

# DOINGWHATWORKS



Audio

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

## Peace Day Rally

P.S. 269 Nostrand, New York • May 2009

Topic: Reducing Behavior Problems

Practice: Schoolwide Approach

### Highlights

- Phyllis Corbin, the principal at P.S. 269, describes a program that the school has been using for five years, the Peace Day rally.
- Peace Day aims to deliver the “message of peace” so it will be heard throughout the surrounding community and have a lasting effect on students’ lives.
- Every class has banners, posters, and displays that reflect the work they have been doing throughout the year on peace lessons; students and staff gather in the schoolyard to sing, recite poetry, dance, and celebrate peace in the community.

### About the Site

P.S. 269 Nostrand

Brooklyn, NY

### Demographics

90% Black

6% Hispanic

2% Asian

1% White

93% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

10% English Language Learners

P.S. 269 has established schoolwide practices and routines to create and maintain a supportive and caring school climate. Key features include:

- Explicitly teaching and reinforcing rules and routines,
- Collecting data about student behavior and the conditions that prompt and reinforce it, and
- Conducting community events to promote peaceful relationships between the school and the community.

## Full Transcript

My name is Phyllis Corbin. I'm the Principal of P.S. 269 in Brooklyn, New York.

Our Conflict Resolution curriculum has been in effect in the school for seven years. The rally's been for five years. And over the seven years, we've managed to train every single individual in the building, and we don't have a large turnover, so everybody has been trained, both teachers, school aides, secretaries, everyone. So, the payoff now is that we have a core group of people that know the curriculum. The other thing is that if we all start at the beginning of the year and work our way to the end, when the child goes the next grade, they're already familiar with the language of peace. They know the win-wins. They know how to solve problems. They know about peace corners. They know about all the things that make this curriculum work. So, then they carry it from third through fourth through fifth. So each year, they get a little stronger.

And so, another really interesting thing is that when we train on peer mediators, we're able to train children younger than the year before. So now, we are training third graders. Third graders now get trained in about May. So they start being peer mediators in the fourth grade and then they move from the fourth to the fifth. So, I think that the payoff is that we're consistent. We don't wait until the last minute to try to do anything, and we just keep building on the successes of the program.

The purpose of the Peace Day rally is for everyone to know that the message of peace has to go beyond yourself, beyond the classroom, beyond the school, that you have to have that same impact in the community. And we always try to link what we're doing in school with the community so that children, after they leave the building, they can reference this local store or they can talk to younger children and say you know, "Did you see our rally? You want to ask about it?" And sometimes people will say, "Do you go to that school where they had that big rally and they made all that noise?"

The rally involves first every class having a banner, displays, anything that they have that will reflect the work that they've been doing in their class. It could involve maybe the anti-bullying poster or something like that. And what they do is we have sort of a schedule of the day. We all come down. We assemble in the schoolyard. So, it's all the classes in the schoolyard with a schedule, a program. We're singing. We're doing readings, and we're making enough noise in the yard to involve the community to come and see what we're doing. And we usually send out all kinds of invitations: daycare centers come; other schools come. So, the message is that we are peace builders, and we want everybody to know it, and we want to let them know that we are doing it right here in the community.

Now, how this evolves into from a rally to a parade, is that we then get police escorts in the street, and we take the rally on to the street. Traffic stops. We involved all the stores in the community, everybody gets posters to say that they are supporting what we're doing, and we make noise. Our ideas to go from our school to another school, a neighboring school, and cover the whole area. And what we're looking for is for parents to maybe hang out banners outside their windows saying, "We support P.S. 269 Peace Parade." And if they do that, it's an awesome sight.