

Hello Suamico Elementary Parents/Guardians,

Happy New Year! I hope this reaches you well.

This time of year has most of us reflecting back on 2017 and looking forward to the adventures of 2018 with hope and excitement. It has been a wonderful semester and I want to take a minute to share a brief overview of what your child/children has been learning in Guidance class thus far this school year.

We started the school year with an introduction to my role as the School Counselor, followed by Kindness to others. I relayed the message of kindness using the popular "Bucket Filling" analogy. That is filling the invisible bucket that people carry around with them each day... be a bucket filler, not a bucket dipper.

We then learned about the brain. Understanding how our brain works is an important first step to regulating our feelings and emotions. Your child could explain to you where the Frontal Lobe, Limbic System (which is where our feelings and emotions live), and Brain Stem are in the brain. We liken the brain to a stoplight, Red (Brain Stem) means stop you're out of control, Yellow (Limbic System) means slow down and take caution, and Green (Frontal Lobe) is go, you're focused and ready to learn.



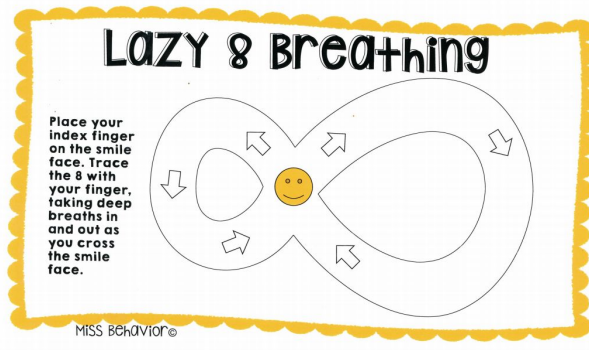
The Zones of Regulation

Blue Rest Area	Green Go	Yellow Slow Down	Red Stop
Sad	Happy	Nervous	Angry
Upset	Excited	Surprised	Yelling
Hurt	Calm	Confused	Aggressive
Tired	Proud	Silly	Mad

Following the lesson on the brain we talked about the *Zones of Regulation*, which was developed by Leah Kuypers. This is a framework that encourages students to use self-regulation and emotional control. Check out the image to the left to better understand what feelings fit into each color zone.

We are all better learners when we are in the green zone

however, there are many times when life puts us in the yellow, red, and blue zones. Hence, we followed Zones of Regulation with Calming Strategies. We discussed ways to calm yourself down. One example is relaxation breathing.



Prior to the holiday break we discussed the importance of exhibiting kindness to others in need and the benefits of gratitude (“The best things in life aren’t things”).



Currently the Kindergarten and 1st graders are learning about the importance of goal setting and the 2nd-4th graders are learning about Growth Mindset. Growth Mindset is credited to Carol Dweck’s book, *Mindset* and students in 2nd-4th grade are learning about the power of YET (when students feel discouraged we should promote that they add the word “Yet” to the end of negative self-talk statements like “I don’t understand this... YET”).

I want to share some helpful tips to encourage the development of a Growth Mindset in a child. See attached for some resources to support that at home.

Students have also been doing a lot of mindfulness practices as well. One thing we do to start each Guidance class is to “invite the bell”. Students sit with their hands on on “heart and home” and listen quietly until they can no longer hear the sound, which only takes a minute or so. Most students LOVE the bell and report feeling more calm and relaxed afterwards.



I feel truly honored to know and to work with your child/children each day at Suamico Elementary, they are an inspiring group of kids. Thank you for making me feel welcome and a part of your family. Please let me know how I can further assist you and your child/children along their path to greatness!

Wishing you well,

Alexis Foley  
School Counselor  
Suamico Elementary  
(920)662-9814