



# Springfield Middle School Robertson County Innovation Academy



715 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue West ♦ Springfield, TN 37172 ♦ Phone (615) 384-4821  
Dr. Grant Bell, Principal ♦ Ms. Amanda Mounts, Asst. Principal ♦ Mr. Patrick Carneal, Asst. Principal

## “We are EPIC!”

### *The Jacket's Buzz*

October 1, 2018

*“Providing a well-lit path in the pursuit of purpose and happiness.”*

*“Every single day, we will strive to ensure that everyone is safe and respected; and that ALL scholars are responsible for working to master ALL standards.”*



## *“Let Us Lead By Serving Others”*

BETA Club Motto

<b>Monday:</b>	Fall Benchmark Assessments
<b>Tuesday:</b>	iA 6 <sup>th</sup> grade Trip to the Robertson County History Museum 8:30 Fall Benchmark Assessments
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Robertson County Football Championship vs Greenbrier 6:30 Title I Family Art Night 5:00 Fall Benchmark Assessments
<b>Thursday:</b>	Fall Benchmark Assessments
<b>Friday:</b>	Fall Benchmark Assessments Fall Break Begins!

### Bus Duty:

<u>Monday</u> Language Arts	<u>Tuesday</u> Related Arts	<u>Wednesday</u> Math	<u>Thursday</u> Social Studies	<u>Friday</u> Science
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# Lady Jacket Volleyball



The Lady Jackets finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the Robertson County volleyball tournament hosted by SMS at SHS. We are all very proud of the improvements we saw throughout the season. The ladies just got “better and better” each week, winning 3 of their last 5 matches! Way to go ladies!!





**Leadership Summit 2018**  
Rapid Response Team. National Qualifiers

Keelee Walker, Katy Fisher, Mason Dorris, Garrett Reeves, Taylor Milteer

**Outstanding Leadership School Award**  
Officers: Presley Richards, Keelee Walker, Emily Blackburn, Katy Fisher, Taylor Milteer, Garrett Reeves, Mason Dorris



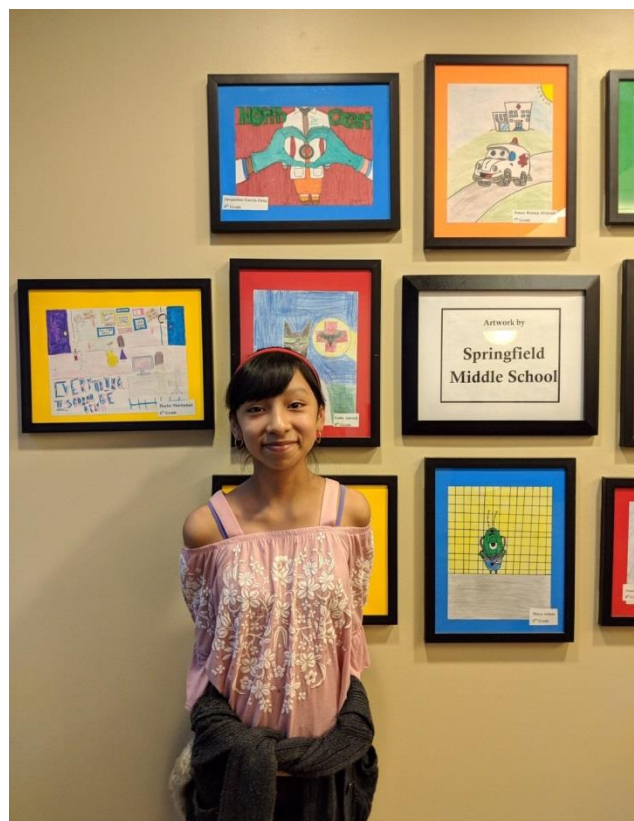
# SMS Art at NorthCrest Medical Center



Max Baldwin



Amarria Love



Jacqueline Ortiz



Maya Atkin

# What is STEAM?

STEAM stands for:



Science



Technology



Engineering



Arts



Math

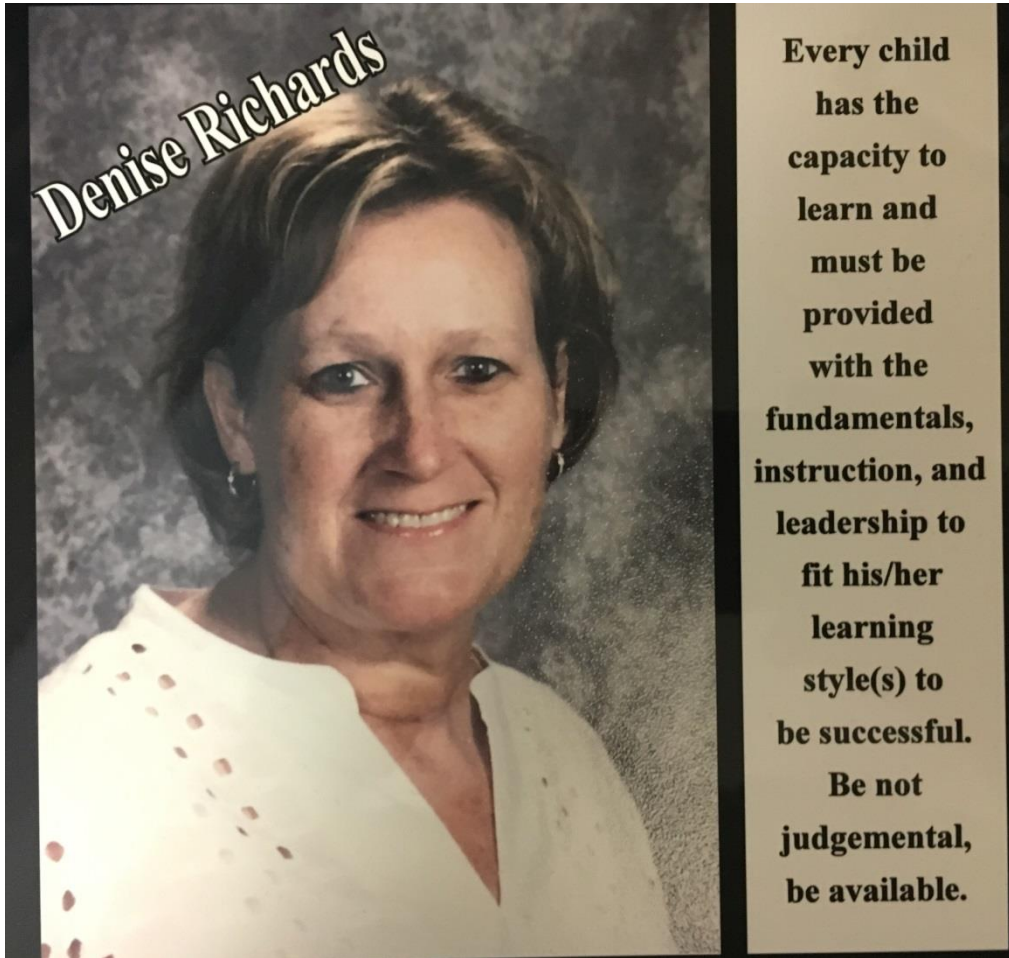


Energy Conversion Labs



Chemical Changes Lab

# Staff Member of the Week



**Every child has the capacity to learn and must be provided with the fundamentals, instruction, and leadership to fit his/her learning style(s) to be successful. Be not judgemental, be available.**

Name: Denise Richards

Grade: 8

Subject: REACH (ELA/SS)

Hometown: Cedar Hill (formerly Madison)

*Family: Scott (husband) married 22 years. Together, we have the honor of being parents to six children, and seven grandchildren. Our youngest son is living in Rochester, NY, and the others are married and local! Our oldest granddaughter is an 8th grade iA scholar, a member of the SMS Jr. Beta Club, and on the SMS Volleyball Team, and our youngest granddaughter is less than a month old. GO JACKETS!!*

*Education: Austin Peay State University Alumni, BS degree with a double major in English and History, minor in Secondary Educ. Licensed Cosmetologist, 27 years.*

**How did your career lead you to Springfield Middle School?**

*Formerly a cosmetologist of 23 years, I decided I wanted something more in my life and chose to pursue a second career in teaching. After graduating from APSU in 2010, SMS was my first teaching position with Dr. Morris, Mrs. Webb, and Dr. Bell. I taught here from 2010-13, 8<sup>th</sup> RLA, and then decided to pursue the high school experience closer to home. While I enjoyed the*

*students, the high school environment, and two mile commute, I am grateful for the experience, but happy to be back home at SMS.*

*What do you love about our school and children? I have always loved the family environment at SMS, and how our teachers and staff share the same focus when it comes to our scholars. Our children come from many different backgrounds and each has interesting stories to share. Our teachers are nurturing, caring, and genuinely love the children unconditionally, which makes our scholars feel safe and at home. I love that we have been able to expand within our walls and offer scholars throughout the county the opportunity to attend a STEAM magnet school, including putting technology in their hands. It's a welcome challenge as well as a great blessing for all involved.*

*What is the most challenging aspect of your responsibilities? As an educator, it is always challenging to make sure that every child is given the proper tools and foundation to be successful in his/her educational journey. Understanding and meeting the various needs of my scholars will always be the most challenging aspect for me. As for the human side...knowing that every child can leave here and possibly not be provided for, or cared for, is one of the most challenging dilemmas that I (as do many others) struggle with daily. This is why I strive to give the children a safe and nurturing environment when they are under my care.*

*Personal Philosophy of Education: Every child has the capacity to learn in some form. Therefore, every child must be provided with the fundamentals, instruction, and leadership to fit his/her learning style(s) to be successful. Be not judgmental; be available.*

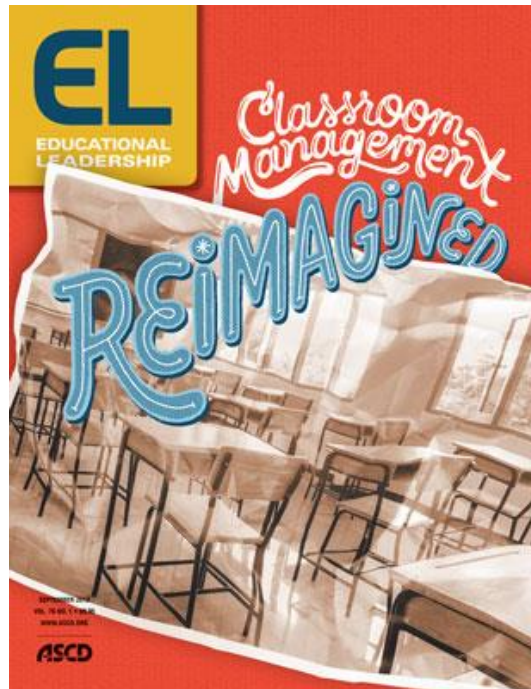
*What is EPIC about SMS? According to my scholars: Our scholars, the relationships and friendships that are created, our morning assembly, the opportunities with clubs (Robotics, Drama, Jr. Beta, iA Senate, Scholar Council, Jazz Band), technology, athletic programs, the teachers, administration, and Dr. Bell.*



# Lagniappe



EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP



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**Classroom Management Reimagined** Pages 26-33

## Getting Consistent with Consequences

Mike Anderson

Applying consequences for student behavior is hard to get right. Here's how to do it better.

Few topics cause as much angst in schools as consequences for problematic behavior. Colleagues can view the same challenging behavior and have wildly different ideas about an appropriate consequence. Educators can struggle with the proper use and role of consequences in schools even more than with academic issues. Why is getting consequences right so hard?

I'll explore here several ideas about consequences. One thread runs through them all: Using consequences effectively requires taking a nuanced view of disciplinary situations—and that's hard. Most of us would prefer consequences to be cut-and-dried. If a student does *X*, then *Y* should happen. This perhaps explains the appeal of one-size-fits-all approaches like "three strikes and you're out" or zero-tolerance policies. These systems are comforting because they seem to offer quick, easy solutions. We can feel like we've done something and get back to teaching.

When we step back, however, we realize that the reality of teaching students appropriate behaviors is much more complex. Punishing a student for a misbehavior offers us the illusion that we've held that student accountable, but have we really? Or have we only created a façade of accountability without actually helping that student learn and grow?

## Common Stumbling Blocks

Let's consider six reasons educators struggle with consequences, and how we might avoid each obstacle and employ consequences more effectively.

### 1. "Consequences" Means Different Things to Different People

One reason adults in schools often struggle with reaching common ground on consequences is that when we use the term *consequences*, we're not all talking about the same thing. There are several different types of consequences for problematic behavior, so we should be clear about which type we're discussing or using.

*Natural consequences* don't require any adult action or intervention; they simply happen. If Maria doesn't wear a coat to recess on a chilly day, she'll be cold. If Markus cheats while playing a game with other students, they might not want to play with him anymore. Natural consequences can be great learning opportunities for students, as long as they're not overly damaging. We wouldn't, for example, let a kindergartener jump off the top of the play structure. A broken leg is too harsh a teacher. Similarly, we wouldn't allow a sophomore to simply not do any work all semester without support or intervention.

*Logical consequences* differ from natural ones in that they require adults to implement them. If Brad is getting overly silly while working with a friend, his teacher might tell him to find another spot to work. According to Jane Nelsen<sup>1</sup>, effective logical consequences fit four criteria: they must be *related* to the behavior, *respectful* of the student, *reasonable* for the student to carry out, and (whenever possible) *revealed in advance* so the student knows the potential consequences of their actions ahead of time. These kinds of consequences can be powerful in maintaining calm, safe, and respectful learning environments.

*Punishments* are the antithesis of logical consequences. They're often harsh and frequently involve shaming students. Kelly is building towers with her base-10 blocks instead of using them to solve math challenges. Her teacher calls in an exasperated tone, "Kelly! Clip down!" Kelly walks to the front of the room with her head drooping and moves her clip from yellow to red. Jamal is fooling around in the cafeteria and spills milk all over the floor. The staff member on duty declares, "Oh, Jamal! You're going to stay after lunch today to mop the whole cafeteria floor!" Punishments do more harm than good. They can breed resentment and diminish students' sense of self, often leading to even more disruptive behavior in the future. They can even model bullying, in which people with more power (teachers) impose their will on others (students) through force.

### Doing It Better

By planning ahead, educators can gain more consistency and ensure they rely on natural and logical consequences rather than punishments, even in the heat of the moment. Why not have a group of teachers generate a list of common behavior mistakes kids make in your school? For each mistake, teachers can consider

whether any natural consequence is likely to work, brainstorm logical consequences to try, and consider common punishments to avoid.

## 2. We Try to Get Consistent with Consequences Before We're Consistent in Beliefs

Many factors go into our personal beliefs about effective discipline. The way we were raised, both at home and in school, is a huge one that often lurks below the surface. Our teacher-preparation programs and internships play a large role in how we view discipline in schools, and even the way we approach problem behaviors as parents can impact how we interact with students. With so many factors influencing how we view discipline and so many various (often conflicting) methods floating around, it's easy to see why approaches can differ greatly from one classroom to the next.

There's an underlying instinct in schools to view discipline the way U.S. society views parenting—you do your thing, I'll do mine, and we stay out of each other's business. A colleague commented that she sees schools having more success adopting (and implementing with fidelity) common academic curricula than behavioral ones. Educators seem to be more comfortable being responsible to each other around, say, literacy strategies than around discipline strategies.

This presents a huge problem when we work toward a more consistent implementation of consequences in a school. In several schools in which I've worked, there's a difference in philosophy between classroom teachers and administrators and counselors, which is evident when students are removed from classrooms for disruptive behavior. Teachers sometimes believe that students should be penalized—shamed and punished—when they're sent out. Counselors and administrators often believe students need to be calmed down—reregulated—so they can get back to class and reengage in learning. Teachers see kids come back to class looking calm (and even in a good mood!) and feel like they haven't been supported. ("I send them out of the room, and nothing happens!") Administrators see teachers looking upset when they bring a student back, and feel unappreciated. ("I helped get an out-of-control kid back in control, and the teacher isn't satisfied!")

While these two groups have a different set of beliefs about the goals and purposes of consequences, it's going to be almost impossible to come to any kind of consistent implementation of practices. Additionally, resentment is likely to build between staff members.

### Doing It Better

As a faculty, work at coming to a consensus around a few shared positive beliefs about children and discipline. (Examples: *All kids want to do well. All students want to be a positive member of a community. All students need caring adults in their lives.*) Begin by having everyone brainstorm their own list. Next, join people together in pairs and have them create a list of positive beliefs they share. Then, have partners join together into groups of four, and again, have groups create one list of shared beliefs—ones that are positive and that all agree on. Continue this process until you have come together as one group. Use this list whenever discussing discipline challenges in the school. Ask, "Are we acting in ways that are consistent with our positive beliefs?"

## 3. We Want Consequences to "Work," but Haven't Defined What That Means

Teachers often think, "I'm looking for a consequence that *works*." But what exactly do we mean by "works"? This gets to one of the most complex issues surrounding consequences. Knowing how to choose the right reaction to misbehavior requires us to understand what consequences can and can't do. Let's look at this issue more closely.

*Consequences can stop misbehavior in the moment.* If we have a class rule that says that we will be safe, and two students are shoving in line, we split those students up. This creates a tone of safety and order.

*Consequences can get students back on track.* If Jesse is playing Fortnite on his phone instead of working on his research project, and you say "Jesse, put your phone on my desk. You can get it back at the end of the period," you've just acted as Jesse's prefrontal cortex, enabling him to get back to work.

*Consequences can be part of how students learn.* Stacy is playing with her snack. Her pretzels drop on the floor and she spills her milk, then asks for another bag of pretzels. "Nope," we reply. "Students get one bag of pretzels. Here's a dustpan and brush to clean up the mess." The natural consequence of losing her snack and the logical consequence of having to clean up help Stacy learn to be more careful.

*Consequences can't teach missing skills.* As Ross Greene notes, punishing a kid doesn't teach that kid the skills he or she needs to be successful.<sup>2</sup> Even natural and logical consequences can't teach capabilities that students don't already possess. If a student doesn't have the self-soothing skills needed to handle frustration, giving her a consequence when she melts down over a test won't help her the next time a test rolls around.

*Consequences can't work as our only strategy.* Imagine if we tried to teach students to write by simply circling their errors and making them rework their writing. While this might be one strategy to use as students are revising and editing, we know that they'll also need direct instruction in effective writing strategies, time to practice and make mistakes, and a nurturing environment.

So, what should we expect from consequences that "work"? We should expect that consequences will help us manage students' behaviors in the short-term, allowing us to put out little fires as they pop up. If we want to reduce future fires, we'll need to engage in lots of proactive teaching.

#### Doing It Better

Educators might brainstorm two lists: one of consequences that help manage behavior in the moment and one of strategies *other than* consequences that teach positive behavior and support long-term growth in skills. The first list will contain things like making a student who runs in the hall go back and walk. The second will include strategies like modeling appropriate behavior or collaboratively creating rules with students. Hang these lists in the staff room as a reminder to use strategies from both lists.

#### 4. We Miss the Middle Ground

When we don't use consequences at all (or wait too long to use them), we become permissive. When adults set limits but don't follow through, students feel unsafe, which often leads them to push limits. It's almost like they're begging us to be in control—to keep them safe. A high school student recently told me about a kid who runs into class and vaults into his chair each day. His teacher always says, "Don't do that again," and he replies, "Okay." The next day, he repeats the performance. The student telling me this story was exasperated at both his classmate's immaturity and his teacher's inaction.

However, the overuse of consequences—especially punitive ones—also leads to an unsafe climate. When teachers yell, levy harsh punishments for minor mistakes, or are overly controlling, the classroom climate becomes one of fear and resentment. Both permissive and punishment-heavy cultures put students, especially those already on the edge, in a place where it's almost impossible to learn well.

An important part of getting to that sweet spot between permissiveness and harshness is getting clear about how consequences feel for *students*. Again, this is nuanced and tricky. On the one hand, if a student has to leave the classroom because she was out of control, she may feel bad—but we shouldn't make feeling bad the goal. To invoke shame ("Terry! Why am I not surprised that you're out of control again?") isn't productive or respectful. At the same time, we don't want the consequence of being removed from the room to feel like a party. Sitting quietly with a book or working on a jigsaw puzzle might soothe a student's spirit, helping him regain control so

he can rejoin class. But if the student's allowed to play video games or is given candy during a time-out, this might send confusing messages and inhibit his ability to calm down.

When we're in that desirable middle ground, consequences help a classroom feel safe, orderly, and predictable. Students understand that mistakes, both academic and behavioral ones, are part of the learning process, and that their teacher is there to support them. They aren't necessarily happy when they experience consequences, but they aren't devastated. The overall tone of the classroom is one of firm caring and support.

#### Doing It Better

Educators can help one another get a feel for that middle ground. They might brainstorm a variety of different responses to behavior challenges, intentionally coming up with some that feel overly lenient or overly harsh. Teachers could then sort the examples into ones that feel too permissive, ones that seem too harsh, and ones that feel about right, and discuss the scenarios for which they have different opinions.

#### 5. We Act with Emotion, Not Reason

Using consequences effectively requires educators to react with reason and logic when our inclination is to be emotional. When a student says something mean to a classmate, we feel outrage for the child who is insulted. When annoying pencil drumming interrupts a lesson (once again!), we feel frustration grow. When a student flips a desk in rage, we are scared and hurt, which can lead to our own feelings of anger. We may even subconsciously seek revenge, wanting that student to hurt like we do.

Of course, the last thing students need (especially students from backgrounds full of trauma) is more anger in their lives. Our students need us to be strong enough to react with reason, not emotion. They need to see what it looks like when mature adults respond to frustration in calm, respectful ways. And they need to be treated with dignity and respect, especially when they're in a crisis.

#### Doing It Better

Educators can help one another practice reacting with reason. Small groups of educators might engage in role-plays. Give each group a scenario in which a student is struggling with a problem behavior and the adult must respond appropriately. Let each group choose appropriate responses and then act out the scene. Try each scenario a few times so each teacher can practice being the one to respond to a student.

Create your own personal list of strategies to use for controlling your frustration and anger. Taking 10 deep breaths, consciously relaxing your muscles, or walking a few brisk strides gives you some movement to help calm your emotions. It might be helpful to frame the challenge objectively ("This student is having a hard time") instead of personally ("This student is doing this to me"). Keep this list handy to refer to in the heat of the moment.

#### 6. We Misunderstand Consequences' Role in the Big Picture

There's a common misunderstanding about the role consequences play in the broader picture of discipline. Too often, educators view consequences as the center of the picture and see all other supportive strategies—like teaching skills, modeling appropriate behavior, and building relationships—as tangential. In fact, relationships should be at the center, with *all* other strategies seen as tangents. Without relationships, everything else falls apart.

This shift in perspective helps teachers change the question they often ask when considering consequences—*"What's the consequence that will fix the problem?"*—to a better question—*"Is there a consequence that might be part of how we help this student?"* Instead of looking for the right-sized firehose that will prevent future

fires, we look for the one that will help in the moment, and we realize that other strategies will play a greater role in supporting long-term positive behavior.

That shift is especially helpful for our most vulnerable students, those who've experienced trauma and chaos at home. It's a sad irony that kids who often aren't strong enough to benefit from the potential teaching power of consequences are the ones most likely to be hammered with frequent punishments. At the same time, kids who have the emotional stability and behavioral skills to learn from consequences are often excused from them ("She's a good kid and usually on track. I'll just give her a warning.").

#### Doing It Better

To help shift their view, adults in a school might create their own visual model representing the relationship between consequences and other strategies. Depict relationships at the center and show many other strategies connected to that element. Keep this image where adults in the school can see it as they develop responses for kids struggling with behavior issues.

## Digging Deeper

Consequences are tough. On the one hand, they're critically important. Like a rumble strip on a road, they help set clear boundaries and keep students and teachers safe—so that challenging behaviors don't spiral out of control. At the same time, we must not over-rely on them, because they have limited power to teach positive behaviors. Additionally, educators shouldn't adopt black-and-white consequence systems, since children are all different and each situation is nuanced—and yet a school that doesn't have a consistent approach to consequences will create anxiety for everyone. So we must engage in robust conversations with colleagues, developing more consistent beliefs and understandings of the role of consequences and practicing appropriate responses. When we do this, we create a school culture that's structured and safe while also supportive and respectful of students.

#### Resources on Effective Discipline

Check out these texts for a more thorough exploration of respectful approaches to classroom management. Each can work as a guide for individual teachers or a resource to support a group.

*Better Than Carrots or Sticks* by Dominique Smith, Douglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey. (ASCD, 2015).

*Discipline with Dignity* by Richard Curwin, Allen Mendler, and Brian Mendler. (ASCD, 2018).

*Lost at School* by Ross Greene. (Scribner, 2008).

*Positive Discipline* by Jane Nelsen. (Ballentine Books, 2006).

*Teaching Children to Care* by Ruth Charney. (Center for Responsive Schools, 1992).

## Guiding Questions

- › Do you agree that teachers often struggle with decisions about consequences for student misbehavior more than they struggle with decisions about curriculum and academics?
- › Share with others in your school your experiences with choosing and implementing consequences for problematic behavior: Is this often a struggle for you?
- › Anderson says that while our decisions about consequences feel "private," they are also "public" because they impact other people in the school—so teachers should consider how their discipline decisions might affect the broader school community. Do you coordinate with colleagues as you decide on rules and consequences for students? How, practically, might you coordinate more?

For a discussion of helping kids monitor their own behavior, see the online article "A Healthy Ecosystem for Classroom Management" by Paul Emerich France.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Nelsen, J. (2006). *Positive discipline*. New York: Ballentine Books.

<sup>2</sup> Greene, R. (2008). *Lost at school*. New York: Scribner.

Mike Anderson ([www.leadinggreatlearning.com](http://www.leadinggreatlearning.com)) is a teacher, author, and consultant who works with teachers and schools to support great learning. Follow him on Twitter.



## Four Tips to Help Your Child Succeed at School



Parents, families, educators and communities—there's no better partnership to assure that all students, pre-K to high school, have the support and resources they need to succeed in school and life.

The research shows that students tend to earn higher grades, have better attendance, are more motivated and less likely to drop out when their families are involved in their education.

Here are four tips for what parents can do outside the classroom to help their child succeed:

1. Create a home environment that encourages learning and schoolwork. Establish a daily routine of mealtimes with time for homework, chores and bedtime.



2. Reinforce learning at home and show your child the skills they're learning are applicable to everyday life. For example, if your child is learning about measurements, solicit help with a recipe.
3. Model the habits of a lifelong learner. Let your child see you reading, writing and using technology.
4. Become an advocate. Sign up to speak to the school board about resources your child's school and schools in general need to be successful.

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