
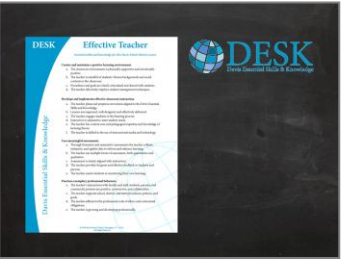




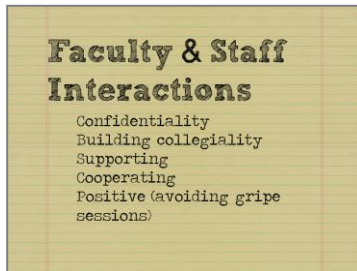
Effective Teacher: Professionalism

Objective: The following leader notes and corresponding PowerPoint are provided by the Curriculum and Instruction Department to school leaders as a support in training faculty members on timely and important subjects. Please feel free to use as is, or revise to best fit the needs of your faculty/staff.

<p>1</p> 	<p>This presentation deals with one of the elements critical to becoming, being, and remaining, an effective teacher. The major ideas and concepts which we'll be talking about are taken from the standards used by districts and professional organizations across the United States.</p>
<p>2</p> 	<p>Davis School District has simplified the standards for evaluation and suggestions for teacher professionalism and effectiveness into a single document which can be expressed in much the same way as we format standards for students. That is, in the DESK format. You may not have seen it before. Take a second and look at it now.</p> <p>[Handout 1-DESK: Effective Teacher. Allow teachers a moment or two to look at the handout if you decide to distribute copies.]</p>
<p>3</p> 	<p>Many of you are veteran teachers who have always been true professionals. You may be thinking that there is something "new" here – and you may be doubting that there could possibly be anything new. You're right! What it means to be a "professional" has not changed. But a reminder is always a good idea. And some teachers actually have good questions about some of the things we'll be talking about.</p> <p>NOTE: Use humor to alleviate fears among faculty members that they are being accused of being less than professionals. The presentation is a reminder and clarification from which all teachers can benefit.</p>
<p>4</p> 	<p>Today's presentation focuses on the 4th, and last, part of the DESK for teachers. This section states the following description of an effective teacher...in terms of professional behaviors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The teacher's interactions with faculty and staff, students, parents, and community partners are positive, constructive, and collaborative. b. The teacher supports school, district, and state procedures, policies, and goals. c. The teacher adheres to the professional code of ethics and contractual obligations. d. The teacher is growing and developing professionally. <p>We'll look at each one briefly, and separately.</p>

<p>5</p> 	<p>But first, what do we mean by “professionalism” exactly? We have probably all talked about the importance of behaving professionally, of being treated like professionalism, and of teaching as a “profession.” But do we really know what is meant by the term?</p>
<p>6</p> 	<p>Professionalism can be broadly defined as accepting responsibility for one's own professional development and growth. Specifically, it refers to exemplary practice, and being aware of and experimenting with new developments in the field. Professionalism has been defined as the incorporation of "specialized knowledge, self regulation, special attention to the unique needs of clients, autonomous performance and responsibility for client welfare."</p> <p>Think about each of these items...they are true of teachers, aren't they? Well, we didn't need to be told that teaching was a profession, or that teachers were (or at least should be) professionals. Let's look at the areas identified by the DESK for Effective Teachers.</p>
<p>7</p> 	<p>One of the ways teachers demonstrate their professionalism is through the types of interactions they have with the people they work with. The nature of a teacher's job places him or her to some very different kinds of relationships. Knowing how to act in each of them is a sign of true professionalism and this is the FIRST SUBTOPIC the DESK indicates.</p>
<p>8</p> 	<p>Teachers have relationships with their colleagues – like all professionals, but also with administrators (their supervisors in the workplace), students (this can be a wonderful, but sometimes tricky relationship), and parents (who are terribly interested in teachers due to the great impact they have on their children.) Each of these merits some consideration to remind us of things we probably already know, but may forget when interactions get “tough.”</p>
<p>9</p> 	<p>Authority is part of our society, and part of a school. In fact, a chain of command, so to speak, is what keeps our system orderly and functioning. In a school , the final “authority” is the head administrator.</p> <p>Many of the most important interactions with administrators involve working on school goals, the teacher's goals, or solving problems. Administrators usually welcome teachers' input and value the expertise and efforts of the faculty. Working together, they arrive at “consensus,” even if not always agreement. The hardest part of professionalism is what happens next: support.</p>

10



Good working relationships among staff members are a critical part of any school. Developing them is sometimes easy, and seems to come naturally. But other times, or with other teachers, it is much harder. It doesn't matter whether it is easy or hard, the relationships must be – at the very least – professional. At their best, they are positive, constructive, collegial, cooperative, and friendly.

Teachers support each other whenever they can. We know that team skills are important for students to develop, and they can learn some of these skills by watching how their teachers interact. Be a team player. Work together, eat together, attend school functions together when you can.

11



Teachers should take the initiative in establishing good relationships with the parents of their students. Remember that parents are our partners, or perhaps to put it even better, we are their partners, in the education of their children. Of course they are very concerned for the well-being of their children, as we are. If teachers work (and it is work) to initiate positive relationships with parents, early in the year, then everyone benefits from the positive interactions. Communication is key. Remember to focus on the idea that we all want the same thing as far as students are concerned: their success.

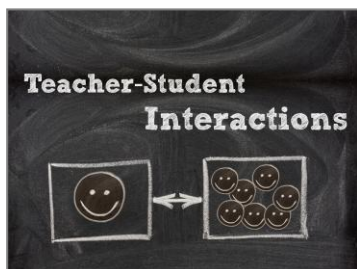
Three “R”s can be identified that might help. When we work with parents we should be **responsive** to their concerns. Reply quickly when they contact you. Always treat parents with **respect**. They are our clients just as much as their children are. They deserve respect just as you do. Many parents lack resources. Be **resourceful** for them. Offer parents ideas, help, and a hand. They'll probably take it.

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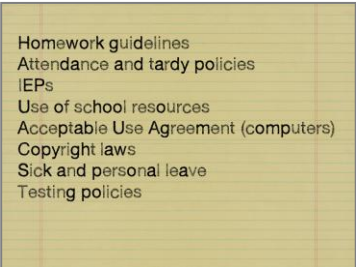
One other “R” bears noting; **resolution**. Sometimes our first interaction with a parent is when a concern has been raised. Whenever that is the case it's time to look for resolution. And as quickly as possible so that we can continue to work on learning goals, on curriculum. When a professional deals with a problem, the goal is not to “win;” it is to find resolution.

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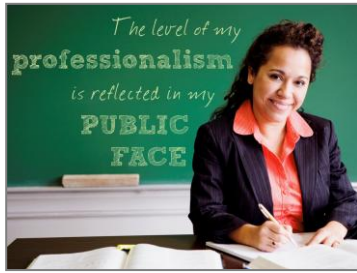


Finally, any teachers' most important day-to-day interactions are with students. Unlike the other three relationships, and interactions, in this case the teacher is the authority figure. And as such, should be pay special attention to the way he or she “conducts business” with students.

Here are five ideas that may help us see how important it is to make this relationship a professional one.

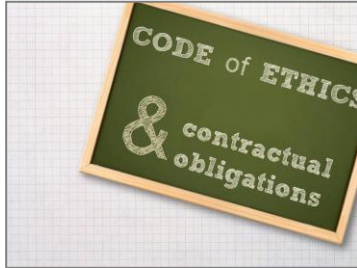
<p>14</p> 	<p>First of all, remember that students are our focus. Individual students: their needs, their goals, their concerns.</p> <p>Second, teachers are role models. We have to be on time, honest, hard-working, and productive if we expect our students to be.</p> <p>Third, we need to get to know each student as an individual as much as possible. Conference with your students regularly; informally or formally. But keep lines of communication OPEN.</p> <p>Fourth, remember that we do have to earn the respect of our students. Some students come to their teachers with great respect from the beginning, but others do not. Always be worthy of a student's respect.</p> <p>Finally, be fair. Students are quick to recognize justice, and quick to demand it. They are generally merciful, and expect that, too.</p>
<p>15</p> 	<p>These guidelines help us to accomplish the Davis School District's new motto: Learning First. Professional relationships with parents, fellow teachers, administrators, and students are critical to making school a place where learning is the focus.</p>
<p>16</p> 	<p>The SECOND PART of teacher professionalism which the DESK identifies deals with the way a teacher responds to school, district, and state policies and goals. Sometimes it seems like there a lot of them! Really, though, most teachers are in compliance without even trying. But sometimes there are areas that we could pay more attention to.</p>
<p>17</p> 	<p>Look at this list of items related to policies, procedures, and goals. We've received training on some of them, but not all of them. Think about how careful you are about complying with each of them. Some are probably easy, but others may be more difficult. A professional teacher tries to follow guidelines set by their school, district, and state as carefully as possible.</p> <p>[Principals may want to choose an example or two from this list which have been problems at the school and speak to the issue.]</p>

18



Teaching is a very public act. Teachers and schools are always on display; every day, all day. The things that we do and say here are discussed in homes, at parks and ball games, at dance recitals, and in churches. We need to make sure that our public face is professional. Whatever people may say or think about schools, they should not be able to wonder, or need to worry, about the level of professionalism that they see there.

19



The THIRD SUBTOPIC of teacher professionalism identified by DESK is similar: professional teachers adhere to a code of ethics and follow their contractual obligations.

It may have been a while since you took time to actually read the district's code of ethics. Turn to a neighbor and talk about 2 or 3 of the items listed in this short document. It is a good idea to reread it once in a while, just as a reminder.

[Distribute copies of Handout 2: Code of Ethics and allow teachers to discuss for a few moments. Alternatively, invite another administrator to point out some areas that he or she feels particularly worthy of note in your school.]

20



Remember that the Code of Ethics and the Professional Agreement are both designed to help teachers. Following their guidelines helps ensure a high level of professionalism. None of us would like to be mentioned in an article like the one shown here, and yet similar features appear in magazines and newspapers with despairing regularity.

21



One of the areas that can be a real problem is that of our "contract hours." Teachers work hard. And they work long hours at home. We all know this. But we still have contractual obligations requiring us to be "on the job" during specific hours. When teachers don't hold to these obligations it creates a bad impression for the public and problems for other teachers.

[Briefly remind teachers about the contract hours at your school.]

22



The language of the district code of ethics says that: "A professional appearance is encouraged for all educators. Care should be taken to dress in a manner which reflects well on the teaching profession and the District." But "professional dress" can mean many things to different people. Just what is it?

23



Well, most of us are pretty good at knowing what it is NOT. Teachers pretty much all agree that the things on this list are not appropriate for schools. But there are still questions.

NOTE: Two additional resources (*What to Wear* and *Dress for Work Success*) are included with this presentation which may provide support to teachers who struggle with issues of dress standards. Make them available if you feel they will be beneficial.

24



What are some the things you think might be questionable?

[Allow teachers to suggest ideas here. Don't make final decisions about what is or is not appropriate. Simply allow teachers to see that there are things that may be questionable to one person, that to another seems perfectly clear.]

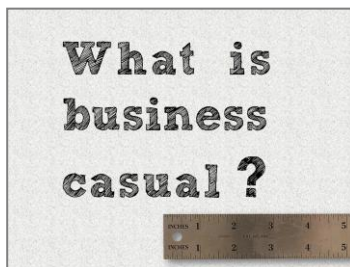
It's interesting how difficult it can be to determine what is or is not appropriately professional in terms of dress. The problem is faced by professionals other than teachers, and a solution has been offered.

25



One good method that has been suggested for deciding how “dressy” or how “casual” a professional should dress is this: The more contact one has with one’s clients, the more professional (i.e. “dressy”) the dress. If a business person has little or no contact with their clients, then a more casual look is okay. So...who are OUR clients? Students, parents, and community members, of course. And how often do we have contact with them. Well, every single day.

26



Business casual is the term that most schools use to describe the level of professional dress required for their teachers. It is less formal than “business” but more dressy than “casual.” Even still, many people are unsure what is meant by this term. One administrator– in describing his teachers in particular – has said: The faculty needs to meet and exceed the dress code for students. (paraphrased from Gill, p. 3)

27



So here is a common description of business casual clothing items. You can ask yourself if this reflects your own standard of clothing for school.

[Read the lists and discuss briefly as necessary.]

28



So how about this look? Many of our teachers dress just like this. He certainly meets the standard we set for students. But does he look like a professional to you?

[Allow teachers to respond in with their neighbors or to the whole group. The emphasis should be on the fact that the man is NOT dressed in business casual attire.]

Here's a great rule of thumb: "If your school has a "Dress Down Day," your students should be able to notice that you're participating in the fun. I they can't tell the difference, you need to pay more attention to what you wear to school." (Gill, p. 16)

29



What about our language? We teach the importance of vocabulary in every classroom. Mostly we talk about "content" and "academic" vocabulary, but part of being a professional is modeling for students the way that adults communicate with each other, especially in a public setting like a school. Our students should see us as model communicators in every way. There is obviously no room in schools for cuss words, but crude and coarse language often is heard from teachers. We should dress like the professionals we are, and sound like them, too.

30



There is another element of our communication which greatly reflects on our professionalism; the written communication we offer to the public.

Think of the many ways we communicate, in a written format, with students, parents, and community. The documents that come from a school should reflect the quality of the professionals who work there. Make certain that your work is to the highest of quality.

31



We have become so accustomed to the computer fixing our mistakes, that sometimes we think it actually has when it hasn't. There is no substitute for good proofreading. At one school, teachers are encouraged to pair up as "buddies" who proofread everything that goes out to parents and community. We can read not only for spelling and grammar errors, but also to make sure that the tone is what we want, and that the message is clearly conveyed. In some schools, everything that is hung on walls in hallways of the school has to be approved – proofread, in essence – by a committee of students and teachers before it can go up. The goal? The creation of a professional "look and feel" throughout the building. Our schools don't need to go this far, but teachers, again, should have a high standard for themselves in this area.

32



Our classrooms also reflect the level of our professional training. A teacher's classroom is similar in many ways a working laboratory is to a scientist. They both contain the tools of the trade, the necessary raw materials, space for the folks who work there, and records/data/information which is produced and studied there.

Classrooms have distinctive personalities, and each is different, reflecting the subject or grade-level, the teacher's personality, and collective personality of the students. But they should also have some things in common.

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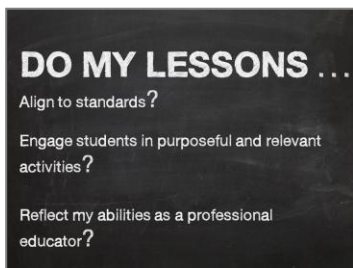
These words could be used to describe classrooms. Of course, the main purpose of any classroom is to serve the learning needs of the students, and these words indicate that. Think about your own classroom? Are these words that students, and visiting parents, would use to describe it? We hope so. Two classrooms which look very different from each other, reflecting the uniqueness of their schools and teachers, should still BOTH be able to be described as organized, inviting, and safe.

34



The final element of professionalism identified by DESK for teachers reminds us that teachers, like all other professionals, continue to hone the skills they have and develop new skills related to their area of expertise – that is, to *teaching*. We all believe that there is nothing more important to a student's education – *nothing* – than the quality of the instruction they receive.

35



One way to think about this is to think about the instruction that we deliver; what is its quality? We are very aware of these questions when we are being observed, but probably less-so on a day-to-day basis. But that doesn't mean these questions aren't critical EVERY SINGLE day. We should be good at what we do: that's what our degrees are in; that's what we're trained to do well; that's what we are *professionals* in.

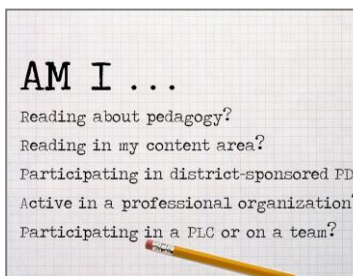
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All of us need to be role models in the idea of life-long learning and professional growth. OUR homework needs to be done, too. Our profession is changing: society is changing, technology is changing, the architecture is changing, and student needs are evolving. How can we keep up with it?

The other three parts of the DESK for Effective Teachers address these kinds of issues: classroom management, instructional technique, and assessments. Take advantage of opportunities to learn about and improve in each of these areas when it is available.

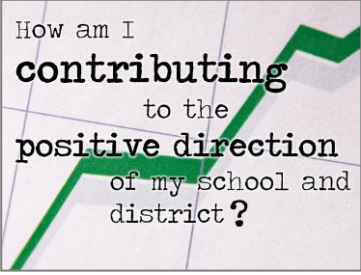

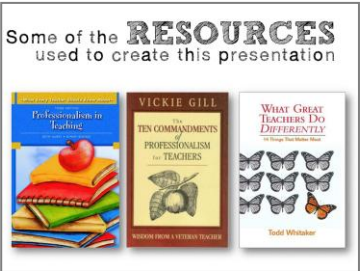
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Think about these questions:

Am I reading about current best practices in my grade or discipline?
 Am I continuing to expand my own content knowledge?
 Am I taking advantage of professional development opportunities?
 Am I contributing to others in my area in some way?

True professionals can answer yes to most or all of these questions.

<p>38</p> 	<p>One final question to ask ourselves: How am I contributing to the positive direction of my school district?</p> <p>Davis School District is going places, learning, growing, and developing. We are on the cutting edge of many things; learning spaces (architecture), language immersion programs, gifted education and AP Programs, science education, and more. We can all be part of these exciting developments. And we should be.</p>
<p>39</p> 	<p>In short, here in Davis we are proud of our schools and our teachers. In many ways we are already the “best of the best” but by paying attention to issues of professionalism we can become even better.</p>
<p>40</p> 	<p>Any one of these books, each of which served as a resource for part of this presentation, is a great place to learn about teacher professionalism.</p>

References:

Davis School District Policy Manual, 2010-2011

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<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewsnetworking/a/businesscasual.htm>

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Professionalism in Teaching (Beth Hurst and Ginny Reding)

The Ten Commandments of Professionalism for Teachers (Vickie Gill)

What Great Teachers Do Differently (Todd Whitaker)