

# Working with Students Who are 'Difficult'



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# Josh & Lauren - Introductions



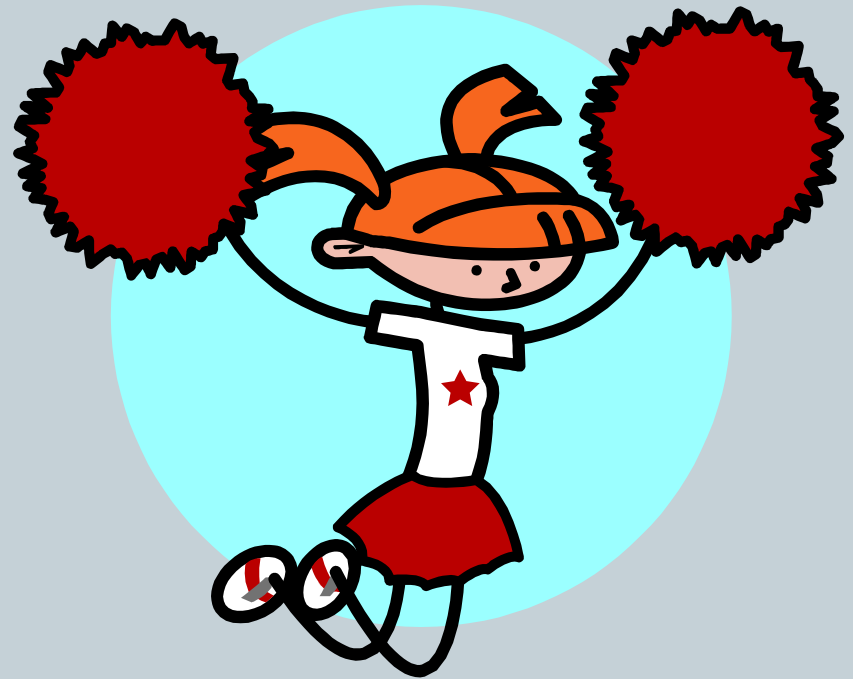
# Successful Strategies

- “Start Early”
  - Establish positive relationships with students and parents as soon as possible.
  - For Example: A “positive” phone call within the first days of school can make a behavior concern go over much more smoothly later in the year.



# Successful Strategies

- “Praise Publicly”
  - Find a reason to put students in a positive spotlight
  - For Example: Highlight students who excel in areas other than numerical grades; praise students for working well within a group, keeping the classroom clean, and taking time to complete assignments.



# Successful Strategies



- “Punish Privately”
  - Communicate respect for students by administering corrections in a private arena.
  - For Example: Instead of correcting a student’s behavior in front of other students, approach the student and lower your voice or ask the student to step out into the hall for a moment.



# Successful Strategies



- “Know Their Stories”
  - Be aware of each student’s history and family background.
  - For Example: Many students display “home” behaviors at school. Instead of allowing a difficult home life to excuse the behaviors, apply the appropriate consequence and use the opportunity to teach the student a more socially acceptable response to the situation.



# Successful Strategies

- “Uphold Your Authority”
  - Whenever possible, manage student situations yourself, rather than immediately referring students to a “higher authority.”
  - For Example: Clearly communicate your behavior expectations and the consequences for not meeting them. Before enforcing consequences, be sure to re-explain the desired behavior. Afterwards, document the discussion.



# Successful Strategies



- “Get Students Involved”
  - Make students feel special by allowing them to take responsibility for classroom tasks.
  - For Example: When appropriate, ask students to “help you out” by distributing papers, taking attendance, running errands, choosing a review game, etc.



# Successful Strategies



- “Pay Attention to Interests”

- Find out what students consider “important” and use those things to catch their attention.
- For Example: Ask students to list their favorite sports, after-school activities, and types of music. Work the information into word problems, analogies, vocabulary explanations, etc.



# Successful Strategies



- “Make a Connection”
  - Get to know students as “whole” people; find out who they are in non-academic settings.
  - For Example: Sponsor a club, attend sporting events, and talk with students during lunch and recess.



# Successful Strategies



- “Maintain Consistency and Structure”
  - Clearly explain your expectations and follow through on all “promised” consequences and rewards.
  - For Example: Avoid making empty promises and threats (“A donut every morning this month if you make an ‘A!’” or “If you do that, then no recess for the rest of the year!”). Instead, take a moment to think of something you can follow through on.





## Promising Opportunities for “Difficult Students”



What Administrators Appreciate...

- Write office referrals as a last resort.
- Practice equity not equality...be aware of each child's situation.
- Be firm.
- If you are going to write a referral, make sure you are willing to stand your ground (call home, parent conference, etc).
- Keep us informed.
- Communicate what you are doing to reach out.
- Let us work with you.
- Remain objective in dealing with poor student behavior.
- Work to continue positive ongoing parent communication.
- Don't give up on your students. You may be the only hope they have.

## Promising Opportunities for “Difficult Students”



## “Student of the Week”

- Each teacher chooses one student each week based on a prior week of:
  - Good attitude
  - Class attendance
  - Assignment completion
- The chosen student receives:
  - Public praise and description of how he/she earned the title
  - A prize of choice
  - A teacher-written letter mailed home detailing the title and the reasons the student was chosen
  - All “teacher assistance” classroom privileges for the week (distributing materials, running errands, etc.)



## Promising Opportunities for “Difficult Students”

### “Positive Pupil Referral”

- Each teacher receives “Positive Pupil Referral” forms with blanks for:
  - Student’s name and grade
  - Referring teacher’s name
  - Description of positive action observed
  - Administrative response
- Referred students are:
  - Publically praised during the morning and afternoon announcements
  - Called to the office and personally thanked by the Principal for setting such a positive example
  - Given a copy of the form – with a formal administrative response written at the bottom – to take home to their parents
  - Rewarded with a pizza party



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## **Focus Club**

“Focus on Uniqueness, Character, and Success”

- Focuses on students who are “Frequent Flyers” to the principal’s office.
- Every student member of the club has an adult mentor within the building.
- Each month, the club meets to discuss topics such as individuality, responsibility, citizenship, and other topics.
- Students are rewarded for good behavior.



[See Focus Club Information](#)  
[See Focus Club Parent Letter](#)

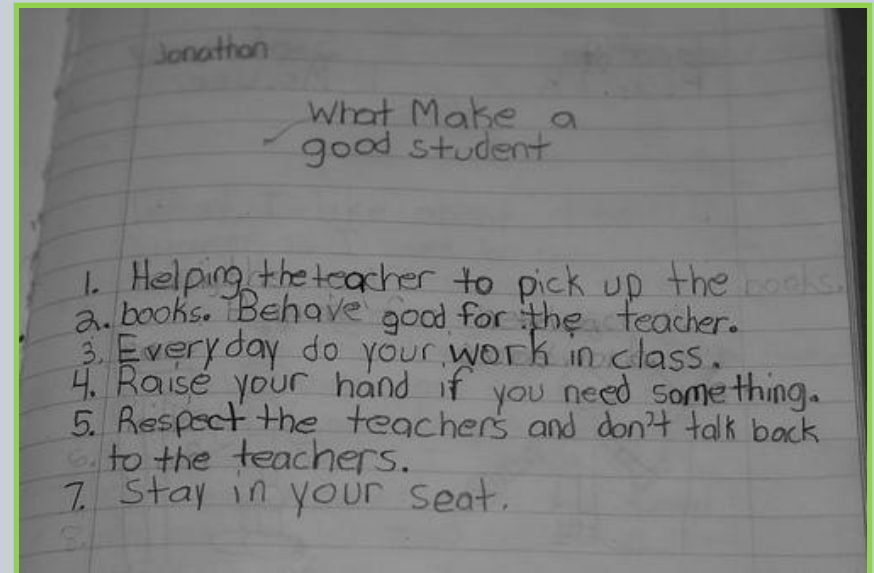
# Promising Opportunities for “Difficult Students”

## “Turn-Around Award”

- Given to students who received ISS or OSS the previous grading period.
- Guidance counselors meet with students who receive ISS or OSS.

## “Super Surfers Award”

- Recognition given to students who do not receive an office referral or lunch detention within a single grading period.



# Presenters' Contact Information



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