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Educational Values Statement

I believe that teachers must be, above all, enthusiastic in their commitment to furthering the intellectual and emotional growth of children. They must seek out and develop the best in all of their students - especially the ones who differ greatly in their approach to life and learning. Frequently, it is from these students that teachers learn the most and improve the most in their abilities as teachers. Every child can learn. Teachers must call upon all resources – peers, support teams, administrators, parents, community - to find the most effective way to reach each child. Building an individual relationship with a child is the key to reaching that child and enabling learning.

Each child brings to the classroom a unique set of life experiences, needs, and issues. I believe that most potential behavioral issues can be successfully navigated by understanding what drives the behavior and putting in place interventions to enable the child to successfully function in and out of the classroom. I do think that a behavior becomes a problem when it interferes with a child's ability to interact with peers, is disruptive to other students in the classroom, or impacts the child's ability to work to his or her potential. Some behavioral "problems" cannot be changed – such as tics in a child with Tourette Syndrome. Yet, the teacher is responsible for setting up the classroom to minimize the impact on other students while at the same time providing an environment in which the child with the disability can flourish. I'm excited to learn about collecting data that will help me choose effective interventions for problem behaviors. A one size fits all approach to behavioral support is not an effective approach.

In the classroom, I value honesty, perseverance, empathy, and respect in my students. A child who is honest does his own work and is also willing to ask for help. With perseverance, she will do her best, even if the material being covered seems too difficult. Empathy in a student opens the student to understanding that not everyone is the same. Children learn to respect their differences and maintain an environment in which they can be successful. I encourage my students to work cooperatively together to master new ideas. This only works with a solid foundation of honesty, perseverance, empathy and respect.

Over the past few years, I have used multiple strategies to refocus disruptive or inappropriate behaviors. One on one discussions are usually all that are needed; however, rearranging the environment (seating), changing my proximity to the student, employing timeouts, and setting up more frequent "check-ins" to keep students on track with desired behaviors have been used with success. Some of my students have been motivated when I've kept their parents in the loop on a weekly basis. A child needs to know that parents and teachers are on the same team when behavioral issues are being addressed. Equally important is the need to include the child with disruptive behaviors in the process of setting up and implementing interventions. When these strategies have not been effective, I've relied on my colleagues, the school counselor, and the school administrators for additional ideas.