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.

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Setting the Tone: Prepare for Disruptions

Good classroom management goes hand-in-hand with student expectations. To achieve good classroom management, educators must understand how social and emotional learning (SEL) influences classroom management design. Meeting both academic and SEL goals require less disciplinary action. During the months of November and December, we focused on two classroom management tactics: planning for blocks of time, and how to plan engaging instruction. This month, we will focus on our third tactic that makes effective use of your instructional time while supporting all students.

Tactic three: Prepare for Disruptions
A typical school day is loaded with disruptions, from announcements on the PA system to a student acting out in class. Teachers need to be flexible and develop a series of plans to deal with anticipated classroom disruptions, which rob students of precious in-class time.

Prepare for transitions and potential disruptions. Consider the following suggestions:
Place lesson objectives and resources in an area of the classroom where students can see them. Tell students where they can find lesson information on the board or online. In the event of a fire drill or lockdown, students should know where to access emergency information. Identify the typical times for student disruptions and misbehavior. This is usually at the start of the lesson or class period, when topics change or at the conclusion of a lesson or class period. Be ready to redirect students when they get off the established routine (s).

Greet Students by name at the door to get a feel for their moods/temperament. Engage students immediately with independent or collaborative opening activities.

Diffuse conflicts (student-to-student or student-to-teacher) in the classroom with a series of steps that redirect the student, engage the student in dialogue, temporarily relocate the student to a designated “cooling off” area or, if a situation warrants, speak to a student as privately as possible. Teachers should use a non-threatening tone in private talks with misbehaving students.

As a last resort, consider removing a student from the classroom, but first alert the main office or guidance department. Removing a student from the classroom gives both parties a chance to cool off, but it should never become a routine practice.

Classroom Management: Positive Teacher-to-Pupil Interactions

On the average, teachers allow about 98% of all appropriate behavior to go unrecognized and are two to three times more likely to recognize inappropriate behavior than they are to recognize appropriate behavior. Student behaviors are reinforced by being recognized. It has been shown that strengthening desirable behavior through positive reinforcement, rather than trying to weaken undesirable behavior using aversive or negative processes, will do more to make a classroom conducive to learning than any other single skill.

In general, positive verbal praise, a smile, a nod, and other appropriate gestures are among the very best ways to interact in a positive manner with students. Negative and corrective interactions should be outnumbered by positive interactions at a rate of about one negative to a minimum of eight positive. It is advisable that teachers have at least 20 to 25 positive interactions with their students during every class hour.

To become more positive, it is generally necessary to learn new skills. Just saying to yourself that you are going to be more positive and less negative will probably not be sufficient. You must practice positive interaction skills until they become second nature in order to implement them efficiently and effectively. One way to do this is to identify those situations in which you are most inclined to be negative and to describe those situations in writing. Using a form such as the one below can be helpful. On the left side of the paper, describe the problem or inappropriate behavior which is most likely to elicit a negative response from you. On the right side of the paper, write a positive, proactive response which could be used instead. Once the positive response has been developed it needs to be practiced in order to become a natural response. Have a fellow teacher, friend, or family member play the part of the student behaving inappropriately and practice responding in a positive manner. Remember that you are learning a new skill, and that in order to become proficient it must be practiced many times.

Situations will arise which will cause these positive interactions you have practiced to completely escape your recollection. When you can’t think of an appropriate way to respond and are overwhelmed with the urge to react in a negative manner, don’t do anything! Unless what you are about to say or do has a high probability of making things better, don’t say it and don’t do it.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anticipated Problem</th>
<th>Positive, Proactive Response</th>
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<td>Two students talking instead of working on their assignment</td>
<td>I’ll either reinforce a behaving student, then look for an opportunity 30 seconds to a minute later to verbally reinforce the talking students for being on-task, or I’ll reteach my expectations followed 30 seconds to a minute later by a verbal praise for being on-task.</td>
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Reference:
Classroom Instruction: Checking for Understanding

As most teachers know, checking for student understanding is essential, but the pressures of the daily classroom make it difficult to do effectively. Following this technique will help you be consistent, thorough, and responsive. Checking for Understanding is shorthand for two actions:

1. While you teach, constantly assess what your students understand. Gather responses from not just one but several students who represent different levels of achievement and performance. Use the data to estimate how many in your class are understanding and what segments of the class you might have left behind. In this process, ask Cold Call questions with the conscious purpose of sampling understanding. Also Circulate as students do desk work, with the conscious purpose of sampling levels of mastery in written answers. Exit Ticket is yet another technique to Check for Understanding.

2. Respond to misunderstanding by reteaching, and usually reteaching differently. There’s no point to checking unless you also respond — the more promptly the better — to improve understanding. The shorter the delay, the more likely the intervention will work.

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<tr>
<th>Cold Call</th>
<th>Circulate</th>
<th>Exit Ticket</th>
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<td>Call on students to answer questions regardless of whether their hands are in the air. This requires that everyone pays attention, and pushes all students to answer all of your questions in their minds. Allow students to think, then call on random students. If a student doesn’t know the answer tell the student you will come back to them. Encourage the student to listen to other students answer the question. Then go back to that student after other students have answered the question.</td>
<td>Involves moving strategically around the room during a lesson, getting nearer to students when that's necessary for learning or for managing behavioral expectations. Circulate doesn't assume that proximity itself is necessarily all that’s required. Circulate means building your consciousness of how closer proximity can identify what else you do to address a need. Move through the classroom constantly and intentionally.</td>
<td>Tickets get passed out at the end of the class or lesson and include one or more questions that assess one or more parts of the objective. Every student receives the same question(s). Each student does the work and writes the answer(s) on his or her sheet, and you collect all sheets as or before students leave. For younger students the answer can be verbal. Check the answers. Did your students master the skill? Modify the next lesson to clarify or reteach.</td>
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Professional Development

Our third professional development session, “Special Education” is scheduled for Monday, February 4th from 4:00—7:30 p.m. in the VUSD District Office Board Room. Participants will be compensated at the half-day substitute rate. Jana Hegg who is a District Supervisor for Special Education, will present on inclusion and behavior management for all ages and classrooms. During the second week of January, we will send out a notification to register for Session #3. Space is limited to 30 participants. After the first 30 registered participants, we will create a waiting list. We hope to see you there!

If you have any questions on using the SmartFind Express, please contact Laura Lemly:
laurelemly@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

December 21-January 5 Winter Recess
(School Resumes January 9th)

January 8 HS PD Day (Non-Student Day)
K-8 Non-Student Day/Non Staff Day

January 12 District Staff Development Day (Non-Student Day)

January 15 Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday
(Holiday)

Principal’s Corner

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

- Shelly Hildreth is amazing! She is always positive and nurturing with students and has excellent classroom management. She makes an effort to get to know every student by name and show them how much she cares. She embodies the Bobcat spirit!

- Julie Wach is a model substitute teacher. She is at the top of the list for all teachers. She goes above and beyond to serve our students in all grade levels and special education. We love having her on campus and appreciate her dedication and hard work.

Krista Bernsten,
Principal—Lake Elementary School

Charlene Smith,
Principal—Monte Vista Elementary School