Vision
Our vision in Vista Unified is to be the model of educational excellence and innovation.

Mission
The purpose of Vista Unified School District is to inspire every student to persevere as a critical thinker who collaborates to solve real world problems.

VUSD Values
RESPECT - treating all with dignity
TRUST - having confidence that every decision focuses on the best interests of all students.
COLLABORATION - working in a collective partnership with clear two-way dialogue that builds relationships among home, school and the community.

Inside this issue:
Following Lesson Plans is Important 1
Establishing Routines 2
Pause, Prompt, and Praise 2
Classroom Management: Responding to Inappropriate Behavior 3
Important Dates 4
Principal’s Corner 4

Following Lesson Plans is Important

A lesson plan is a detailed description of the individual lessons that a teacher plans to teach on a given day. A lesson plan is developed by a teacher to guide instruction throughout the day. It is a method of planning and preparation. A lesson plan traditionally includes the name of the lesson, the date of the lesson, the objective the lesson focuses on, the materials that will be used, and a summary of all the activities that will be used. Furthermore, lesson plans provide a terrific set of guidelines for substitute teachers.

Lesson Plans are the Foundation of Teaching
Lesson plans are the teachers equivalent of a blueprint for a construction project. Unlike construction, where there is an architect, construction manager, and a myriad of construction workers involved, there is often only one teacher. They design lessons with a purpose and then use them to carry out the instruction to construct skilled, knowledgeable students. Lesson plans guide the daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly instruction within a classroom. Therefore, it is essential that you follow the lesson plans in all assignments.

From time to time, substitute teachers will go to a classroom and find that there are no lesson plans waiting for them. Always remember to inform the office and administration when you do not have lesson plans. The Substitute Handbook that you received during orientation also has emergency lesson plans. Coming prepared with additional activities and ideas of things to do with students will assist with transitions and extra time you might need to fill.

After you complete an assignment, a teacher wants to know how your day went. Leave a detailed note, including what the students did and how you handled it. Address any issues you may have had with the curriculum. Include information about student responses, questions, or support the students required. Teachers can adjust future lessons as needed.

Reference:
Establishing Routines: Entry Routine and Threshold

Your entry routine describes how you expect students to enter the classroom and how the classroom session begins. In the absence of a conscious entry routine, an unconscious, often inefficient one takes over by default.

A good entry routine is planned to proceed quickly and automatically with little or no narration by the teacher. It becomes part of the classroom culture for the day. A significant amount of time transpires between when students enter the room and the moment a teacher begins formal instruction. An entry routine aims at getting students to use that time productively.

Whatever the entry routine includes, manage the time so that your expectations are clear and students do not gradually pressure you into expanding to an ever larger amount of unproductive time.

Threshold means meeting students at the door, setting your classroom culture expectations before they even enter the room. This is the single most important moment for setting those expectations. Threshold technique is part of establishing and maintaining strong positive, disciplined systems and routines in your classroom. These are the basic elements:

- **See both sides.** Stand where you can see the room and the hall.
- **Control the flow.** Stand where you control movement in and out as much as possible; it’s your right and responsibility to control how quickly and when students enter.
- **Shake hands!** This builds a tone of civility and should cause each student to pause and make eye contact.
- **Reset expectations.** Use Threshold as an opportunity to remind and reset students who are in danger of slipping. A gentle reminder of your expectations will go a long way for students struggling to improve.
- **Use positive chatter.** Build positive rapport and connections to students with brief personalized comments—“Looking sharp, John!”

### Basic Elements of Threshold

- See both sides
- Control the flow
- Shake hands
- Reset expectations
- Use positive chatter

### Pause, Prompt, and Praise

One strategy that makes effective use of praise is an adaption of what is commonly referred to as “Pause, Prompt, and Praise”. This strategy is best used while students are engaged in a particularly demanding task with which they are having difficulty.

During the “pause” phase of the strategy, the teacher asks the student to stop working on the task for a moment. As a “prompt,” the teacher provides the student with some specific suggestion for improving his or her performance. If the student’s performance improves as a result of implementing this suggestion, then “praise” is given.

*Reference: Classroom Instruction that Works, Marzano, Robert, Picking, Debra, Pollock, Jane. ASCD, 2001.*
Classroom Management: Responding to Inappropriate Behavior

For the most part, inappropriate student behavior, regardless of how annoying it is, is inconsequential. This means that it is not life threatening, it isn’t going to destroy the building or its contents. A substitute teacher responding to inconsequential student behavior is actually reinforcing it, and the frequency of these behaviors will likely increase. A better tactic is to ignore inconsequential behavior and respond positively to appropriate behavior with a smile, verbal praise, and other appropriate gestures.

There are, however, inappropriate student behaviors which are consequential and require a teacher response. Such behaviors would include those in which a student persists in disruptive behavior and is increasingly destroying the learning environment, when students are physically or verbally abusive to one another, and so forth.

The most common, and least effective, response to these types of behaviors is coercion, “you had better knock it off or else…” Coercion makes a student want to escape or avoid their coercer. It does nothing to address the problem. At best, it will instill a sense of fear in students which prevents them from acting out. While on the surface the problem seems to have gone away, in reality you’ve threatened the student’s self-confidence and destroyed the atmosphere of risk-free student response opportunities you are trying to create.

A better way to handle such situations is to stop and then re-direct student behavior. This should be done as privately and quietly as possible. The following are six steps for stopping and re-directing inappropriate student behavior:

1. Say something positive.
2. Briefly describe the problem behavior.
3. Describe the desired alternative behavior.
4. Give a reason why the new behavior is more desirable.
5. Practice the desired behavior.
6. Provide positive feedback.

Another aspect of responding noncoercively to consequential inappropriate behavior is the application of consequences. You should never threaten consequences that are unenforceable or unreasonable. Threatening a noncompliant student with statements such as, “If you do that one more time, I’m going to send you to the principal, get you suspended from school, and demand that you are never allowed in a class I substitute teach again!” is foolish. Furthermore, it eliminates all of your power. If the student does act out again, you will not be able to enforce the consequence you have threatened. In a sense, you will have become a tiger without teeth or claws.

Consequences should always be made known to students before they are administered. In other words, consequences should not be sprung on students out of nowhere after the behavior has already taken place. Students need to know in advance what they can expect as a result of their behavior, both positive and negative, so that they can make informed choices about how to behave. It is a good idea to discuss consequences while addressing the expectations or rules for the classroom or particular activity.

Reference:

Respond positively to appropriate behavior
Stop, then re-direct inappropriate behavior
Don’t threaten consequences you can’t carry out

If you have any questions on using the SmartFind Express, please contact Laura Lemly:
lauralemly@vistausd.org (760)726-2170, ext. 92207
VUSD Beliefs

We believe that...

All students have a unique capacity to learn.

Risk taking, effort and perseverance lead to excellence and innovation.

Individuals learn and work best in a safe, nurturing environment.

Important Dates

March 13 & 15          6-8 Parent Teacher Conferences  (Minimum Days)
March 15 – 16           MVHS Finals (Minimum Days)
March 26-30             Spring Break

Principal’s Corner

Thank you to the following substitute teachers from our site Principals:

Sara Wright has been an amazing addition to our team as our site substitute. She is flexible and always comes to work with a smile. She welcomes each assignment with a great attitude and students love working with her. She is innovative and has established a great rapport with all staff, students and parents.

Brenda Klicsu stepped in as a long-term sub for AVHS math classes. Prior to taking over, she volunteered her time to meet with the teacher going out on leave to plan for the transition. In her 2+ months here, she has formed relationships with students, provided tutoring assistance, assigned grades, and maintained the quality of classroom instruction.

Kim Morton, Principal at T.H.E. Leadership Academy

Susan Ford, Principal at Alta Vista High School