



Teachers Should Not Threaten to Exclude Students from Celebrations to Control Behavior Before a Break

By Educator Barnes - December 13, 2021

The struggle seems to become the most real right before a long break. Regardless of what type of school calendar a school uses, most schools are closed for two weeks for winter break. The week before break does not have to cause worry and dread.

Listen, I know some students seem to burst right through the best-designed plans. I am not here to say this will be full proof, but hopefully, this perspective will help.

First, let me get this out of the way ... do not, I repeat, do not threaten to take away a holiday party or ban a student from an end-of-the-semester celebration. There are two types of teachers when it comes to this threat, the ones who follow through and the ones who don't.

The ones who don't are hoping that this empty threat will force students to behave. Students easily discover the bluff and turn it up a few notches. Then there are the teachers that actually keep their word. They do not let students participate in parties or celebrations. Once students realize the teacher is keeping their word, they turn it up a few notches. They don't care because this dangling carrot is no longer an option and on top of that they are mad because they got excluded.

Yes, I saw the eye roll and heard that sigh. I am not saying that we should give no consequences. Teachers don't need to make up new ones; they should implement the ones already in place and let natural consequences happen. If Terry hits a classmate right before the celebration and is removed from class and therefore misses the party, that is a natural consequence without dangling it in the student's face.

Celebrations and parties before winter break bring closure and mark the halfway point of the school year. This celebration may be the only bright point for students until they return back to school after break.

The weekend before winter break ended in 2021, my father died. My sons had just seen him for Christmas, and we were supposed to see him the day after he died. A few days after my dad died, a gift my dad order for one of my sons arrived. I know that although my sons are excited about the break, they are sad and will miss how winter break used to be. The holiday season is not always pleasant, and teachers should do their best to send off students with joy.

It is important for teachers to note how proud they are of their students and that they will miss them during the break. Those words may be the shining light that gets them through break. Of course, this English teacher also suggest telling students to read ... look, I can't help it!

Don't ignore poor behavior. Talk to those students and tell them you expect better after the break. If they are a chronic offender, tell them that you are going to help them turn over a new leaf after the break and show them ways to appropriately let out frustration, anxiety, or anger.

The week before a break should be a week of fun and excitement not a week of stress and threats.