

EDUCATOR INSIGHTS

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New Teachers' Corner: Keeping Your Cool in School

SUBMITTED BY: Kim Sanders

Temple Grandin, a leading advocate in the autistic community, once said “I cannot emphasize enough the importance of a good teacher.” How true. Often, you will hear those that have experienced great success credit one single teacher for inspiring them to make the world a better place. And after all, isn't that why most teachers choose this profession - to make a difference in the life of a child?



The energy and optimism of new teachers often permeates a classroom. However, it is not long before they realize that teaching is not only one of the most rewarding careers, it can also be one of the most demanding. Whether teaching in a special needs or mainstream classroom, teachers will quickly encounter children with challenging behavior. These outbursts can be severe and even include aggressive language, destruction of property, self-inflicted injury or physically acting out towards another student or teacher. How teachers choose to respond can have a lasting effect on the children in their care.

If you are a new teacher, there are a number of things to remember in order to keep your chin up, your morale high and your safety — as well as that of all of your students — in check

Build Trust Many of the students in your classroom may not have a healthy relationship with authority figures in their lives. Breaking a child's trust early on can have a lasting impact on their ability to trust others as they grow older. Creating an environment where children feel safe to share their thoughts, fears and problems is essential. If a child is able to discuss the troubles they are having, they are much less likely to lash out at others.

Discover the Past. Trauma is pervasive and far-reaching. And, while trauma is often understood as an experience of violence and victimization such as sexual abuse, physical abuse, severe neglect, loss, domestic violence and/or the witnessing of violence, it can also refer to bullying, shame, fear and anxiety, among others. So it is critically important to understand if any past trauma has occurred with each student, either inside or outside the classroom. Teaching with a trauma-informed approach is the best way to ensure that your classroom remains calm, safe and secure. This approach focuses on providing a comforting, supportive environment that recognizes and respects the effects of past trauma versus one that relies on controlling students. Understanding whether a child has lost a parent, been bullied, or has a history of physical or sexual abuse can put an outburst into perspective. Conversely, physically or psychologically trying to control that child may result in escalating a tense situation. Teachers will



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see a much better reaction if they comfort the child by acknowledging their frustration and asking questions about how to make the current situation less upsetting. (Continued on page 2)

Look for Triggers. A trigger is something that sets off a memory tape or flashback, transporting the person back to the event of her/his original trauma. Triggers can come in all forms. For instance, if a child always becomes disruptive before nap time, it may be bringing to mind a fear of the dark or of an abusive encounter that happened during their nap-time at home. For older children, perhaps presenting in front of other students might cause an aggressive outburst due to a past situation where the child felt humiliated in public. Pay close attention to what happens before the outburst and take note as to whether there is a pattern. Once a trigger has been identified, talk with the child privately to see what you can do to help manage their anxiety and stop an incident from occurring.

Manage Your Expectations. For new teachers, especially those working with special needs children, it is important to enter the education field with your eyes wide open. I have often seen teachers lose their motivation due to becoming frustrated with one or two students. It is important to remember that not every day may be a good day. But there is some good in *every* day. Seeing the small victories and keeping them close when tackling seemingly overwhelming negativity you might face will keep things in perspective and keep you from burning out.

Be Open Minded. Every child you encounter is different, and therefore learns differently. The same can be said for discipline techniques. What may calm one child, might only exacerbate another. As children become disruptive, search for “the why” verses trying to stand firm behind a threat or a rule. Why is that particular child responding in that particular way? . Very often, children are lashing out due to something that may have happened outside of the classroom two weeks or two months ago. Remain open-minded and creative in your search for the right way to defuse a volatile situation.

Refrain from Restraint. Currently, 267,000 children are physically restrained or secluded from their classmates annually, despite the fact that there are hundreds of examples of the use of restraint and seclusion resulting in far more harm than good. It is understandable, that when confronted by an aggressive student, there is a genuine fear for the safety of the child and the other students in the classroom. Teachers are quick to turn to restraint, especially when they are not given any other physical alternatives.

However, these techniques have potentially deadly and, without question, traumatic consequences. They are not evidence-based practices and there is no data to suggest that either leads to reduced violent or uncontrolled behavior. In fact, research indicates that restraint and seclusion actually cause, reinforce and maintain aggression and violence. Of course, frustration plays a part in this equation. As they say, patience is a virtue, and sometimes teachers find themselves in a situation where patience has run thin and restraint seems like the quickest path to calming the situation. However, if we are going to make a real change, we have to fill in the gap between asking a child to stop an unruly behavior and physically restraining them into submission.

Ask about Training. Ask the school administration about its crisis training. Schools should be looking for a training module that instructs teachers on how *not* to restrain or seclude children. Providing teachers with training that offers meaningful intervention — including a safe, physical alternative to restraint — will be the key to reducing these practices and increasing the safety of the child and teacher.

And this type of training is available. Over a decade ago, Grafton Integrated Health Network (Grafton) — an organization serving children and adults with autism and co-occurring psychiatric diagnoses — issued a mandate to eliminate restraints without compromising employee or client safety. Grafton’s staff developed the Ukeru® model, which is a combination of trauma-informed training, blocking techniques and culture change. By using this method, the organization has reduced the use of restraints by more than 99 percent and has significantly increased the rate of treatment goals mastered across the organization. It also greatly reduced the number of injuries to both clients and staff while simultaneously lowering costs associated with workers’ compensation policies and employee turnover.

All of these tips can lead to not only a better learning environment for students, but also a better work environment for teachers. But my bottom line advice for teachers is that when students are at their worst, you have to be at your best.

Don’t give up on your students. If you have one student that is consistently disruptive, disrespectful and unhappy, don’t lose faith in him/her. That individual has a story to tell. You just need to help them tell it in a more healthy way.



And definitely don’t give up on yourself. You have a calling. Hear it, acknowledge it, embrace it. There will be plenty of dark days, but keep your light shining in order to inspire those that are struggling in your classroom. One day, you just might be the teacher that made all the difference.

Promoting Alternatives to the Use of Seclusion and Restraint – Issue Brief #4. SAMHSA, 2010 IBID

About Kim—Kim Sanders is the President of Ukeru Systems. Kim has worked with children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities for over 25 years. Kim has served in a series of both hands-on and leadership roles at Grafton Integrated Health Network, including Case Manager, Direct Support Professional, Residential Administrator and Executive Director, and Executive Vice President. Kim has presented at the national and international level on the Minimization of Restraint and Seclusion model, and she is recognized as an innovator for moving towards a physical restraint free environment at Grafton. Kim holds a BA in Psychology and a MS in Strategic Leadership.

Ready for a Challenge? The answers to the Pi Day Riddle:

1. Write down and hold up the value 3.14 in front of a mirror. What do you see?
Ans: PIE

2. What famous physicist was born on March 14, 1879? Ans: Albert Einstein

3. At what position in pi is the Feynman Point? Ans: The sequence of six 9s begins at the 762nd decimal place of pi

4. Riddle Ans:
"i 8 Sum chair + e pi"
(I ate some cherry pie)

The first 25 people to submit the correct answers are listed below. Each received a "Pi Swatter" in the mail.

1. Dawn Knapp
Victor Senior High
School - New York
2. Kat Thoman
Leland High School -
California
3. Sophie Canestrelli
ASU Preparatory
Academy—Arizona
4. Lily Huang
Stone Mill Elementary
— Maryland
5. Adina McInturff
Stonewall Jackson High
School —Virginia
6. Lillian Aninag
Stockton USD —
California
7. Dean Coder
District of Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania



The Enlightened Educator: Diversity in the Workplace



Diversity, in this case, specifically the workplace, my workplace, cannot be addressed without reaching into my past, and into the world that surrounds me and manifests itself in my workplace. I could write a couple of pages and bore you to tears but let me not do that.

Therefore, America is the world's greatest example of human diversity, and the American school I work in is a world of diversity. Let me simply say that when I value the difference of a child, or a man, or a woman, or an idea, or a kind word from someone who is not like me; diversity then opens a door to a bigger and better world. When I allow whatever differences I find in the world to be explored in a safe environment, knowing that not all differences are equal or to be accepted, or that I will enjoy every difference, I have changed the world into a safer place. I have changed fear into communication. I have turned peculiar into interesting. I have taken suspicion or prejudice and turned it into communication. Suddenly I am aware that "together" we can conquer the universe. When I celebrate everyone's uniqueness as equal to my own "suddenly" I feel like I can discover something greater than myself, and suddenly, I understand that differences can be valued and not feared. Suddenly, I am aware that I am different and that it is okay. Suddenly, I realize that we are all different and that is a good thing, an energizing intellectual stimulant.

A tree is not a leaf, nor is it a branch, nor bark, nor fruit, nor cambium layer. etc. A tree is all of that and more. To reduce it to individual parts is to destroy the tree. People are not children, or adults, or culture, or religious this and that. People are not just individual ideas, or feelings, or isolated notes of a song. We are People; and together we are like a tree, and we can grow and be fruitful. But separated we are individual pieces of something that is not yet itself.

Diversity, taught me that. That I am but a leaf vulnerable to being blown in the wind, but if I find my brothers and sisters, I am a tree and we can grow stronger than the wind that blows an un-diversified world into less than it can be.

Mrs. Brenda Dizon-Harris
Science & PLTW Teacher
Pinacate Middle School
Learn more about Brenda by reading [Brenda's Bio](#)

Expert Excerpt: Homelessness in the Classroom

Submission by:
Dr. Christine Cantrell
Education Consultant



There ARE children experiencing homelessness in your classroom: How to ensure their academic success. Tips for New Teachers

The economic recession has brought a drastic change to the face of homelessness. The reality is that homelessness includes families with children who were once the average middle-class family and who never dreamed that they would ever experience homelessness. Child homelessness emerged as a considerable social dilemma during the mid-1980s and has steadily increased over the years. Families with children are among the fastest growing homeless category and accounts for nearly 37% of the homeless population nationally (NCFH, 2014).

Studies have demonstrated that the effects of homelessness can be devastating for children, particularly to their educational success (Tobin, 2014). Homelessness and the lack of stable housing can cause children to change schools frequently resulting in severe academic loss for homeless students. Research indicates that it can take four to six months to recover academically from each school change (Coleman et al., 2014), which can also negatively affect attendance, test scores, academic success, and social relationships. Numerous studies have found that students experiencing homelessness consistently underperform and score lower on standardized academic tests than their stably housed peers (Bowman, Dukes, & Moore, 2012).

Homelessness is a traumatic stress that can disrupt every aspect of the child's life. Along with the loss of their home, they lose their sense of safety, trust, their sense of place, possessions, sometimes their friends, and even pets. Homeless children often experience emotional and behavioral problems, including anxiety, depression, withdrawal, and delinquent or aggressive behaviors (NCFH, 2012), all of which can make learning and focusing in school very difficult for these children. The risk factors associated with homelessness present extraordinary challenges to the academic and social success of students, as well as to the teachers and school staff who work with these children.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (MVA) is a legislative law designed to provide legal protection for children experiencing homelessness; it addresses the elimination of educational barriers, and it provides increased services and supports for children experiencing homelessness (Canfield et al., 2012). The MVA legislation provides a specific definition of homelessness that details who is eligible for protections and services under the Act, and clarifies the broad range of inadequate living conditions (Coleman et. al, 2014). According to the U. S. Department of Education (2016), Section 725(2) of the MVA defines homeless children and youth as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This definition includes children and youth who are:

- Sharing the housing of others, or “doubled-up,” due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
- Living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Abandoned in hospitals;
- Living in a public or private place not designed as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

Schools play an important role in providing students experiencing homelessness a place of safe refuge, a sense of stability, and the supports needed to promote learning and resilience. Several studies have examined how schools and teachers can best serve homeless students and support academic success. Murphy and Tobin (2011) described an educational framework for schools that identified seven provisos for supporting and promoting the academic success of homeless students: 1) developing homelessness awareness; 2) attending to basic needs; 3) providing effective instruction; 4) creating a supportive environment; 5) providing additional supports; 6) collaborating with other organizations; and 7) promoting parental involvement. In her research summary: Teaching and classroom strategies for homeless and highly mobile students, Moore (2013) provided specific teaching and classroom strategies on how teachers can improve the classroom environment, academic performance, curriculum, and increase social engagement. Examples of improving the classroom environment included:

- Examining the student's record for grades, attendance, and background information;

- Watch for indications that the student is struggling to adjust academically, socially, or emotionally;
- Offer a welcome bag or backpack with school supplies and snacks;
- Keep snacks in the classroom for students who are hungry;
- Respect students' right to privacy.
- Ensure that students do not feel singled out because of their living circumstances.

Examples of improving academic performance included:

- Provide clear, achievable expectations - do not lower academic requirements;
- Offer tutoring before or after school or at lunch;
- Be flexible with assignments. Homeless students may not be able to afford the materials required to complete some tasks. Offer several alternatives from which all students can choose;
- Allow students to finish assignments independently, or at their own pace;
- Create a portfolio to document the student's work in case they move again;
- Offer after-hours (evening or Saturday) and off-site parent meetings.

Examples of improving the curriculum included:

- Allow a variety of method and topic options for student assignments;
- Broaden the diversity of families depicted in the books and materials in the classroom to include homelessness;
- Consider doing a unit on hunger and homelessness

Examples of improving social engagement included:

- Form a "new student" group, mentoring or peer buddy program;
- Connect the student with an adult mentor from the school or community.

Studies have shown that a positive student-teacher relationship can provide homeless students the emotionally secure and supportive learning environment that will promote the students' ability to self-regulate their emotions and engage in interactions with others and their academics. Teachers are seldom made aware of a student's unstable living situation and it is generally up to the teacher to determine the best strategy for working with students who are homeless (Moore, 2013). Make no mistake, children experiencing homelessness ARE enrolled in every school, and an effective teacher understands their diverse needs and how to create positive learning environments to ensure these students' educational success.

(Written using excerpts from my dissertation; The Impact of Homeless Education Professional Development on Teaching Practice and Student Achievement)

Dr. Christine Cantrell is a master educator who works with teachers on building positive professional relationships with other educators, administrators, parents, and most of all, their students by facilitating reflective practice, fostering empathy, and transforming their teaching practice through a social justice and equity perspective. Dr. Cantrell has 32 years of professional experience in the field of education. She has worked with students with disabilities, students in poverty, and students experiencing homeless situations. She has also supervised college interns, mentored classroom teachers, and coordinated professional development programs. Dr. Cantrell has conducted training in the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Cultural Competence, Clinical Educator training, Time Management, teacher mentoring, and homeless education. She presented at the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHYC) national conference in November 2016. Dr. Cantrell holds a Bachelor's degree in Specific Learning Disabilities from the University of South Florida, Tampa; a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg; and a Doctorate degree in Curriculum and Teaching, from North Central University.

Resources:

Bowman, D., Dukes, C. & Moore, J. (2012). Summary of the state of research on the relationship between homelessness and academic achievement among school-aged children and youth. Retrieved from http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/nche_research_pub.pdf

Canfield, J. P., Teasley, M. L., Abell, N., & Randolph, K. A. (2012). Validation of a McKinney-Vento Act implementation scale. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 22(4), 410-419. doi: 10.1177/1049731512439758.

Coleman, L. M., Duffield, B., Heybach, L. M., Julianelle, P. F., Horton-Newell, A., Trupin, C., & American Bar Association. (2014). Educating children without housing: A primer on legal requirements and implementation strategies for educators, advocates and policymakers: Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Washington, DC: American Bar Association, Commission on Homelessness & Poverty.

Moore, J. (2013). Research summary: Teaching and classroom strategies for homeless and highly mobile students. National Center for Homeless Education. Retrieved from <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/resilience.pdf>

Murphy, J. F., & Tobin, K. J. (2011). Homelessness comes to school. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 93(3), 32-37. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy1.ncu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=67225154&site=eds-live>

National Center on Family Homelessness (NCFH). (2014). America's Youngest Outcasts: A Report Card on Child Homelessness. Waltham, MA: Retrieved from <http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Americas-Youngest-Outcasts-Child-Homelessness-Nov2014.pdf>

National Center on Family Homelessness (NCFH). (2012). The characteristics and needs of families experiencing homelessness. Retrieved from <http://www.familyhomelessness.org/media/306.pdf>

Tobin, K. J. (2014). Homeless students and academic achievement: Evidence from a large urban area. *Urban Education*, (July 25, 2014, 0042085914543116), 1-24. doi:10.1177/0042085914543116.

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**They don't care how
much you know
until they know
how much you care.**
- Theodore Roosevelt

Administrator's Advice:

The following excerpts were used with permission Andrew and are timely in today's school environment.

Chapter 1 - Be a Better Leader

Tip 1. Treat every kid as if they are your kid.

This is the golden rule of hiring people, and our daily philosophy with our staff. Love kids. Act it. Demonstrate it. Treat them the way you want your own children to be treated. This is the number one best thing you can do as principal, which is why this is the first wisdom point. You will read this theme in multiple tips and sections throughout the book. It will make your job so much easier if you have people around you who adopt this way of working with students in the school. It doesn't mean be a pushover and give them anything they want. That's not loving kids, nor is it good parenting. Some of our best teachers are the toughest and run the most challenging classrooms, but they love the kids. Add compassion, understanding, forgiveness, kindness, openness and humor. This winning combination reaches out and is felt by each student.

We actually listen for people to say that they love kids when we ask them why we should hire them over other candidates. It has been said that children are like dogs (not meant in a derogatory way!) in the sense that they can sense a phony a mile away, and instinctively feel love in people with whom they interact. So hire people who love kids and listen for it in the interview. When the students feel love, they do better in school and have a better overall experience. If you create this type of environment in your school, you will never regret it.

Tip 8. Be the most energetic and enthusiastic person in the building.

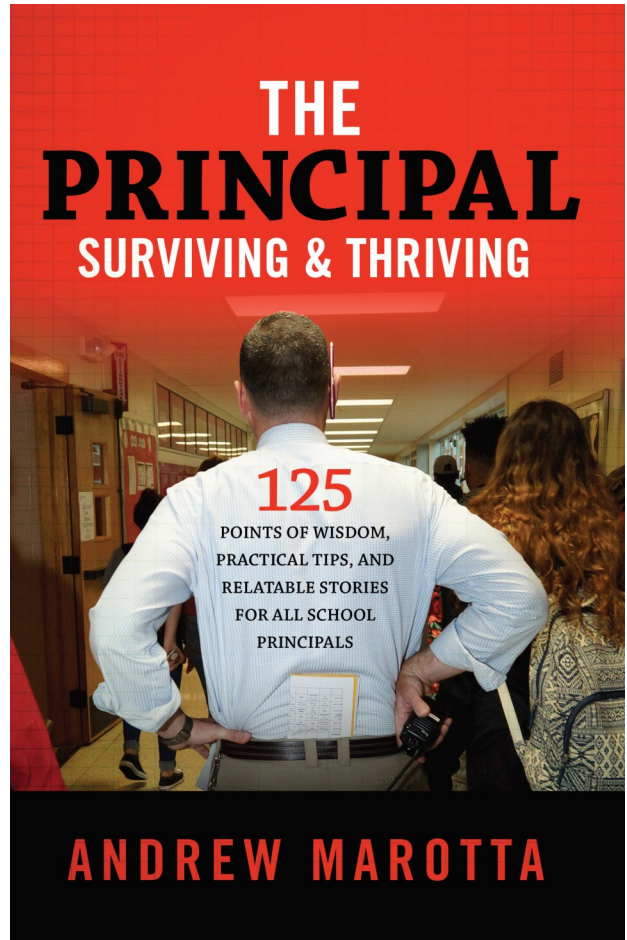
This does not take any talent or skill, it is simply in your heart and mind: be the most enthusiastic and energetic person in the building. I cannot stress enough how important this is. There are another 124 tips in this book, but this one is way up there with the most important of all: get after it! Bring the energy each and every day. Your students will feed off it and your staff will, too.

If the principal's energy and enthusiasm fade, so does the school. Each and every one of you need to know, understand, and take this to heart—extra sleep, vitamin C, coffee, Mountain Dew, prayers ... do whatever you have to do for energy when you arrive at school, and throughout the day. When you're greeting students on the announcement speaker, meeting parents, or discussing an issue with staff, make sure you give off positive energy and enthusiasm. This will carry you through hard times and set the tone for student education. If you want your students to be excited about learning, you better be able to show excitement for your duties.

29. Be the first source of information during a time of crisis.

In the age of 24/7 social media and real-time digital Breaking News, it can be tough to be the first source people turn to; but you do not want Facebook or some random blog releasing news about your school before you present it yourself. You want your office to be the first place people turn to for information in a time of crisis. Get out in front of it and face the music: good or bad. There might be lawyers or bosses telling you not to make a statement for one reason or another, so you may have to navigate that; but get out in front of it as quickly as

you can and be the reliable, honest source of updates on the situation at hand. Be quick, but not in a hurry. Be accurate, but cautious about giving all the information to the general public. Be prepared and get the news out: e-mail blast, public meeting, letter home, video release, etc. Don't let others do this for you. When a dangerous or scary situation arises, you have to be a leader the community can turn to and trust for timely, accurate information.



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Announcing our

Teacher Appreciation Essay Contest!

We are seeking essays for inclusion in a special edition of Educator Insights. The edition will celebrate National Teacher Appreciation Week, coming up the week of May 7th, 2018! The articles can be based on your experiences or that of your teachers:

Suggestions for topics include:

- A Teacher you admire, makes a difference in your district, or inspires others.
- What inspired you to become a teacher.
- Share a favorite classroom story i.e. most profound teachable moment or humorous incident.

The authors of essays chosen for publication will receive a Bluetooth speaker!



Send your / your teachers' submissions to:

Paul.Mulcahy@Phoenix.edu

The Voice of Diversity

Submitted by Prince Marshall, Middle School Principal

Throughout the United States, many school districts experience a large amount of diversity when it comes to their student population. Here in Central California, it is guaranteed that every school site will serve students from different backgrounds.



Diversity can be defined as experiences, viewpoints, backgrounds, and life experiences. Diversity can also be measured through many variables such as age, race, sex, economics, geography, religion, philosophy etc. To speak to the access that surrounds diversity is that it allows us a seat at the table. A seat at the table is not merely enough to obtain forward progress of working as a collaborative community and ensuring

high levels of student achievement.

The voice of equity allows individuals an opportunity to not only have a seat at the table, but to also have a voice at the table. Bolger (2017) states that, "Equity as an approach that ensures everyone access to the same opportunities. Equity recognizes that advantages and barriers exist, and that, as a result, we all don't start from the same place. Equity is a process that begins by acknowledging that unequal starting place and continues to correct and address the imbalance" (blog). Engaging in a participatory role where voices are heard, valued and taken into practice leads towards deeper understanding and creates a rich level of collaboration towards ensuring meeting needs in order to support student achievement.

With the understanding of the power that equity holds for all stakeholders it is vital that we include their voices into the fold of our daily work. Voices that are seldom heard are those of the students and parents. At my site we are currently creating opportunities to invite our parents who are rarely included into the fabric of our collaboration and empower them with tools and strategies that will aim to support them in supporting their child's education. It is highly evident that their dreams and aspirations for their children must be known as we as educational leaders must act to support those dreams. We are in the beginning stages of branching out of our common parenting clubs and extending those opportunities focused on social emotional support, classroom access, curriculum exposure and the list is still being created. If you have been successful in this area or are open to collaborate please feel to contact me.

Prince Marshall has been in education for over 15 years. He started out as a janitor, van driver, and kitchen aid eventually going into the classroom as a Middle School substitute teacher. Prince holds a Bachelors Liberal Studies with a Concentration in Child and Family Studies from CSU Fresno 2002, a teaching credential from National University, and a Masters Educational and Instructional Technology 2016. After 5 years in the classroom, Prince became a High School administrator before being promoted to Principal for a Middle School.

Reach out to Prince at :

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Interested in submitting an article?

Send your submissions to:

Paul.Mulcahy@Phoenix.edu

or call 757.945.1001

We want to hear your thoughts and suggestions!

Ready for a Challenge? The list of the first 25 correct respondents to the Pi Day Riddle (continued):

8. Jack Calhoun—Palm Springs USD, CA
9. Charlie Webb—Appoquinmink, DE
10. Brandt Butko—North Valley HS, NV
11. Dawn Reinhardt—Neptune Township, NY
12. Judy Warner—Christa McAuliffe HS, MA
13. Jeremy Youngdale—Gaithersburg HS, MD
14. Tyler Peerson—Gaithersburg HS, MD
15. Casey Bannon—Valley Central Schools, NY
16. Ashley Pratt & Class—James River HS, VA
17. Anna Strickland & Class — Lord Botetourt HS, VA
18. Julie Montgomery—Leland HS, CA
19. Danielle Landis—North Valleys HS, NV
20. Hilary Renard—Rio Vista School, AZ
21. Sasha Slocum—William J. McGinn Elementary, NJ
22. Rebecca Peiffer—North High School, AZ
23. Sunshine Tye — North High School, AZ
24. Jessica Gomez—North High School, AZ
25. Gayle Chaney & Class—Magna Vista HS, VA

Congratulations to All!
In addition to the bragging rights of being published here, each correct respondent received a "pi-swatter" for their effort!

