



CHARACTER EDUCATION AT BENNINGTON SCHOOLS

R-E-S-P-E-C-T, as sung by Aretha Franklin, is being heard through the Bennington Elementary School; and students are dancing to the music. Not just for fun (and it is fun!!), this is being done to teach about how to have REPECT for ourselves and for others.

It is easy to say that we need to “Respect” by just saying “treat others the way you want them to treat yourself,” but do we always have enough SELF-respect to know how to do that. In this school year, our goal is to provide students with the tools, information and practice time to actually live-up-to the:

Rings of RESPECT

In the center of the rings is the “self.” For the next few weeks:

1. Students will discover the “dance” of RESPECT, so watch out if the radio plays Aretha Franklin’s R-E-S-P-E-C-T. You might find yourself dancing and Singing: “Whoop, Whoop, Whoop.”
2. Students will work on identifying emotions/feelings. People can usually identify happy, sad and mad, but there are other emotional labels that are more accurate. Feelings such as frustrated, joyful, hopeful, confused may not be as easily understood and sometimes be confused with happy, sad or mad.
3. Students will learn about “basic respect” toward the self as there are some levels of respect that don’t need to be earned. These include not harming the self, being honest with the self, and not insulting the self. When we are not able to do these, we say that there is low self-respect or low self-esteem.
4. Students will discuss that if we want to have respect from others, we need to respect ourselves. It may seem obvious, but there are many times we allow others to treat us badly, because we think others “don’t know better.” Perhaps we are not willing to stand up to those people, because we don’t want to lose them in our lives. So we become victims.
5. Students will have a chance to do better physically. When we make an effort to keep our bodies in working order, we feel better and have a sense of pride. Being more concerned about our proportions is not as healthy as having a good BMI. What we wear and how we move our bodies is not as important as learning what we can and cannot control.

The more we know about ourselves, the more we will appreciate how we are unique and the more we will respect ourselves. Hopefully our students will stop pandering to other peer's approval and discover their own personalities and talents.

FYI: The dance steps of R-E-S-P-E-C-T:

Flip right hand 4 times, Flip left hand 4 times, Push right arm 4 times, Push left hand 4 times, Thumb to right, left, right, right. Thumb to left, right, left, left, Wrap right arm to left hip, Wrap left arm to right hip, Right hand to right hip, Left hand to left hip, Sprinkler to the right three times (don't forget to "Whoop") and Clap. Repeat.