

Standard 1

Educators value and care for all students and act in their best interests.

In today's society, with pop culture and technology permeating our everyday lives, students of all ages are exposed more than ever to the harsh realities of life including racism, sexism, homophobia, and other discriminatory concepts. Thus, many students are adopting these kinds of ideologies and participating in the bullying epidemic across North America and the World.

As educators, we have a moral obligation to create a learning environment that is safe for all students. For some of these students, we are the only reference point or role model that they have. Included in the standard is the word "fostering", which alludes to the fact that a respectful environment needs to be developed. Bullying occurs in most classrooms around the World (whether it be personal or cyber bullying). We can foster a safe and respectful environment by addressing bullying in real-time; that is, directly after it happens.

Although we, of course, want to rid our classrooms of bullying, I believe that it is difficult to achieve this goal by purely suspending or expelling these "bullies". What are they learning from? If they leave the school, they are not learning from their mistakes. As teachers and educators we are there to help students learn, not only in their academics, but also in the social and affective domain. Ultimately, to value and care for all students and act in their best interests, we need to not only be reactive to bullying, but also proactive.

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