything that might make things better for them or their children - it's just easier to complain. They don't like anyone, especially themselves. Their children can never please them, either. And you, the educator, will come in for more than your fair share of abuse from these thoroughly disagreeable and unlikable people to whom you are expected to be gracious, warm, and accepting.

Third...

**Be Individuals of High
Character When Working
With Parents...**



**In Dealing With Parents, Our
Administrators & Teachers Must...**



✓ ***Be trustworthy.***

You can't make parents trust you. They either do or they don't, based on your behavior, your reputation, or experiences they've had with someone in the same position as yours. Some parents may reserve judgment until they've seen you in action themselves, others will take the word of a friend or neighbor (the grapevine is alive and well), and still others will make up their minds about you immediately, based on nothing more than a "gut feeling". ***Building trust among parents is one of the most important tasks you will undertake as a teacher/administrator.*** Trust is the glue that holds relationships together through tough times. When parents trust you, they give you the benefit of the doubt.

✓ ***Be honest.***

Integrity, the second important trait of character that gives you money in the problem-solving bank, consists of far more than just telling the truth. ***Integrity speaks of a unity and consistency of personal behavior that withstands scrutiny and invites the confidence of parents.*** When you are an educator of integrity, you are predictable because you make decisions based on a coherent set of values. You know what you stand for and can articulate your beliefs with eloquence.

✓ ***Be authentic.***

Authenticity means giving the same kind of attention and respect to everyone regardless of who they are, where they live, what they look like, or how they act.

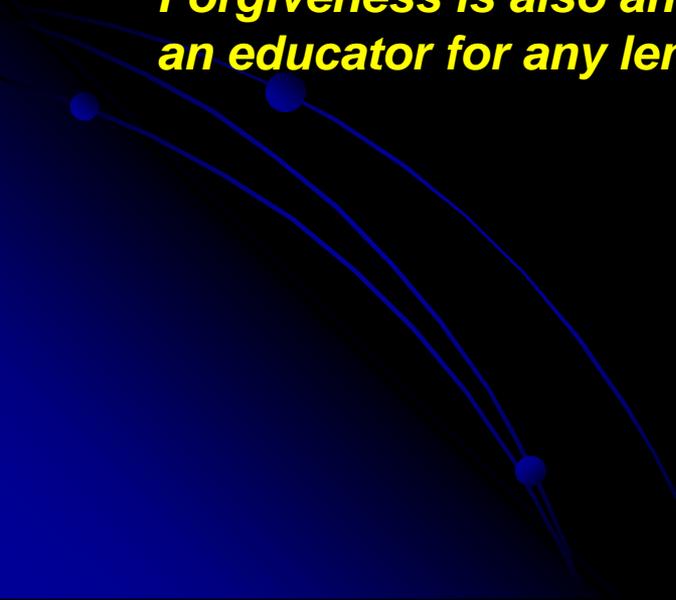
✓ ***Be respectful.***

One doesn't usually think immediately of respect (i.e., consideration, courtesy, and attention) as a correlate of successful schools like effective instruction, standards for learning, and instructional leadership, but in their review of research on effective principals, Persell and Cookson (1982) found ***"a recurrent characteristic of successful schools concerns the amount of respect shown to all participants"*** (p. 23).

✓ ***Be forgiving.***

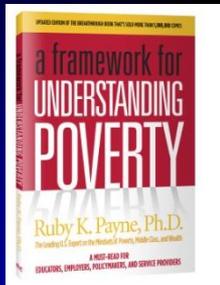
You may think of forgiveness as a religious concept, and indeed, "Forgiving one who has harmed you liberates you from the emotional prison you have created for yourself ... [and] is a deeply spiritual act" (Rosen, 1998, p. 255).

Forgiveness is also an essential way of being if you intend to remain as an educator for any length of time.



Fourth...

Help Students Understand Unspoken/Hidden Rules of School...



Key Point to Remember...

**We must teach students that
there are two sets of rules...**

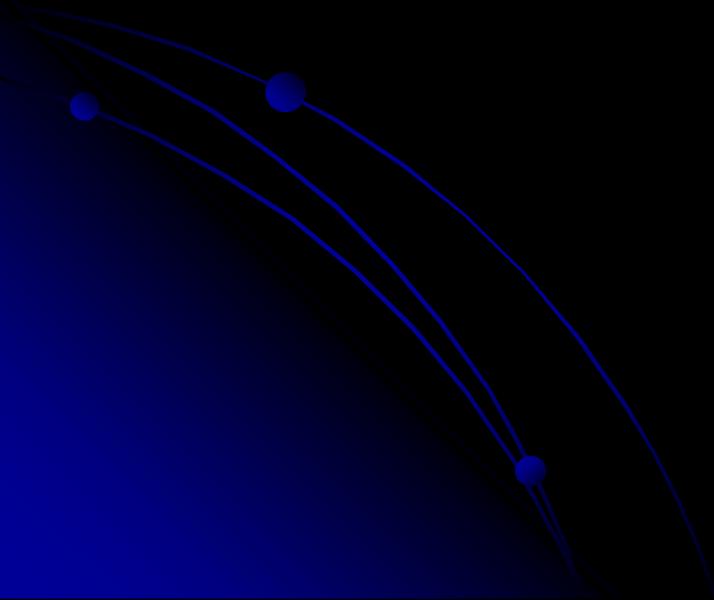
**Example: Basketball does not have the
same rules as football.**



Fifth...

**Emphasize Building
Relationships with Students...**

Why?





"No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship based on mutual respect."

Creating Relationships – How?

DEPOSITS (positive)

WITHDRAWALS (negative)

Seeking first to understand

Seeking first to be understood

Keeping promises

Breaking promises

Kindnesses, courtesies

Unkindness, discourtesy

Clarifying expectations

Violating expectations

Loyalty to the absent

Disloyalty, duplicity

Apologies

Pride, conceit, arrogance

Open to feedback

Rejecting feedback

Adapted from *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. (1989). Stephen Covey

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How Translated into the Classroom...

- The teacher calls the student by name.
- The teacher notices the student and says "Hi."
- The teacher talks to the student respectfully.
- The teacher answers the student's questions.
- The teacher helps the student when help is needed.
- The teacher uses positive nonverbal signals (**gestures and intent**) that are a key part of showing respect (**not judgment but support**).

How to Create an Environment of Mutual Respect in the Classroom...

1. Know something about each student.
2. Engage in behaviors that indicate affection for each student.
3. Bring student interests into content and personalize learning activities.
4. Engage in physical behaviors that communicate interest in students.
5. Use humor when appropriate.

Robert Marzano, *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*. 2007

**“The Easy Part is
Knowing *What to Do*...
The Hard Part is
Actually Doing It...”**

Adapted from the movie, *“The Horse Whisperer”*, 1998