

DOINGWHATWORKS



Audio

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Using Social-Emotional Learning Standards to Guide a Schoolwide Approach

Baxter Elementary School, Alaska • April 2009

Topic: Reducing Behavior Problems

Practice: Schoolwide Approach

Highlights

- The principal at Baxter Elementary explains the social-emotional learning (SEL) standards used at the school and how these standards are intertwined into many aspects of the school day.
- Teachers at Baxter Elementary use an SEL curriculum which provides a common language and expectations for all students.
- The Anchorage School District developed the SEL standards on which the curriculum is based. The SEL standards include four goals: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Social Management.

About the Site

Baxter Elementary School

Anchorage, Alaska

Demographics

48% White

10% Hispanic

9% Native American

6% Black 7% Asian

47% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

3% Special Education

Baxter Elementary School implements a schoolwide positive discipline plan as a framework on which all school behavior-related practices, policies, and expectations are based. Key features include:

- Integration of social-emotional learning (SEL) and character education lessons into the curriculum;
- Organizational practices to promote a climate of safety, respect, and caring; and
- Supplemental enrichment lessons for students with office referrals.

Full Transcript

My name is Vicki Hodge. I'm Principal of Baxter Elementary School in Anchorage, Alaska. I've been at Baxter Elementary School for five years. The first year that I was here, we started a positive schoolwide discipline plan. And with that, we have set four expectations that we call our school matrix, and those are to be safe, be respectful, be responsible, and be positive. And out of that, all of the classroom rules, expectations, our whole school procedures are founded on those four simple procedures.

We believe that, at Baxter, the research that says that students make the biggest difference when there's a core curriculum that's taught consistently so that students learn the language and understand the concepts related to making good choices and with problem solving. And so we have a core curriculum that we use, and every Monday, the whole school focuses on social and emotional learning. The teachers teach lessons from the core curriculum or an alternate curriculum related to a focus that they want to have for the week. For example, respect, maybe that's been an issue within the classroom. And so, they will focus on, choose a lesson that relates to respect, and then, throughout the week, they will infuse the idea of respect through the rest of the curricula, through the reading program or through social studies or through other teachable moments.

Then we also believe that students should be rewarded for doing the right thing. A lot of times students do the right thing all the time, don't get recognized; the students that are having issues or the ones that are getting attention. So, what we do is we reward students for doing the right thing. So, students that do not have any office referrals for the month earn bubble gum recess, and that's a 30-minute extra recess that we have the first Friday of the month for any student that's made it successfully without an office referral. We also use caught coupons, and those are passed out around the playground, in the halls, throughout the school area. And so students can get a caught coupon for following our four components of our matrix. And then those students are invited to have lunch with me.

Then, for the students that may have difficulty following those, they're invited then to participate in the

activities that are going to help them review and understand and be able to better follow our matrix. So, we have our rebound program, which is an after-school program. We don't call it detention, but the rebound teacher sits down with students, and they talk about what happened. They review the matrix, and then they do problem solving and talk about how the student could make different choices next time and be successful. And then, during bubble gum recess, for students that did receive office referrals, those students participate in activities that are also related to whatever their infraction was where they can again practice following the matrix. And that's a program we call MINT or Making It Next Time. And then throughout the month, the teachers mentor those students and help them, encourage them to make the choices so that they'll be able to participate in bubble gum recess the next time.

The leadership team, we have found, has been really the whole core behind the success of the program here. We meet at least twice a month. We have updates at staff meetings so that we're making sure that we are continually training the teachers on like, for example, reviewing the matrix or of the procedures for our rebound program. The leadership team is representative of all grade levels, and then they not only take ideas back from the team to their grade-level partners, but they also bring any kind of questions or suggestions from their grade-level partners to the team for discussion. And then, yearly, we have a retreat where we have subs for a day, and the SEL team meets away from the school. We look at what was successful over the course of the year, what maybe wasn't so successful, and then out of that, we generate our plan for the next year.