

I used to think negatively about rules because it sometimes it seems they are used as means to have power over or control students. Now, I think that rules are a way of enforcing safety, a way to help students regulate their behavior, a way of maintaining high expectations, and a way for students to stay in control so that all students can learn. My thinking on classroom rules evolved because of what we read in *Teaching Like a Champion* and our discussion on high expectations.

I would like to keep a short list of rules positive and have students come up with their rules at the beginning of the school year as a means to hold themselves accountable- Therefore, my list will include:

Respect yourselves, each other, the teacher, other people's space, and property

Take Responsibility for your own learning, behavior, and actions

Realize that taking risks and making mistakes is a part of learning

Be Ready to learn, be on time and prepared

Rest or go to the seat that has a rest over it if you need a break or feel unable to keep yourself in control

Several procedures I would like to have in my room include a reward system for individual and full class behavior, a consistent three warning behavioral plan, a routine at the start of class, and non-verbal cues that signify stand up, sit down, be quiet, move to the piano etc....

Non-verbal cues that tell students when to stand up, sit down, be quiet etc... are not only an excellent way to save the voice, they can help to maintain the positive environment. From an elementary music methods course I took in the fall, I learned that non-verbal cues can be introduced as a game at the beginning of the year. For example, a teacher would ask students to move around the classroom, but when they hear a bell the student have to move to the risers and turn off their voices. Non-verbal cues can be a fun way to introduce rules and expectations at the beginning of the year.

I believe that routines can help students adjust and prepare themselves for what is about to happen. In observations I have seen teachers sing a short song to help with transitions. I attended a music and mindfulness workshop in the fall where the teacher explained she asks her students to practice mindfulness as a way to transition them to music. Another teacher I've been observing at Werner elementary will have the students sing a song, take a bow and then he chooses a leader to play the drums while the rest of the students either go to the risers or the instruments to play the song. Routines can help to establish trust in the classroom.

A consistent behavior plan is important because students know what to expect if they are unable to follow classroom rules. The PSD has schools that have positive behavior plans and staff that are consistent. If I am lucky enough to teach in a school where everyone is on board and follows the behavior plans, that would be ideal. At the least, I would like to implement a three warning system where students receive a warning, on the second warning they sign a behavior book so that the student can be accountable and in case I need to refer back to for parents or teachers, and on the third warning the student takes a break under the rest area.

I used to not believe in tangible rewards, but after working with students and observing other teachers, I have seen the benefits of students having something tangible for their good behavior. I believe this can be something as simple as a note that describes the behavior to choosing from a prize box. I am currently spending time in a music classroom at Werner Elementary and the teacher has a five star system for the entire class. Every time the class earns five stars, he gives the classroom teacher a token and when the tokens fill a jar the students get pizza parties or free reading time. Additionally, the music teacher will reward his consistent five star classes with choice Friday where the students get to choose their favorite music activities including games, songs, and movies. I believe that incentives can help with classroom management.

