

## Teacher Quality Standard II

**Teachers establish a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students.**

*The most important action an effective teacher takes at the beginning of the year is creating a climate for learning.*

*—Mary Beth Blegan, former U.S. Department of Education teacher-in-residence*

A positive classroom environment enhances the academic achievement of all students, promotes appropriate classroom behavior, and is welcoming to families and adults. A respect for diversity and the uniqueness of each individual is valued. A sense of community is created in which members encourage and promote the learning of each other through collaboration, communication, and mutual respect as they work to achieve individual and common goals.

### Element F

**Teachers create a learning environment characterized by acceptable student behavior, efficient use of time and appropriate intervention strategies.**

*Effective classroom management is essentially invisible, because when students are well-behaved and engaged, the focus is on instruction and learning.*

*—Rick Smith*

Professional practices referenced under each element of the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers are cumulative. Therefore, for teachers to be proficient in creating a learning environment characterized by acceptable student behavior, they must communicate clear behavioral expectations and hold students accountable to adhere to their expectations. Teachers must also implement procedures that create a safe and orderly learning environment that results in instructional time being maximized by all students.

#### **BASIC RATING LEVEL**

##### **PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: THE TEACHER:**

- ***Provides clear expectations to guide student classroom behavior.***

According to Marzano, Gaddy, Foseid, Foseid, & Marzano (2005), “Establishing rules and shared expectations for general conduct helps to lay a solid foundation for effective classroom management.” (p. 9)

Just as the teacher takes time to plan instruction of academic content, the teacher should plan for the teaching and reinforcing of classroom rules. Unfortunately, many teachers make the mistake of limiting their “teaching” to reading or stating the rules for acceptable behavior and fail to actually teach them. Students do not learn writing skills from just hearing them stated, but rather from seeing them taught and modeled with opportunities for practice. Similarly, students need to see and hear the teacher model behavioral expectations and have opportunities to practice in order to internalize them and take responsibility for their own actions.

The most effective classroom management comes in the form of strategies that prevent acting out before it occurs. And those strategies arise from assuming that our students want to be here, want to participate, and specifically, want to learn good behavior. (Smith & Lambert, 2008, p. 16)



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When establishing rules and consequences, it is useful to keep in mind that typically the goal is to have students be responsible for their own behaviors—this way they will learn the life skill of self-management. Therefore, students must understand the reasoning behind each rule and know the potential consequences if the rule is violated. The consequences should be logical and student-based—not labor intensive for the teacher. For example, if a parent is to be called about an infraction, make the child responsible for making that phone call and explaining his or her actions. (Erlauer, 2003)

Teachers may enlist students in setting and maintaining standards of **classroom behavior**. By soliciting student participation, teachers can contribute to students’ feelings of ownership and increase the likelihood of students following behavioral expectations.

*See also Standard II, Element B, Proficient Professional Practice, Establishes processes that result in a sense of community among students.*

*Refer to these external resources for additional information:*

- Excerpt from *Educator’s Guide to Preventing and Solving Discipline Problems* by Mark Boynton and Christine Boynton  
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/105124/chapters/Establishing-Clearly-Defined-Parameters-of-Acceptable-Classroom-Behaviors.aspx>  
Excerpt provides guidelines and questions to support teachers in the establishing of rules to guide classroom behavior.
  - Article: “Keys to Classroom Management” by Robert and Jana Marzano  
<http://home.comcast.net/~reasoned/4410/PDFonCRM/Marzano%20Keys%20CRM.pdf>  
Article describes research-based strategies for establishing effective classroom management.
  - Article: “Assuming the Best” by Rick Smith and Mary Lambert  
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept08/vol66/num01/Assuming-the-Best.aspx>  
Article describes strategies for teaching behavior expectations.
  - Website  
<http://www.adprima.com/managing.htm>  
Website provides a variety of tips for establishing classroom management.
- ***Holds students accountable for adherence to school and/or class rules.***

A teacher’s behavioral expectations are only as strong as his or her plan for holding students accountable. When planning behavioral expectations, a teacher should ensure the expectations are appropriate for the age of the students and are ones that can be consistently upheld and reinforced.

When a teacher responds to misbehavior quickly and respectfully, the chance of the student correcting his behavior increases. An effective teacher is consistent and fair in applying consequences with students based on the immediate behavior and not past experiences. Teachers should also focus on correcting the behavior rather than making it personal. This allows the student to maintain his dignity and makes it more likely that he will accept the consequence and make behavioral changes. (*Eagle County Schools Professional Practices Rubric, 2012, p. 70*)

*Refer to this external resource for additional information:*

- Article: “Building Safer, Saner Schools” by Laura Mirsky  
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept11/vol69/num01/Building-Safer,-Saner-Schools.aspx>

Article describes practices for helping students learn to confront their unacceptable behavior and the consequences of their behavior on others in order to build a community of learners



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