

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE...

“There’s something intriguing about the idea of something being an epidemic — and it’s easy to get that impression when a topic gets a lot of media coverage. The combination of kids, the internet, and risk is a media magnet, and some recent bullying incidents have received a lot of attention and sensational news coverage — and some of that coverage has been really irresponsible. So it’s understandable that people think we’re facing a bullying crisis, when in fact rates of bullying have been consistent over the last 25 years.” Taken from Great Schools Magazine

WHY?

This school year the Cabrillo staff has been learning more about the **Olweus Bully Prevention Program**. Together we are developing strategies to implement school-wide that create a Bully-free Learning Environment for ALL kids. Research has shown that the best way to stop bullying is building a culture of empathy, caring and compassion school-wide. Creating a learning environment where ALL kids stand-up to bullying type behaviors by sharing that “we do not behave like that at Cabrillo.” The strength is in the numbers of **Up-standers** and the understanding of WHY people behave as they do.

When children feel accepted, safe and have full-buckets there is no need for bullying type behaviors. Of course we all understand that conflicts and emotions are a part of life. Giving children the appropriate outlets and strategies for expressing their emotions and solving conflicts results in positive solutions. *Creating a learning environment where challenges become opportunities and possibilities rather than failures and dead-ends will result in a bully-free campus.*

WHAT is DIFFERENT This Year Thanks to Olweus?

One of the strategies implemented in ALL classrooms this school year is called a “Class Meeting.” During this time, the major goal is to develop a sense of community and mutual respect. Using the monthly Filling Buckets with Character themes, the teachers discuss strategies for first, creating a positive classroom environment and second, for creating a positive playground and school-wide environment. The class meeting provides an opportunity for the students to share and discuss ideas for solving real-life situations that impact them. They learn strategies such as mindfulness to help them think before reacting for example. Given conflicts do happen, they learn how to use “I” statements to express their needs instead of just reacting physically. They listen to stories during Social Studies/History about people like Martin Luther King and Abraham Lincoln. During the Class Meeting, connections are made to behaviors and actions they demonstrated and how they resolved situations with respect, responsibility and/or compassion to name a few. The teachable moment but the lid firmly on the bucket!

WHERE ARE WE GOING WITH THIS?

Putting it all together into a meaningful and purposeful social-emotional learning plan to ensure a kind, caring and compassionate learning environment doesn't happen overnight (unfortunately in this case) but it will happen if we can work together. Thanks to the leadership of our PTA President, Dr. Jennifer Johnston-Jones and her Board, we are well on our way. My sincere appreciation to ALL for understanding that the development of the Cabrillo Kids Care Plan is a work in progress as it encompasses several parts that ultimately will build a physical Learning environment, extra-curricular after school activities, enrich/enhance activities/programs, parent information and training, and support teachers in implementation of Filling Buckets with Character to create Up-standers in the classroom. The PTA in collaboration with the School Site Council/ELAC are developing a long-range plan with goals that are meaningful and purposeful, support staff/teachers in meeting vision, to create a kind, caring and compassionate learning environment, and most importantly is in the best interests of the students at Juan Cabrillo.

COMMUNICATIION is KEY!

The key to the success of anything we do will be communication. Coming to meetings is not something I was able to do when my daughter was in school, due to working full-time. Therefore, we will work to provide it to you quickly and in a variety of formats as well. Your patience and understanding is why Cabrillo is such a great place for kids to grow and learn. Hand-in-Hand, Together We Can-isn't just a motto, it is HOW we can make it happen.

As you all know one of our strategies used is called, **BE COOL: (in the Parent Handbook)**

STOP-Use I statement to tell the other person what it is you want them to stop doing. "I don't like it when you lean on me while we are sitting on the carpet at story time." Teaching students to express themselves in an appropriate way is a large part of the class meeting and student discourse.

WALK or IGNORE-Walk away or ignore the other person-This is not easy to do, but can help make a situation stop. So in the above situation, if the child doesn't stop leaning then the suggestion is to move to a different spot on the carpet.

ASK-Given kids worry about tattling we use the word **ask**. If a student has tried the above strategies then asking an adult for help is considered a very appropriate action. Even adults ask for help.

It is called BE COOL because we recognize that it isn't easy to do these strategies but if a child uses them then he or she shows a lot of courage and strength and is a COOL kid!

The Primary teachers also introduce the strategy called **TAKE 5 with the hand as the visual: (Created by our own Stephanie Brewster)**

1. **Is it good?** -Stop and think before you act.
2. **Is it right?**-Did you identify the problem.
3. **Is it helpful?**-Was your solution helpful? Can you develop another solution? (Does it fill his or her bucket? Does it make me happy?)
4. **Will it make my teacher** happy and 5. **Will it make my parents** happy? -Think about the good benefits (positive outcomes) of your actions-of your solution to the problem. In the TK-K and 1st grades the students need to learn about the importance of bucket-filling and the impact on self. Yet we all recognize that they are still very concerned with how their parents and teachers will react to what they do. Therefore, it becomes even more important to have your involvement and support so a growth mindset can be built.

TAKE 5 is put into simple terms and shared through stories to demonstrate to the TK and K students' real examples of situations they experience at school. Using these stories the teachers further explain each of the steps and what the thinking means.

This year we are fortunate to partner with the District and the Boys and Girls Club. Thanks to their support we have Interns supervised by certificated staff who also work with small groups or one-on-one to provide school-based strategies for building friendships. Thanks to having this staff we continue to learn other strategies to share with our students.

For example:

Another strategy shared with the students is **SODA**:

Situation—What is going on? A good place to use a mindfulness strategy to stop, focus and think.

Options? — What are the different choices you can make? Students work on brainstorming so that the development of strategies extends beyond pick up trash or be sent to the Principal's office.

Disadvantages— What are the disadvantages of each choice? (Could bad things happen?) It is important for students to learn that they have the power to make choices. Responsibility means making smart choices but also accepting whatever consequence results from that choice.

Advantages— What are the advantages of each choice? (Positive things could happen?)

Solution— What is the best solution based on the disadvantages and advantages?

Main Question before acting:

1. Does this keep me, the people around me and the things around me safe?
2. Could this have a consequence? If so, what? Is it a smart choice? Can I accept the consequences of that choice?

Strategies shared with students, for example:

Take deep breaths-Mindful Breathing

Walk away-Head up high, shoulders back and letting it go too

Tighten and loosen fists-Some people need a more physical/sensory based strategy

Think about things you are looking forward to-positive attitudes prevail!

Mind-dump-using a journal

Stomp on the grass, take a run, hit the tetherball or throw pillows-get out the energy-the blood that has risen-the anger...

Use squish balls, and other squeeze type stress control hand objects

Write out all the things in your head-even those things you can't say at school because this is a paper nobody is going to see then tear up the paper and throw them away.

Solution Teams

Join the Lunch Bunch group

These are just a few of the many strategies that are shared with students.

Remember that each situation and each child is different therefore finding the best solution takes patience and support. Unfortunately, when an interaction between two children occurs during class or PE, the teacher or Coach or specialist doesn't always have the time at that moment to address it the way all staff at Cabrillo would prefer. Therefore, students are provided with something to begin the process and support a cooldown. At Cabrillo, students are given a "Think About It" form to allow them to process and provide information immediately. The forms are created for both primary-pictures and upper-words/sentences. One of the new strategies this year, provided by a teacher is called a "Walking Ticket". This is another opportunity to reflect yet at the same time get outside for fresh air and exercise. Students may be given the opportunity to speak with the Principal. NOT because they are "in trouble" but to provide that opportunity to share, sort through the situation, and work to resolve it by learning strategies to ensure it does not happen again. Sometimes students are just provided with a "time-out" which means space and time to reflect. These types of strategies are implemented to let the child know that the adults are aware and care but at that moment cannot meet due to supervising another 25 at PE or in the middle of teaching a lesson.

**Thanks, in advance for continuing to work with all staff at Cabrillo as we build an environment of empathy, caring and compassion. Together we can be up-standers and fill the buckets of ALL students as we provide them with the necessary "tools" for their Life-tool-bag.

Attached you will find an article on cyber-bullying. With all the new technology in the world, this is another area for us as adults to be aware of and monitor. Often at the elementary age, students truly do not understand the impact of their technology/social media encounters/writings. Now is the time to intervene and teach.

Hand-in-Hand, Together We Can!

Filling Buckets and Developing the Future Together!

Dr. Pam Herkner

Principal