

>> First of all, good afternoon. We are Mercer Elementary School. Our title of our program is Don't Panic, You've Got This. And what we're trying to do here today is to give you an idea of what our program looks like, it started about 3 years ago, and what we've done from day one until right about now. If you have any questions, we'll take some questions at the end, just hold those to the end, drop them down. And we'll try to get them at the very end of the presentation. Couple things, one of which is during the slide show for whatever reason, you never know how technology works, there's gonna be a little box that pops up occasionally with some of the add-ons that says, "Are you sure you really wanna open this?" And it says, "Okay." It's gonna come up. We apologize for that. For whatever reason, it's doing that right now. But we'll just click okay. And it'll progress through the presentation. Title of the program is Don't Panic, You've Got This. And when we started this program about 3 years ago, there was some panic on our part due to the fact that we went to the local YU. There were a ton of steps as far as implementing this procedure. And we came back as a team and thought, "Wow, what have we gotten ourselves into?" And so this is the title of our program, Don't Panic, You've Got This. We kinda took a step-by-step approach. Hopefully, you can pull out some thing today that you can take back to your own school district to implement and some ideas that we found useful that you may also find as well. This is our positive behavior team at Mercer Elementary School. My name is Nathan Crooks. I'm a sixth grade teacher. Today, we have my wife, Andrea, first grade teacher. Maggie Ference, computer teacher, and then we also have Joni Kostelnik, who's learning support. Just some quick demographics about our school. We are in Northwest Pennsylvania, about an hour north of Pittsburgh, about an hour south of Erie. We are a K through six building. We house about 600 students. We're kinda one of those schools, we're not quite poor enough to get a lotta money. We're not quite rich enough to get a lot of the state's money. We kinda fall in the middle. We are a town that doesn't have a whole lot of industry. A lot of the people that live in our community go somewhere else to work. To give you an idea, I actually graduated from Mercer not too long ago, about 125 students per class at that point. Now, we're at about 80. So we've lost about between 25 and 33 percent of our student population here in the last 15, 20 years. So that kinda gives you an idea of where we're at. Before we get started, and we're gonna talk numerous times today about incorporating your staff members into this process of implementing school-wide positive behavior. One of our staff members, her daughter is a news reporter for a local NBC affiliate in Youngstown, Ohio. And we contact her. And about a year and a half ago, she came to our school and did a little minute-and-a-half snippet kinda detailing our program. So we're gonna show you this. This kinda gives a general overview of what school-wide positive behavior looks at Mercer Elementary School. So this is the local broadcast ...

[VIDEO START]

>> Be safe. Be kind. Be respectful. Be responsible.

>> It's a chant students at Mercer Elementary School have no problem reciting. More importantly, though, the four phrases serve as the foundation for how each student is expected to behave, not just at school, but during extracurricular activities and at home.

>> Hopefully, this will continue to be implemented in their frame of mind, that they'll become safe, respectful, responsible adults.

>> Mercer, Sharon and the Greenville Community Alternate School are the only three schools in Mercer County to have adopted this national initiative. In the classroom, behavioral expenses are taught to students just as any other subject would be taught. Reminders even line the hallways.

>> We have to behave well in the bathroom. We have to stay nice to each other in the hallways and be respectful as we're transitioning from classroom to classroom. And in the lunchroom, we just have to be respectful of the lunch ladies and kind to each other.

>> You don't even think about it now. You just know how to be good now.

>> Because of the program's success, the Mercer School District hopes to expand this curriculum into its Middle and High Schools.

>> It's been received so well by the students, the staff, the community. We have a great buy-in with the administration as well. So we have seen a reduction in our behavior referrals.

>> Beginning next school year, Farrel, Hermiate and Greenville will join the mustangs, launching their own versions of the school-wide positive behavior program.

[VIDEO END]

>> Okay. Before we roll this out to the students and staff, we had to come up with some certain things to get the program started. These are kind of how we prepared to put school-wide positive behavior in place at Mercer Elementary School. The first thing we did is, you have to come up with expenses for your students and staff. Out of our 600 students, these kids have these memorized. They hear them all the time. Be safe, be kind, be respectful, be responsible. Why did we choose these? Well, they're applicable to Kindergarten. They're applicable to sixth grade. They're also applicable as you progress through high school and as your progress through adult life. If you are these fourth things, you are going to be successful. And we preach that to the kids each and every day we're at Mercer. We also came up with a matrix. And what does this look like, being safe, kind, respectful and responsible in different areas of our building? We identified eight areas: classroom, hallway, arrival, dismissal, the bathroom, the cafeteria. Every staff member got this. What does it look like? So everybody's on the same page. And you're gonna hear a lot of us talk about concise language, everybody's using the same language in the building. I can't stress to you enough how important that is that everybody's on the same page, everybody's using whether it's Kindergarten, whether it's sixth grade. There's no misconceptions. Everyone, staff member, students, know what's happening. We also made signs from a local sign company came up with these signs. They're displayed all around the school, hallway, cafeteria, playground just as a reminder to students as they move through the hallway. We came up with an award system. And the award system you're gonna hear a lot about as we progress through here. What does the award system look like at Mercer for students being safe, kind, respectful and responsible? And we'll get to that more in detail as we progress through. We also had to come up with roll out lesson plans. We roll out these expectations and rules to the students, what does this look like? So we came up with lesson plans for the teachers, whoever it was presenting this to students. Lesson plan's about 15 to 20 minutes long. What are we going to teach those students as they move through and learn the expectations for Mercer Elementary School? These are some of the roll out lessons. You're gonna see a little bit more about this as we progress through. But we did bathroom expectations, hallway expectations, what did we expect the students to do on the playground, what does it look like on the cafeteria, on the bus, leaving the school and also arriving. And this is so important. We do this on the second and third day of school each year. Every single student and staff member goes and hears the expectations. They all know what is expected of them as they progress through the building. And that's the goal of this. The roll out is super important for setting the stage for the rest of the year. And we have

a quick video of a couple of these different lessons, one from the cafeteria, one from the hallway, of what they look like.

[VIDEO START]

>> Finish that good lunch and I walk over to the table. And I say, "Oh, this table looks like they're ready to dismiss." What would you have checked before you have left this table? Zach? You would've checked for paper on the floor and food you have dropped. It is your responsibility to leave a nice, clean area because other people have to come back to the cafeteria. Gentlemen, check your floor. Looking good? Okay. Gentlemen, I'm gonna let you stand up. I'm going to pretend you're carrying your tray so pick up that napkin. Okay, we'll pretend. That's very good. All right. Come along this way. Now, look how Tyler's being so polite. He's letting the other boys go in front of him. And when he's walking, he's gonna walk here on the right hand side. And we're gonna throw our things away, pretend you have silverware to throw away. Silver we throw away. We throw our food away. And then you have the tray. Where do you put it?

[INAUDIBLE]

>> Boys and girls, you wanna keep your hands at your sides and no spaghetti arms, no spaghetti arms, no spaghetti arms. If you're walking in line, boys and girls, and you have spaghetti arms, what kinda ...

>> For lunch and I walk over to the table and I say ...

[VIDEO END]

>> We're gonna skip that part. You kinda get the idea. You have to understand, if you're anything like Maggie or myself, this is like stressing us out completely that this is not working. Anyway, after we implement the beginning of the year expectations and we've given the kids exactly what we expect of them, we've raised that standard. And we've said, "This is what you need to be in Mercer Elementary School." Then the fun starts. We have a kick-off assembly at the beginning of the year. Now, for the first 2 years we did this, the kick-off assembly was right there at the first month of school. But what we learned was that sometimes our teachers were using the ticket system that we had in place for their classroom management. We then, this year, changed it to starting our kick-off assembly in October. We don't start our ticket system until October. And we've encouraged our teachers to have their own behavior management system. It is not for your classroom specifically, it is for the entire school to find role model behavior in the entire school. So we encourage them to even mirror the program in their classroom but not to use this as their classroom management. That should be separate. And it's worked out really well. It really has this year. So our kick-off assembly is where we get the kids excited about the ticket system. We let them know that there are going to be teachers and staff members with tickets on a rotating basis. And nobody knows who have these great tickets that they want so badly. You never know who in the building is going to have to have those ticket on any given day. And then when a teacher, and we've encouraged our staff to really look for model behavior consistently. This is not a caught-being-good. This is not a, "Oh, Johnny is bad every single day and he finally opened the door for somebody else so here ya go." It really is a consistent behavior that we're looking for. And so we're asking the staff to really pull those kids aside and make them an example to either the other kids or pull them aside just by themselves and really talk to the kid and be like, "This is why you have this ticket because you have consistently been responsible this, this, this or this." After they get the ticket, they get to put their name on it. And they go up to the office where our greeter is so good about saying, "Why'd you get your ticket

today?" And they explain all of what the teacher had said. "This is why I got my ticket today." And then, after they write their name on it, they get a chance to sign something that's going to go in the hallway. The first year, we had a celebrity book. And it was set up in the hallway. The second year, we had a horseshoe. And we lined the hallway with these horseshoes and had their signatures. And we told them, "You're famous. You are an example to the other students in this building. So you really need to keep that role model behavior going because that signature says that you are a role model in Mercer Elementary School." This year, we have the mustang. And the kids sign the mustang. Next year, we're gonna do an enormous big M. I'm not sure what we're gonna do after that. We're kinda running out of ideas. But they get really excited to show their signatures. And then, they get to take home a certificate. That's their prize to take home to their parents and brag about their behavior. And then, they also get a mustang pride pencil. And these pencils are golden to them, especially in the primary grades. They just love using them. They love showing them off throughout the day. After they get their pencil, they then get to choose a bingo chip. On the bingo chip is a number. That number corresponds with a number on our mustang pride board. That mustang pride board gets filled up with names. Now, our mustang pride board was built by Patti Shaffer's husband. She's not here today. She's one of our team members. She's retiring. But we told her, "Your husband's not because your husband we still need to build things for us." So he built this for us. And as the names get put on and it starts filling up, we eventually hit bingo. And on the morning that we hit bingo or the next day, whatever time of day it is, we hit bingo. Then yours truly gets on the announcements and announces it to the entire school that we have hit bingo. We actually have a little video clip of it. Let's hope it works, yeah.

[VIDEO START]

>> Calling all mustang fans, let's show our school pride and get up and dance. We have bingo!

[VIDEO END]

>> Yeah, try it again. You'll see, if it doesn't show, we have a clip of the kids dancing. So what we do is, we actually play our school song that was written by one of our teachers and the kids actually stand up and

[VIDEO START]

>> Calling all mustang fans! Let's show our school pride and get up and dance. We have bingo!

>> Okay. Here we go.

[Lyrics]

Let's throw our hands up in the air right now

Saying Mercer, Mercer Mustangs

We wanna show 'em that we love our school

Saying Mercer, Mercer Mustangs

'Cause we like being kind, responsible and safe

So [INAUDIBLE]

'Cause it's what we do

Now we've said it once

Well, we'll say it twice

[INAUDIBLE] Mustang pride

[INAUDIBLE]

>> All right, boys and girls, have a seat. Way to go, mustangs, we filled the board with some amazing students once again. Bingo winners please come to the office to receive your gift card to Pizza Joe's and your invitation to a pizza party tomorrow afternoon. Congratulations to the following students:  
Kindergarten: Tyler Heckman ...

[VIDEO END]

>> They get pretty excited to hear their name on the announcements. So as you can tell, we call them up to the office right then and there. They get their picture taken all together. And then, that picture is displayed in the school in the hallway. The other thing that we do is, they get to come up right away and spin the wheel, which again, Patti's husband made for us. See why we're not letting him go? He made the wheel for us. And they spin the wheel. And on that wheel are different prizes. And what we did was, it's very difficult being a K through sixth building sometimes because being able to help out a Kindergartener and what they desire and a sixth grader and what they desire becomes a little difficult. So what we did was, we took a survey of the kids in grades three through six. And we asked them, "What is it that would motivate you to get a mustang pride ticket? What is it that you would work hard for?" And that really changed the way our system worked. It really changed our prizes. And we really took that into consideration. So one of the things is, they get coupons. And the coupons are actually for local places that have been donated to us. Our grocery store, Walt's, has donated that the kids get either a pop, chips or a candy bar. The Dairy Queen and Pizza Joe's have also donated coupons for the kids. So that's one of their prizes. Another prize they could land on is the treasure box. The treasure box is the picture down there. They get to go inside. There's all kinds of Oriental trading items that are in there, kind-size candy bars, Gatorades, all kinds of things that would appease all ages. Then, we have gift cards. If they land on the gift card, and this is what the older kids really asked for, if they land on a gift card, they get to choose which gift card out of a whole list that we've made. They get to choose what gift card, like Under Armour, Justice, any of those. And it's a \$10 gift card. And we go and buy it for them and give it to them the next day. The next thing that the older kids really wanted to do was, they love to be able to sit wherever they want in the cafeteria. That's a real prize for them. So if they land on the cafeteria, they get to choose either a free ice cream on a Friday. Or they get to choose to sit wherever they want in the cafeteria on any given day. Then, every student is also given an invitation, an invitation to either a VIP lunch, a VIP breakfast, a Sundae party, any of these kinds. These are examples of the coupons that they get and they take back to their classroom. Sometimes, it's a whole class reward. They just won their class 15 extra minutes of recess. Or they've won their entire class a popcorn party. The prizes vary every time we have bingo. After they get their picture taken in front of the mustang country sign, that big that Patti's husband, again, made. And he also made the treasure chest down there. That is

displayed in the hallway as well. The teacher reward is just an incentive for teachers to really start giving out those tickets even more. The first couple years, we did a \$5 gift card to Sheetz, which went over really well. But an even cheaper one that went over even better was a free dress-down day that they could wear their jeans. And as you can see, the teacher over there is extremely happy. And I have the opportunity to deliver these to the teachers. And the entire room bursts into cheers for their teacher. And the teacher's like, "Yeah, I'm gonna wear jeans!" They get really excited. And it's free. All right. These are just some examples of their bingo rewards. They turned their principal into a human Sundae. They have a VIP lunch. The little boy over there, he was on our student council. Maggie is also our student council leader. And the student council members are the waiters. And they deliver the ice cream to the kids and things. We make it really special for them. They always get to choose a friend. And we've changed that they get to choose two friends this year, 'cause that was another request of the kids, that they get to bring more friends. So that's really exciting for them. And it's your turn.

>> As you can see, we have some wonderful prizes. We have gift cards. We have all sorts of things that we've been able to do for the kids. How did we get to that point? As we said earlier, Mercer is not what you would consider a thriving community. There are no many businesses. So we had a problem at the beginning when we started this. How are we going to raise funds? Where are we going to get this money to do the things we would like to do? So the first thing we did was, we wrote up a letter to local businesses explaining our program, the benefits of it, what this was going to do for the children and hopefully for the community at large. And we had a retired sales person, my father-in-law, who loves to go out and talk to people. And he went to businesses in Mercer and hand-delivered the letter. He knew most of the business owners. And if he didn't, he would go up and tell them about the program. We educated it on 'em. And we had a lot of businesses come right up to the front and say, "I'll write you a check right here." And it was wonderful. And now, it varied. Twenty-five dollars, \$100, \$500, we were really surprised at the amount of support we got from the local community. And that hand-delivered letter was a big reason why. That face-to-face contact was super important to kind of bridge that gap between the school and the community. What we've also done is, we've updated letters. We call them our community sponsors. Anybody who donates something to our school, we will send out a community letter, an updated community letter, detailing our program. We also send thank you cards. In the past, student council members, fourth, fifth and sixth graders have written handwritten notes to those community members who have donated time and money thanking them for that. We also have the student thank you this year where we have the students spell out thank you. And there's a thank you sign as well. For any community partner, we have a proud to support Mercer Elementary school-wide positive behavior. I was just down in the grocery store the other day. In the corner of Walt's, there is a proud to support Mercer school-wide positive behavior. They can put those in their windows, just a way to let community members know that these are the people that are helping out the local schools. We think it's really important to recognize those people. Again, it's time that they don't have to do. It's money that they don't have to give to us. So how do we recognize them? Every January, we have a blue-out assembly. If you've ever seen a college football game like Penn State, they have whiteout night where everyone in the stands wears a blue T-shirt or a white T-shirt, whatever school it may be. Well, we have everyone wears their mustang pride T-shirt, whether it's the Superman one that just came out this year or the one from a couple years ago that just says mustang pride. Every student and staff member has a blue shirt on. Well, we invite the community partners to come. We recognize them at the end, just as a thank you. The students stand up and say, "Thank you," to these people that have donated something to our cause. We've also announced them at football games, halftime football games. I don't know about your community. But on Friday nights, our stands are fairly packed with community members at the local varsity game. Well, at halftime, we recognize, we read a list of our community partners just as another way of saying, "Thank you," another way of getting their name out in the

community. These are the people that are helping our school. We have a local newspaper that does a wonderful job of covering our events. We call them. They come. They put it in the newspaper. They've been super helpful as far as getting that word out. This is a picture. This is in our school, as soon as anyone enters our building. This is our mustang pride community partners. This is a list of all the people that have donated. So we put that up for open house. Just so that we have all those parents come through and the community partners can see this is our way of saying, "Thank you," to the people that have donated. Letter to parents, every year we send home a letter to parents just explaining our program, what it looks like. And on the back is a list of the community sponsors. We also have a very supportive parent organization, Parents As Educational Partners. They go above and beyond. So whenever you start in this program, get them involved. They are super helpful. They come to us, "What do you need?" Every year, they buy mustang pride T-shirt for the entire incoming Kindergarten students. They have done numerous things. We go to them. They are more than willing to try to help us out the best they can. So they are super helpful. They're a nice ally in this cause. Showing pride, how do we show pride in our school? Well, we have different spirit items. We've already talked a little bit about the mustang pride shirts. On the top corner is a sixth-grade student council member, the president of the student council. She has the mustang pride shirt that just came out this year. Two years ago, we had this one that's on the bottom, mustang pride on the front and on the back, "Be safe, be kind, be respectful, be responsible." We've also instituted mustang pride days, just as a way to show pride in your school. One of the things we realize, a lotta students didn't show that pride in your school that we would like them to have. Yes, we went to Mercer. But do they have a vested interest in Mercer? Well, this was one of those ways to get some of that mustang pride to show through. So on the first Friday of every month, we have mustang pride day. Students and staff wear their mustang pride T-shirts. Homework folder courtesy of our parent organization, every year at the beginning of the year, the students get a homework folder that has the mustang pride on the front. We also have bracelet. Students have received a mustang pride bracelet. I don't know if you can see it. But it's one of those little bracelets, the plastic bracelets, that has mustang pride written on it. We've already talked about the mustang pride pencils. And especially at the primary level, kids love those. So it's another nice way of showing that mustang pride. Two years ago, at our blue-out assembly in the middle of the year, each student got a mustang pride water bottle courtesy of a local business that stepped up. And there's an example right over here. Local business stepped up and wanted to do that. So every student got a mustang pride water bottle. This year at our blue-out assembly in January, this went over really well, each student got a mustang pride cinch sack. Cinch sacks are really popular, at least in our school, whatever Under Armour, whatever it may be. But we decided to put Mercer mustang pride on it. You see kids walking around the time now, going to basketball practice, whatever practice, carrying their mustang pride cinch sack, just another way of kind of developing that pride in your school.

>> More about pride, one of the things that's really is, at the beginning of the year to get everybody excited, everybody on board, get the kids excited. But it's hard to keep that momentum up throughout the year. So we've decided is that, throughout the year, we were just gonna start with some exciting events. One of the things we did this year was a holiday spirit week. And every day before Christmas, we had a specific day that we, as a staff and students, were able to participate in. Red day, holiday hat day, Grinch day, and then we had what we called "The Polar Express" day when our principal dressed up as the conductor. And we had Santa come in and give out gold tickets from the movie. And it said, "Mercer elementary believes in you." Because on the movie, that is one of the tickets. So it was extremely well-received by the students and the staff. I don't know how many e-mails I received saying, "We have got to do this again. This was so fun." So it was just another way of bringing unity among the staff and the students again. For Presidents' Day one year, we had a snow make-up day. Nobody likes to make up their snow day. And so we called it Presidents' Day pajama day. And so it was just a way to, again, say,

"School wide loves you. We're sorry you have to come but here ya go, here's a little extra little treat." For Valentine's Day, every year we do a Valentine's card for the kids. You make our school glow. We love having you in our school with a lollipop. We just want them constantly to remember that they are loved. They are accepted. We think great things about them. And we wanna always be telling them that. The heart that you see over there says, "We love Mercer to pieces." Again, Patti's husbands, in case you didn't already guess that. What we did was, we gave each classroom a piece of paper that was in the shape of a puzzle piece. And we asked each teacher to sit down with their class and really make a list of things that they loved about Mercer Elementary School. And the lists were awesome. This went so much better than we anticipated. Teachers had discussions with their kids. They really talked about their pride. And then, they wrote one thing that they voted on on that puzzle piece. We had a retired teacher come and write on each one of these, this is foam, this is like a foam board. And it's pretty thick. And she came and decorated it. And each classroom got to have their own puzzle piece where they said what they love about Mercer Elementary School. And this is as soon as you walk in the door. We just really wanted to show some art work in our school to promote that pride. PSSAs, it's hard to make those fun. So what we did this year was, we gave treats out to each classroom. And all the students, they got treats, and the teachers. And with each treat, we put a little saying with ours like, "Blow the top off this test." And they had blow pops. Or, "Kiss those test jitters good-bye," with Hershey Kisses. And it was just to try to give them a little boost. And again, let them know we're thinking of them and caring for them. We have three assemblies per year. Our first one was our kick-off assembly. And as Nathan said, our second one is our blue-out assembly. And during that assembly is when we try to continue that momentum and try to let them know that we still care about them. We try to have an inspirational speaker come in. They've usually been from the high school. This year, we had two seniors come in and talk to the kids about rising above peer pressure and really becoming [INAUDIBLE] than what you think you can be. And we usually have a pop-up video that we show the kids. And we give an example. We send it out to all the smart boards. And we say to them, "This is an example of what it means to show pride in your school." And they're painted and everything. And it's just to give them an example, to really teach them how to show pride in your school. Not everybody was a cheerleader so not everybody is like, "Woo!" So we have to actually teach the kids, this is what you do to be excited about your school. We then have games between the teachers and the students. That's always a fun one. At the very end of the year, we have a minute to win it. And that is just purely a celebration of their behavior achievements. It's just a fun way to say, "You've had a great year. We're really proud of you." And we do minute to win it games. And they're always teacher versus students. And it's been an annual thing because it's gone over so well. During that assembly, though, we usually have gift card giveaways. They're gonna spin the wheel this year and be able to win some gift cards as well. This is an example of one of our school-wide assemblies. Let's hope it works.

[VIDEO START]

>> [INAUDIBLE] students are gonna win or the teachers? All right.

>> Go, teachers!

>> [INAUDIBLE]. On your mark, get set, go! [INAUDIBLE] Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one!

>> The challenges, [INAUDIBLE]. We also wanna dare you to be better than other areas. We want you to dare to be better in school, math, reading, writing, social studies class [INAUDIBLE]. We also wanna dare

you to be better as a person. We want you to be able to rise above and be better every day as the person that you are. And we know that's not easy.

>> [INAUDIBLE]

>> [INAUDIBLE] Make sure that if you dare to be better than you were last year and make a difference for yourself and for everybody around you because you care about our community and our school.

>> [INAUDIBLE]

>> Very generous donations of our community sponsors. You each are taking home a mustang pride cinch sack.

[APPLAUSE]

[VIDEO END]

>> As you can see, our mustang ... And our mustang was actually new this year. Years ago, they had a mustang mascot but it kinda wore out. So they brought a new mustang mascot this year. And what we did for our mustang was, we went ahead and took a vote. And the kids got to vote for the name of the mustang. And they came up with the name Mighty. And of course, they were helped a little bit. They were coaxed to that name. But Mighty has added so much to our assemblies. The kids love it. The Kindergarten teacher that was doing this? She's the one in that costume. So the other thing that we wanted to do in our school, about 7 years ago we renovated. And we have a beautiful, beautiful school. But nothing on the walls, really, that screams Mercer pride. So we asked a title teacher who's an artist to start putting things around the school. And she's just taken her free time. And she's taken time around the school to paint some real horses and our horseshoes and the word mustangs up a ramp just to continually let the kids see that mustang pride. It's a visual reminder for them. And they really do like seeing it. At Kindergarten registration, along with a T-shirt at the beginning of the year, at Kindergarten registration we give every Kindergartener a new cinch sack. It's also just to get those kids started right from the beginning that you have mustang pride. And we have a letter that we give to the parents explaining school-wide right then. We have two songs. And the first song is right here. We have two songs for our school.

[VIDEO START]

[Lyrics]

Everybody put your hands up in the air right now

Singing [INAUDIBLE]

We want to show that we love our school

Singing [INAUDIBLE]

If you like being nice, responsible and safe

[INAUDIBLE]

Now we said it once

But we'll say it twice

We [INAUDIBLE]

[VIDEO END]

>> Another way that we've been trying to promote pride in our community and trying to reach out to our community members is, last year we did something called, "Where do you show your pride?" And what we did was, we asked the kids to take their mustang pride T-shirts on vacation and all kinds of different places, wherever they were, and take their picture. And we put their picture up on the walls in the school so we could start showing that they've been spreading their mustang pride all over. This year, what we're doing is, we're doing something called, "Where's mighty?" And we have one here. And we gave each kid a card stock drawing of Mighty. And they had to color it. And what they're doing is, they're taking pictures of Mighty in different places. We have them all on our wall. There's a picture of it over there, a big Mighty drawing. And then, we're starting to add them to our wall. And we have kids that have already gone to Disney World and taken pictures of Mighty in Disney World. And this is a picture of Mighty on the "Seussical" set at the high school. They e-mail them to us. And then Maggie, the computer person who does everything. She just doesn't talk. But she really does most everything else. Then they go ahead and we post them up on the wall. One of the other ways in the community was, we were asked to go to a high school basketball game to share with our mustang pride there. So we're gonna show you what that looked like. Hopefully. Maybe not. This was the best one. Aw, man. That's all right. In this one, there's bucket drumming. I don't know if you saw the bucket drumming in one of the other performances, but ...

>> [INAUDIBLE]

>> Oh, here we go.

[VIDEO START]

>> This is how we involve our sixth graders, all [INAUDIBLE] grade students.

[DRUMMING]

[SINGING]

[VIDEO END]

>> As you can see from many of these videos, our staff is amazing. Without that staff buy-in, we could do whatever we wanted to do. But we could not be successful because they are absolutely awesome. Our music teacher taught all those bucket drummers how to do that. And she comes to every assembly and does it with them. But she actually can walk away from them now and let them off on their own. She has also been the one to make the motions up. We have teachers making up the songs. So we do start with the ideas. But they take it to the next level and really help it be successful.

>> And we are lucky. We have a principal who's retiring at the end of this year. She is kinda giving us a free hand. She has been super supportive. We go to her with an idea, she's like, "Run with it." So without that support from the administration, we wouldn't be able to do a lot of the things that we got done. Now, there is another level to our section. We wanna promote mustang pride. We want the kids to see that we believe in them. We wanna celebrate that good behavior. But there's also that other end. And that kinda goes along with school-wide positive behavior as well. And when we started this program, one of the reasons we started this program was, there was not a set of clear definitions and consequences for what was managed by the teacher in the classroom versus what got sent to the principal in the office and where was the dividing line? And when do we send them, when do we not send them? So the staff really wanted this program. So one of the things that we came up with was, what is a classroom managed behavior? What's something that each teacher should handle in the classroom? Versus what's an office managed behavior? Or what is referred to in our school as a major behavior? Every teacher has one of these. It's a quick, easy reference guide so there's no gray area. Well, is this something that really needs to go to the office? Does the principal need to know about this? If there's stealing in the classroom, that's an office managed behavior. There's no gray area anymore. This has really helped our school eliminate some of those gray areas that I think a lotta school districts deal with. Also, we have our office referral form, which we call an ORF, that we set up. And we set this up at the beginning. And here's a picture of it. Teachers have these each year. We pass them out at the beginning of the year. And first of all, you have to fill out, where does the offending behavior occur? One of eight different areas in the school. Teacher will then fill out, and any staff member can fill one of these out, minor behavior, defiance, disrespect, disruption. If it's a minor behavior, one of those get checked there. If it's a major behavior, it's over there on the right-hand side. And then each teacher fills out, what's the perceived motivation? Was there anyone else? And then, these would go to the principal. And then action would be dealt with on that basis. This has been super-helpful kinda keeping that clear, concise language. K through six fills these out. There's no variation between grade level. This is our school form. One of the problems we had at our school was, each teacher had kinda their own form. And then there was one in the office that no one even knew was there. So all sorts of things were getting filled out. That doesn't happen in our school anymore. This is the form that gets filled out. Also, we decided as a group that we would invest, and it's not a tremendous amount of money, it's pretty small, in what's called a SWIS data system. That tracks student behaviors. And I can't stress to you enough how important that is because while you may have an office referral form, it doesn't do you a whole lotta good if you can't tell where your problem areas are at or what your problem behaviors are. So when these ORFs, or office referral forms, come to the office, that's inputted in by the secretary. And then, we have monthly meetings where we track what's going on? Do we have a large number of ORFs being written up in the cafeteria? Why are they being written up in the cafeteria? Then, we can go and try to solve that problem. Are we getting lots of kids that are being written up while using the restroom or in the cafeteria? Whatever it may be, we use this information to drive our policies of, how can we correct it? If you don't have that, you're kind of going down a path you don't know where you end up going. This kinda is the road map that you can follow. What do we need to concentrate on fixing? Using this information, we have developed what we call Booster Sessions. And we have different committees that have been formed in our school. The first one is the cafeteria committee. We found that a lot of our ORFs were being written up in the cafeteria. Kids had some extra free time, it's that unstructured environment. Well, they were enjoying it. And in our school, there are cafeteria monitors. But they're not teachers. They are parents that just come in for the three lunch periods. So these were people that weren't always with the students. And so we found out that we needed the cafeteria committee. And we have booster sessions where we break it down for them and are constantly reminding the students, we have a golden spoon award. And I think we have one over here, actually, somewhere. There it is,

right there, the golden spoon award. This is given out by the cafeteria monitors for those classes each day that do the ...

>> Made by Patti's husband.

>> Patti's husband. And in case you were wondering, Patti's husband put a name to a face, he was Santa. So if you saw him up here, he was also Santa. So you can't go ahead and steal him. He's ours. But he does everything. But this golden spoon comes out to the class that does the best job that day of exhibiting being safe, kind, respectful, responsible in the cafeteria. And they get to take it back to their classroom. The teacher makes a big deal out of it. As soon as they get three golden spoons, they get a special prize. It's just a way of trying to make sure those students understand what kind of expectations are being taught in the cafeteria. We also had teacher modeling. And the fact that I talked earlier about the cafeteria monitors, they weren't regular teachers. They asked, "Could teachers come in here and model to us? How do we deal with these situations? What do we need to do?" So we had some teachers that volunteered to come in on their lunch and show people in our cafeteria, this is the way you need to kinda handle the situations. It was a big help. The other one we have a large problem with as far as the number of ORFs and students misbehaving was on the bus. We have a large population that rides the bus. And in our school district, K through 12 ride the bus together. So you have a large cross section of kids. So we had to come up with a way, what are we going to do to help motivate those students? And one of the things that we came up with, and it was an idea that we got here from a different school district last year, was bus bucks. And we hand those out to the bus drivers. It's a little yellow ticket. And for students who are exhibiting those behaviors that are expected: not poking holes in the seat, not hitting your neighbor as you're sitting there, they get a bus buck from the bus driver. They then turn that in and once every 2 weeks, we have a bus bucks drawing where a student is chosen from each bus. They get to come up. They get to choose a prize. And I'm tellin' ya, it's a big deal. I have sixth graders saying to me, "Hey, is there a bus bucks drawing today? I'm pretty sure I got a couple tickets up there." They want those prizes. And that's sometimes the way it needs to be to motivate them. At the beginning of the year, our school district has a driver meeting where all the bus drivers come in about a week before school and talk to them. We went to that bus driver meeting and tried to say, "What can we do to help you? What can we do?" And so these were some of the ideas that we came up with to help those bus drivers feel empowered. They kinda felt like they were on an island, almost. And this was our way of trying to help them out with some of those behaviors on the bus. We have our librarian, she's been there for a lotta years, she is wonderful. It is her personal mission in life to make sure every student behaves on that bus. I mean, if you misbehave on that bus, Mrs. Langdon is on you like white on rice. I'm tellin' you. All right? You're down there. And we came up bus report free. So we keep a track, it's in the hallway as soon as students come in. Nine days, we haven't had a bus report or 2 days. And as soon as there's a bus report, that goes back to zero. And once every 2 weeks, she gets on. And she reminds those students. We have students who aren't following those rules. In the morning, they're called down to meet with her. And she goes over those rules again. She wants them to behave on the bus. So again, that staff buy-in, she's taken this. And she's kinda run with it. We couldn't do this without a lot of willing staff members. We also have a Check-in/Check-Out, students that have repeated bus offenses. They get a little sheet where the bus driver signs it. They get a number associating with their behavior when they get to school and then when they leave. And just another way of monitoring that student progress on the bus. Each January, we come back from school, I don't know about you. But you're off for that week and a half, 2 week, you need a little refresher course. So through every lunch period in January, we will hit with the students some of those key aspects, reminding the students. What does being safe, kind, respectful, responsible mean in Mercer Elementary School? We also have booster strips that have been sent out to each staff member. These booster strips are on a card like that. That has being safe, kind,

respectful, responsible in our eight areas. What does it look like? And we encourage the teachers to go over with the students every January and throughout the course of the year those expectations. We also have weekly focuses. And usually, we start with the bus and cafeteria first. And each morning, there's a little announcement. "Hey, mustangs, making sure we're behaving in the cafeteria. Making sure that we're cleaning up after ourselves, making sure we're putting our silverware back." That weekly focus in January, February, I don't know about you but sometimes that behavior starts to go down in January, February. And so this is our weekly focus, focusing on one of our eight areas and how we can improve it. One of our last things, we started this in April of 2013 when we had staff members say, "We need something in our school as far as expectations, how we define it." And I don't know how well you can see it. But in April of 2013, 32 percent of our staff members, about 75 people, took this survey. Thirty-two percent said expectations were clearly defined for the students. Only 48 percent said expectations are even being taught in our school. Twenty-nine percent reward system, district support 11 percent. The following year, October, 2014, 100 percent believe that expectations are defined. Expectations are being taught. Ninety-seven percent say there is now an equitable reward system in our school. Our latest survey, we're up in the 90s in all the categories. Just one of those ways that kinda shows our staff has bought into it. I can't stress to you enough how important it is to find those staff members and find those talents. I didn't know a lot of the people in our building were as talented as they were. I had no idea the Title I teacher was an artist. She has taken it upon herself to decorate our school. It's helpful when you find those people, those people are out there. I think that's about all we have. We have an e-mail here in case you have any questions that maybe we didn't get to. I know it can be a lot of information at one time. If you wanna e-mail us, you're certainly more than welcome to. I think we have at least about 5 minutes. If anybody has a question, we'd be more than willing to answer that to the best of our ability or make something up. We can do that as well. I think we have one down here?

>> I heard today that the class management [INAUDIBLE] teachers [INAUDIBLE] and communication [INAUDIBLE]. What are [INAUDIBLE]. One thing that keeps coming up with our faculty, and it's a very small faculty compared to what you have, is that there are consequences [INAUDIBLE] talked about the ones, the talking out in classrooms, the classroom ones. And what we wanna do [INAUDIBLE] all on the same page [INAUDIBLE].

>> We were told to repeat the question. So I'm gonna try to repeat it for the videographer. Her question is, these classroom managed behaviors, how do you deal with them, making sure everyone's on the same page? Not those office managed behaviors, not those majors, but those minors. In our school, and every school's different. I guess I probably should've pointed this out. This is kind of a road map. Every school has to kinda make it their own way to fit their own system. This works for Mercer. Maybe something on here doesn't work for your school. You said you have a smaller staff. We have a larger staff. So you kinda gotta take it and move it with their own. But as far as your question, classroom managed behaviors, if a student is written up three times for a minor, let's say talking out. That, then, in our school, three minors equal a major. That, then gets turned into the office. There is a sheet with a protocol. The first major is 3 days in our quiet room, so in recess. The second major's 5 days in the quiet room. The third major is a detention after school. So we have protocols for that. Now, is every teacher the same as far as what their definition is of talking out? Do they write it up? There is going to be some variation there. But if a student is written three times for talking up, that turns into a major. There's no gray area. First time is 3 days in the quiet room. So that's how we defined it for that section. Does that answer your question? Yes?

>> My school is similar in size to Mercer. How do you get more staff buy-in, anticipating all of your [INAUDIBLE]? Are they [INAUDIBLE]? [INAUDIBLE] for everything. How do we [INAUDIBLE]? [INAUDIBLE]

>> Her question was, how do you get staff involved to be on these committees? We have a cafeteria committee. We have a bus committee. How do you get staff members to do this?

>> To be honest, it was us at the beginning as well. And it just became that our program got really good reviews. They really bought into it after seeing it for a couple years. And now, they're on board. They were all willing to be a part of the assemblies. They were all willing to be a part of those things. But the committees, not until this year. The committees started because I sent out an e-mail asking, we really are struggling with the cafeteria. And school-wide, we're on all different areas in the school. And we really need this to be focused on by a committee. Within 7 minutes, I had five e-mails saying, "I'm with you. I wanna support school-wide in any way I can. I believe in our program." It took couple years for us to get them on like that. It took us 5 seconds for them to get on, saying they want the program. It took them a couple years to say, "We wanna be with you on the program."

>> You're on year 3?

>> We're on year 3. Does that help answer your question?

>> I was hoping to [INAUDIBLE].

>> You gotta make it look really good and really exciting.

>> And before we started this, the nice thing is, we had teachers asking for a program like this. So they weren't doing it at the beginning. But as we've progressed through, people I can say came out of the woodwork almost. You know, "Let me be a part of this too." I guess it's kinda one of those old adages, "Success breeds success." The more things you see, the more people you kinda get like, "Yeah, I'll do that." Any other questions? Yes?

>> Do your kids wanna go home in the summer?

>> I don't know about the kids. But the teachers do. We are tired. This is a lotta work. People put in an extraordinary amount of time. I believe the kids enjoy this. I hope this has added to their educational experience because one of the things on here is, school-wide positive behavior also, and you don't wanna necessarily tie it into this, but this improves test scores. Happier the kids are, the more the test scores go up, which in our education environment, that's the way the world works today. Yes?

>> [INAUDIBLE] make sure that every student in your whole school gets a ticket [INAUDIBLE]?

>> Her question is for our ticket system. Do we make sure every student gets at least one mustang pride ticket throughout the course of the year? We had an issue the first year, a large issue at least in our eyes, as far as the kids that were getting tickets ... We met with the staff. We did it on an in-service day. We said, "The students we want to get this are the kids always modeling that consistent behavior, the kids up here." A lot of it, at the beginning, were teachers giving it to those kids who were not very good, who for that day were doing the right thing. And so they would get a mustang pride ticket. So we started sending out once a week, Maggie the computer expert, sends out a list of all the students in the school and how many mustang pride tickets they've received. So every teacher knows Jamie has eight tickets, Bobby has one. And so that tends to help us a little bit identify those students who maybe don't have as many tickets that probably should. I use it. I have a girl who, every day, does the things she's supposed

to be doing. She works hard. She had two tickets. She should have more than that. So that helps to identify. There are students that don't receive mustang pride tickets, not many. By the end of the year, they probably all have at least one except for ... Everyone has one. Yes? That ticket system lets us find those kids who don't have a ticket and get them one. Any other questions? Oh, one more.

>> Can we rent out Patti's husband?

>> Patti's husband's a good one.

>> [INAUDIBLE]

>> We'll pass out his number at the end.

>> He has a price. Anything else? I think we're about outta time. So I don't wanna ... Okay. Thank you.