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**[holt\_staf] Encouraging High Standards**

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**Subject :** [holt\_staf] Encouraging High Standards  
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Hey Bolts!

I've been thinking a lot about encouraging our students and holding all learners to high standards. We're coming to that time of year when things are little more consistent- there aren't as many breaks from school. Most kids are familiar with the routines by now. The months are long but this is actually my favorite time of year! For a lot of our students, this is the time they can really start making growth. This email has specific examples that relate to primary grades, but the ideas can be implemented across all ages!

- All K-1 classrooms should have a break box (pencil box) in the hall. This are available for all students. Encourage students who usually take breaks in another room to try taking a break in the hall (or classroom) instead! You can encourage this in a few different ways. Be honest with students about supervision. You could say something like, "There isn't always someone available in Ms. Em's room (or the calming room) but I can always watch you out the window!" Consider incentivising- "You can take a 5 minute break in the calming room, or if you stay in the hall you can have 6-7 minutes since you don't have to spend time walking!" If there is a certain type of break item you are wishing you had access to, please let me know!
- Start to remove scaffolding slowly, and leave room for negotiation. If a student has certain task/subject they struggle with, start encouraging them to be a little more independent. Use positive and encouraging language. ex: for a student who struggles to write have them write the first letter of each word, then write the rest for them to trace in highlighter; tell them each day that they write you want them to try and write 1 extra word- then let them choose where they start (today 2 words, tomorrow 3) celebrate with them each time they beat their record.
- Leave room for negotiation when possible. Teaching a student to say, "I'm overwhelmed, can I do 6 problems instead of 8?" or just "This is too much" can

eliminate a lot of power struggles. If you see a student start to refuse (especially doing something you know they struggle with) or they say something like "I'm not doing this" instead of engaging in a power struggle, give them a respectful option. What can they say? "This much work makes me feel overwhelmed." "I need help." "Is there another way I can show you I know this?" Whenever I negotiate a work task, I make sure the student knows it won't happen every time, and I make them tell me what they are going to do next time. Ex: Today you told me you are feeling overwhelmed by 10 math problems so we did 5 instead. We'll need to do a little more tomorrow. Do you want to try 6 or 7 problems tomorrow

- When a student asks for help, is there a portion they can try independently first? It's ok to tell students how important it is they try something on their own, or they'll never know what they are capable of. Give them a choice: "Do you want to do the first 3 together, and the last 3 on your own?" or "I need to see your work on the first one, then I can help you on the second."
- Create a class culture of "doing hard things" Let the kids choose vote on a new class mantra. Ideas:
  - This is tough, but so am I
  - I can do hard things
  - Sometimes you win, sometimes you learn
  - Patience, perseverance, practice
- Change what you are giving Zaps for- tell the class. I highly recommend doing a week when you only give Zaps for doing hard things, or for trying again after a mistake. Ask the kids to be reporters on this too!
- Do challenge activities to build frustration tolerance ([click here for and go to the last slide](#))
- Watch these [Growth mindset videos](#) as a class
- Check out this [playlist of videos on mistakes and the brain](#)

- Have students track their progress- Pick something all students can see progress with and is relative to their starting score, not their peers
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- **If you want to collaborate about a specific student or situation and how to hold students to high standards while accommodating all learners, please reach out! I would love to help you problem solve.**

As always, I'm grateful to work at such an awesome school! Go Bolts!

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