

**Herod Elementary School
PTO Meeting
Tuesday, October 20, 2009**

Welcome

Kristin Reeves

Reports:

**Principal Report
Treasurer Report**

**Andrew Johnson
Celeste Mee**

Committees:

**Rainbow's End
Gift Wrap
Book Fair
Directory**

**Tammy Feldstein
Kristin Reeves
Jenny Skjonsby
Danna Garcia/Kristin Reeves**

Closing Comments

Announcements:

**Wed, 10/21
Thurs, 10/22
Fri, 10/23
Sat, 10/24
Mon, 10/26
Mon, 10/26
Wed, 10/28
Wed, 10/28
Thur, 10/29
Fri, 10/30
Tues, 11/3
Wed, 11/4
Thurs, 11/12 – Fri, 11/13
Mon, 11/16 – Fri, 11/20
Mon, 11/16- Fri, 11/20
Thurs, 11/19
Fri, 11/20**

**Herod Night @ Gugliani's
Cici's Pizza Night
Gift Wrap Delivery- need volunteers
OM Coaches Training
Class Picture Day
Chick-Fil-A Night
No Early Dismissal
Teacher Appreciation
Student Led Open House, 5:30-7:00
Early Dismissal 12:30
Election Day
Report Cards
Book Fair Preview
Book Fair
Magnet Awareness Week
Book Fair Dinner and Literacy Night
(tickets must be pre-purchased)
Teacher Appreciation**

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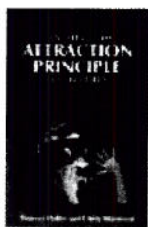
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Ten Rules for Talking to Your Children about Grades by Chick Moorman and Thomas Haller

- My teen came home with a poor report card. How do I talk to her about it?
- I want to praise my son for his recent grades but I don't want to go overboard. How should I handle it?
- What do you say to a child who has a decent report card but you know they could do so much better?

These are just a few of the questions we have received in recent weeks via email, at workshops, or from clients. These parents, who place a high emphasis on grades, want to know what to say and how to talk to children about the grades and the comments teachers place on their report cards. To that end, we offer the following ten rules for talking to your children about grades.

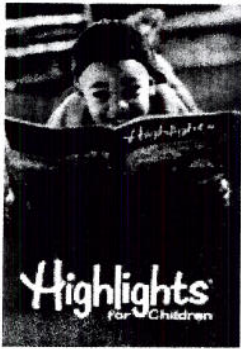


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1. **Begin early.** Talk with your children about grades before report cards come out. Clearly define what you think about grades and what expectations you have for your children regarding grades from the beginning of their school experience. Don't wait until you hold a report card in your hands before you begin this important communication.
2. **Remember, your children are not their grades.** Grades are only a partial reflection of who and what they really are, know, and are capable of becoming. Grades measure only what your child's particular school defines as smart. That narrow definition of intelligence does not measure emotional intelligence, spontaneity, integrity, trustworthiness, fortitude, sensitivity, creativity and a host of other important characteristics.
3. **Rewards are ineffective if a love of learning is your goal.** Paying kids ten dollars for each A, treating them to ice cream if they bring home a good report card, or buying a new video game if they get on the honor role promotes only short-term results at best. What getting rewards for grades really teaches children is that you don't study so you can learn and grow, you study so you can get a treat or special concert tickets. You are teaching your children that learning is not



**Give your child
Fun With a
Purpose!**

the goal; grades are.

4. **Move up in consciousness before you move in with action.** Take three deep breaths or count to ten before you say anything in response to a report card. Talk to yourself before you talk to the child. Remind yourself that he or she is not his or her grades. [REDACTED] Remember that what is, is. You cannot change these grades. They are what they are. It is where the child goes from here, what she does with the information that is on the report card, that is important. The next step is the only one that can be taken now. When you have all that in mind and you are emotionally under control, move to action using the following rules for discussing grades.
5. **Listen more than talk.** When discussing a report card, ask lots of questions. Ask your child: How do you feel about these grades? What do you attribute them to? Were there any surprises on this report card for you? What are you most proud of? Are there any disappointments here for you? What is one goal you have for next time?
6. **Be descriptive rather than evaluative.** Evaluative words like "good job," "excellent," "superb," "lousy," "pitiful," and "poor" are not helpful. Evaluation does not teach or give the child useful information. Describe what you see and leave the evaluation for the child. "Looks like you're a bit down from last time." "Two teachers mentioned missing assignments." Children who receive a positive report card need affirmation, not evaluation. Affirm what they have accomplished with descriptive comments. "I notice you went up in two classes." "Every one of your teachers said they enjoyed having you in class."
7. **Separate the deed from the doer.** "I love you and I don't like this report card" helps the child see that it is the results you don't enjoy, not the person. Help your children see that they are not their report card. Likewise, stay away from comments such as, "I love you so much when you bring home a report card like this." This style of communication obviously tells the child that your love is linked to high grades, so if the grades go down so will your love.
8. **Focus on solution seeking.** Dwelling on what you have defined as a problem brings negative energy to the situation and keeps you stuck in what is. Attention to solution seeking infuses the discussion with positive energy and helps you concentrate on moving things forward to a different ending. Fix the problem rather than fixing blame by searching for solutions.
9. **Punishments don't work.** Consequences and natural outcomes do. What are natural consequences of poor grades? Having a tutor work with you on Saturday mornings. Going to a learning specialist three days a week after school. Investing part of your summer retaking a class. Explain to your child that "opportunity equals responsibility." When the responsibility stays up (a satisfactory report card), so does the opportunity to choose your own activities on Saturday mornings. When the responsibility drops, so does the opportunity.
10. **Communicate positive expectations.** One of the best things you can do for your children is to expect their success and communicate that to them. Use

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The Power of Common Assessments

One of the most powerful, high-leverage strategies for improving student learning available to schools is the creation of frequent, common, high-quality formative assessments by teachers who are working collaboratively to help a group of students develop agreed-upon knowledge and skills (Fullan, 2005a; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Reeves, 2004; Schmoker, 2003; Stiggins, 2005). Such assessments serve a distinctly different purpose than the state and provincial tests that have become the norm in North America, and we draw from the work of Rick Stiggins (2002, 2005) to clarify the differences.

State and provincial tests are summative assessments: attempts to determine if students have met intended standards by a specified deadline. They are assessments *of* learning, typically measuring many things infrequently. They can provide helpful information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of curricula and programs in a district, school, or department, and they often serve as a means of promoting institutional accountability. The infrequency of these end-of-process measurements, however, limits their effectiveness in providing the timely feedback that guides teacher practice and student learning.

Formative assessments are assessments *for* learning that measure a few things frequently. These timely in-process measurements can inform teachers individually and collectively regarding the effectiveness of their practice. Furthermore, these teacher-made assessments identify which students have learned each skill and which have not, so that those who are experiencing difficulty can be provided with additional time and support for learning. When done well, they advance and motivate, rather than merely check on student learning. The clearly defined goals and descriptive feedback to students provide them with specific insights regarding how to improve, and the growth they experience helps build their confidence as learners (Stiggins, 2002). These timely team assessments, when combined with classroom teachers' skillful ongoing assessment of student proficiency in precise skills on a daily basis, create a powerful synergy for learning.

Doug Reeves (2000) uses an analogy to draw a sharp distinction between summative and formative assessments, comparing the former to an autopsy and the latter to a physical examination. A summative test, like an autopsy, can provide useful information that explains why the patient has failed, but the information comes too late, at least from the patient's perspective. A formative assessment, like a physical examination, can provide both the physician and the patient with timely information regarding the patient's well-being and can help in prescribing antidotes to help an ailing person or to assist a healthy patient in becoming even stronger.

Common, team-developed formative assessments are such a powerful tool in school improvement that, once again, no team of teachers should be allowed to



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