

School Board Update October 13

On August 5 & 6th a representative group of the elementary staff met for some focus planning with the help of Thersea, Wendy and CESA 9 staff. We focused our planning on meeting the needs of the whole child at Tomahawk Elementary.

A couple of new things at Tomahawk this school year are the 2nd Step Curriculum. (Denise Peissig will be at the next meeting to talk about the 2nd step curriculum at the elementary level this.)

A behavioral support room (The Hawaii room) is new this school year. The purpose of the room is to:

- Create a safe environment for restoration and refocus
- Give students the opportunity to be taught the critical life skill of self-regulation
- Support teachers so that they have a place to send dysregulated students when the learning environment is disrupted.

The Hawaii room is not:

- A place to send escalated students - students who are showing signs of verbal and/or physical aggression
- Used for major/minor discipline referrals
- Used as a punishment
- A place for work completion

How a student can enter the Hawaii Room:

- Each teacher will receive a stack of “passports”
- Before sending a student to Hawaii, the teacher will try 3 different strategies: restate expectations, offer a break idea from passport and restate expectations again
- If student has not responded to the 3 strategies, the student may use Hawaii to get refocused and ready to learn

What happens when students are in Hawaii:

- When a student arrives in the room, he/she will choose a feeling card from Mrs. Roberts' wall
- The student will take the card to a desk, Mrs. Roberts will provide an activity or self-regulation tool for the student
- The student will be given time alone to complete the activity or use a self-regulation tool - a timer will be set for 5 minutes
- Mrs. Roberts will meet with individual students for a “teaching” moment - the card on the desk will inform Mrs. Roberts what the student is feeling and how to approach the conversation
- If Hawaii is full, or Mrs. Roberts does not answer, the teacher will attempt another strategy within their classroom
- Usually a student will be in Hawaii for no more than 10 minutes

Students return to the classroom

- The student will transition back to the classroom with a pass/exit ticket. There is a script for the teacher to read – the teacher will only say the words on the exit ticket; it is important that the student is welcomed back into the classroom with a fresh start
- Mrs. Roberts will write a strategy that she practiced with the student on the exit ticket. The teacher will refer to this strategy throughout the day – the teacher will praise the student when they see the strategy or remind the student of the strategy if the teacher sees the student struggling again

Another thing we decided to stress with staff this year is that all elementary classroom teachers will build in a morning meeting time for their classrooms. For some classrooms this isn't new and has been part of the classroom and culture that teachers at TES are trying to build in their classroom communities.

There are four basic components to morning meetings:

- Greetings, where teachers and students welcome each other
- Time for engaged sharing, where students and teachers share about something in their lives; the rest of the group practices active listening and asks follow up questions
- Activities that promote teamwork and give students additional time to practice social and emotional skills
- A morning message, which is a short note from the teacher that explains the day's events and objectives

Four ways Morning Meetings Support SEL

- Strengthen Connections and Relationship Skills
- Increase Self-Confidence
- Promote Social Awareness
- Encourage Positive Behavior Toward Others

Overall, it has been a good start to the school year and we continue to appreciate the way that the students have accepted the changes we have had to make to our procedures in the elementary school. We are thankful for every day that we can have them in the building.