

EDWARD "POP" COLLINS SCHOOL  
PUBLIC SCHOOL 146X  
968 Cauldwell Avenue • Bronx, New York 10456  
Telephone (718) 378-9664 • Facsimile (718) 328-5858  
*"AIMING FOR EXCELLENCE"*

Janet-Ann Sanderson-Brown, Principal

Cynthia A. Carter, Assistant Principal

December 5, 2007

David Saphra, Music Teacher  
File Number 614531  
P.S. 146x  
Bronx, New York 10452

Dear Mr. Saphra,

I asked you to meet with me today, Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup> with your union representative, during your fifth period prep, because of my concern for the safety of your students, especially those in K-011.

It is your responsibility to use strategies that maintain a safe environment, and when the students are with you, they hit, kick, choke, bite, wrestle, yell, roll on the floor, roughhouse, fight, run around the room, and remove one another's shoes and socks while you continue to play your guitar and sing with those students who pay attention to you. I have met with and spoken to parents because their children have gone home with knots on the head, scratches on the face, bite marks on the body, and pain in the stomach because they have been punched, scratched, hit with shoes, and thrown against the floor during your class.

In October the classroom teacher attempted to assist you by allowing you to meet in her classroom, for two weeks during her prep, so that she could model management techniques and serve as a presence with her students. I met with you because of the above-mentioned concerns. On or around October 4<sup>th</sup>, I observed you with Class K-011, modeled management techniques, then met with you to offer suggestions. During that meeting, I suggested that you should:

- Have a "zero" tolerance for inappropriate behavior
- Develop an attitude that music is a privilege, and one that can be taken away
- **Use a plan book** and over plan your lessons, specific to each class
- Vary the activities and incorporate movement
- Plan lessons so that students are not sitting for long periods of time
- Engage students in movement activities
- Minimize 'down time' – the amount of time between activities
- Incorporate nursery rhymes, chants, finger plays, call and response songs that tie in with the curriculum, seasons and holidays to keep students engaged
- Assign seats in the Meeting Area, paying attention to compatibility and sociability
- Sit students with their legs crossed and hands in their lap
- Greet students at the door in a position that you can see those in the hall and those in the room
- Allow no more than two to three students to enter into the room at a time; wait for them to be seated and quiet before calling another two or three students into the room
- Wait for students' attention before continuing with an activity
- Let students know you are waiting by stating, "Show me you're ready for music."
- Give directions slowly, one at a time, and not more than two directions together

- **Never, ever speak over the voices of the students; stop, wait, and regroup the class**
- Have a variety of 'attention getters' such as:
  - Snapping the fingers and clapping the hands while reciting, "If you're ready, and you're listening, join in." (You and children continue the chant until every child has joined you.)
  - Saying, "If you can hear the sound of my voice, clap one time; if you can hear the sound of my voice clap two times; if you can hear the sound of my voice, touch your ears, etc.," until you have everyone's attention.
  - I showed you how to give students a break by asking them to stand, wriggle their hands, stand on their toes, stretch to reach the ceiling, bend, and rotate their shoulders, rotate their head, etc.
- Speak with colleagues for lower-grade management suggestions
- **Be firm and consistent, and call parents for students who are behaving inappropriately**
- **Plan every day because students instinctively know when a teacher is unprepared and attempting to "wing it". That's when their behavior is at its worse.**

On Thursday, November 29, 2007, I met with you during your fifth period prep because a parent volunteer had removed two students from your fourth period class and brought the children to me. As she passed the class, she said that she had observed a girl with four to five boys in the back of the room, and the little girl was fighting with one of the boys while he was choking her. I asked you what had happened in the class, and you turned to the students and asked them what happened because, you said to me, you didn't see what happened.

It was also during this particular period that the kindergarten classroom teacher had already removed six of the boys and kept them with her, so the size of the class was reduced to nineteen children. When I asked you what the activity was at the time and what you were doing to maintain order, you replied you were "playing your guitar and singing..." and you are "still trying to find a sure fire way to have them listen." When I reminded you of the number of suggestions I gave you during our previous meeting you replied you "tried some; those were good [and] I have to go back to them." (The only 'attention getter' you were able to remember was, as you said, "jumping up and down, up to the ceiling, down to the floor", so I repeated those I had given you in October.)

When I asked you if you had called parents, you replied you would call the parents of the two who were fighting, and that you had "left a message on Tarreona's machine on November 19<sup>th</sup> but haven't gotten back to them." You further stated you called "Jeramie L.'s home [and] left a message on November 19<sup>th</sup>, [and that you] must follow up. [You] just have to try a different time of the day." I said that "You have to follow-up with calls when unable to reach parents, and if you're having difficulty reaching parents, dismiss with the classroom teacher at 2:25 to speak with parents when they come to pick up their children."

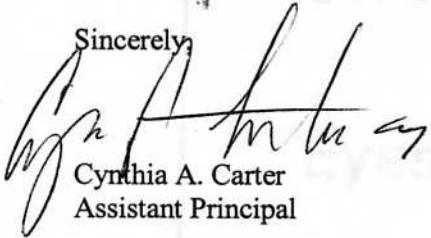
**Safety is the #1 priority in this building.** Mr. Saphra, and I continued by stating you have to call your union office and ask for courses for class management, and immediately take a class. You agreed to let me know the next day where you plan to take a class. You returned to me three to four days following this meeting to say you could take an on-line course or a course in February. I told you that "for you, an on-line course is unacceptable."

To further assist you, attached to this memorandum, are the following papers to help you with classroom management: Give Me Five...Cueing, She Quieted 100 People in Five Seconds, Preventing Behavior Problems, Encouragements & Appreciations, Classroom Procedures: What Do You Expect Students to do When...?, What to Keep In Mind With Challenging Students, Suggestions for Delivering Consequences, Behavior Plans, Effective Rules, How to Prevent Button Pushing Worksheet, and a 'sign' Hands Are For Holding And for Shaking - Not for Hitting. Every class should begin with students reciting the slogan.

You are reminded of your obligation to maintain a safe environment by keeping children safe, to plan your lessons, and to follow my supervisory directives and suggestions to maintain order, and that includes immediately enrolling in a management class and speaking with colleagues for classroom management


suggestions. Failure to do so may lead to further disciplinary action including an unsatisfactory rating and your termination.

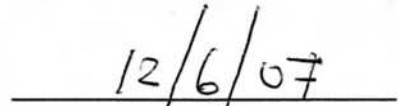
Sincerely,

  
Cynthia A. Carter  
Assistant Principal

  
Date

*I have received and read a copy of this letter, with attachments, and I understand the original will be placed in my professional file.*

  
David Saphra, Instructor

  
Date

## Give Me Five...Cueing

"Give me 5!"	(open hand up)
"Eyes"	(4 fingers up)
"Ears"	(3 fingers up)
"Body"	(2 fingers up)
"Hands"	(1 finger up)
"Brain..Let's begin"	(0 fingers)

\*Note: Pictures or icons can be drawn next to the words on a 'Give Me 5' cueing chart.

### She Quieted 100 People in Five Seconds

We were invited to our daughter-in-law's class to attend the annual International Day celebration. Students from three sixth-grade classes were gathered in a large room for the culmination of their study of the country of their ancestry or choice. The students were dressed in native attire and had information and food samples typical of their selected countries.

The three classes and an assortment of guests—parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, and friends—numbered about 100 people. As we were walking from display to display, talking with the students and tasting food, we suddenly heard the students call out, "... 3, 4, 5."

Then there was silence in the room. Everyone faced the teacher, Cindy Wong, and she spoke. Then everyone went back to what they were doing.

Later I asked Cindy what she did to quiet the room so quickly. She said, "Dad, it's a variation on your three-step technique. I have a five-step procedure because I teach younger students than you do, so I wanted to be more specific as to what I wanted."

"My five steps are these:

1. Eyes on speaker
2. Quiet
3. Be still
4. Hands free (put things down)
5. Listen

"The way it works is, I say, 'Give me five.' They go through each of the five steps in their mind.

"I have rehearsed them in this procedure, so when I say, 'Give me five,' it takes them no more than five seconds before I have their attention."

I asked, "Do all three sixth-grade classes know this routine?"

"Yes," she said.

I replied, "Wow. This has now become the culture for all the sixth graders."



Cindy Wong and the Give Me Five plan as posted in her classroom.

# PREVENTING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

- Clarity of Expectations
- Modeling, Practice, Frequent Review
- Structure & Routine
- Engaging, Meaningful & Motivating Learning Activities/Instruction
- Students are Experiencing High Rate of Daily Success in Curriculum
- Independent/Seat work - All students have capability of doing work without assistance or can access help within short amount of time
- Predictability & Consistency
- Monitoring & Follow-Through
- Clear, Fair Consequences
- Acknowledgements, Recognition & Specific Praise
- Positive Attention & Reinforcement
- Diversionary Tactics & Redirecting
- Teacher Assistance on Personal Level
- Humor
- Preparing for Transitions
- Cueing & Proximity Control
- Providing Enough Space
- Time Out/Time Away
- Communicating with Parents
- Being Prepared, Starting Class on Time/Avoiding Lag Time
- Supervision & Direction
- Being Aware of and Willing to Accommodate Environmental Factors (modifying the setting and environment)
- Making Necessary Modifications to Meet Needs of Individual Students
- Active listening

## Encouragements & Appreciations

- I appreciate the effort you put into this assignment.
- Keep thinking of those good ideas.
- That B+ reflects your hard work. You should be proud of yourself.
- Marcus, I noticed that you were well prepared for class today. It really helped that you organized your desk and notebook.
- I like the way you handled that problem.
- You must feel good to see the progress you're making. Your hard work is paying off.
- Way to go... Keep practicing and soon you'll know them all.
- I bet you worked hard on that one.
- I noticed that Table 2 really helped each other and worked as a team today.
- Leanne, you followed directions quickly. I appreciate your cooperation.
- I noticed you really took your time to practice writing neatly. I can see such an improvement in your printing.
- I appreciate the way you helped show Marianne what she missed when she was absent yesterday to help her get caught up. You really are a responsible buddy.
- Look at the improvement! It really shows that you put time and effort into this.
- I'm confident that you'll make a good choice.
- You can do it!
- You're getting better at...
- That's a hard one. But I have confidence you can figure it out.
- Jared, you are showing great self control this morning. You have remembered to raise your hand when you want to speak and have been respecting other students' space.

## Classroom Procedures: What Do You Expect Students to Do When...?

- the bell rings
  - they need to sharpen a pencil
  - they don't have paper or other needed supplies
  - they finish work early
  - they have a question during instruction
  - they need to go to the restroom
  - they want to throw something in the trash
  - they have a question during independent work
  - they need a drink of water
  - announcements are made on intercom, phone rings, other interruption
  - they enter the classroom at beginning of day (period)
  - they enter classroom after recess/PE/lunch
  - they prepare to leave the classroom at end of day (period)
  - moving into or changing groups
  - they are tardy
  - they return after being absent
  - listening to and responding to questions
  - you signal for attention
  - working cooperatively/working independently
  - turning in papers, passing papers, exchanging papers
  - moving about the room
  - lining up
  - at learning centers
- \*Procedures to teach immediately:*
- ◇ signaling, getting their attention & quieting the class
  - ◇ entering class/AM procedure, and dismissal
  - ◇ preparing for class & homework assignments, & what to do when done
  - ◇ how to/where to keep their materials & belongings



# **What To Keep In Mind With Challenging Students**

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- **Plan a response and avoid 'reacting'.**
- **Praise, encourage and reward increments of improvement.**
- **Change what you can control...YOURSELF (attitude, body language, voice, strategies, expectations).**
- **Be firm, fair & consistent.**
- **Remain calm.**
- **Disengage from power struggles.**

# SUGGESTIONS FOR DELIVERING CONSEQUENCES

Related to offense

Reasonable

Respectfully

With empathy

Without anger or emotionality

No lecturing or moralizing

With as little talk as possible

When in 'thinking' not 'emotional' state

Adapted / excerpted from: Teaching with Love & Logic (Jim Fay & David Funk)

Pocket  
Chart / cut out  
squares

## Behavior Plans

- **Provide structure to control behavior**
- **Consistent**
- **Fair**
- **Motivate students**
- **Reinforce appropriate behaviors**

## Effective Rules

**Rules should:**

- **be written as positive statements**
- **be short, specific, and easy to understand**
- **describe overt behavior**
- **be limited to 4 or 5 rules**
- **state positive and negative consequences**

## How To Prevent Button Pushing Worksheet

1. Visualize an explosive situation in your mind. Describe it in one sentence. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What are the overt behaviors you are going to display to the student? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What are you going to think to yourself to maintain your control? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What are you going to say to the student? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Take time to rehearse and visualize the above steps.

6. What are you going to do to reward yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Hands Are For Holding**



**And for Shaking**



**Not for hitting**