

There are so many situations that take place in schools that never should have happened or escalated had the teacher not provoked the student. The following exchange between the student and the substitute Ana Alvarez was unnecessary:

Sub: *If living in the United States is "so bad," why not go to another place to live?*

Student: *"They brought me here," the boy replied.*

Sub: *"Well you can always go back, because I came here from Cuba, and the day I feel I'm not welcome here anymore, I would find another place to live."*

No, we can't excuse her actions because she was just a substitute; she is also an adult. An adult working in a school should know better than to tell a student to leave the country. The school district said the sub didn't know students were not required to stand for the pledge. First, if the sub was aware of the policy this situation would not have taken place. Second, since the sub did not know, she could have asked him to stand and when he refused, she should have left him alone. She could have written a note to inform the teacher. There was no reason she should have been going back and forth with him. This only upset the student and led to his arrest. This student was arrested because an adult did not understand he was doing what he was allowed to do.

We have too many teachers trying to get even or get the last word with students. It is a waste of energy and time. It is what children do. We need teachers to not act like children and act like adults. Teachers must be calm when students are creating a storm. Children will get under your skin. The key is not to show it and to remain in control of your emotions and actions. When adults lose control, it only escalates the situation and can damage the relationship the child has with the teacher. How the teacher responds to one student can also change other students' perception of the teacher.

Teachers, please do not engage and go ten round with students. It's not worth it. Call for help and seek advice from other teachers if you are consistently having difficulty with a student or a specific behavior that more than one student is exhibiting. Adults have to be the problem solvers, not the problem makers.