

Spotlight on the Standards

[View the Standards here.](#)



How Teachers Can Benefit from End-of-Year Reflections

by Jay Schauer

Wander through classrooms in almost any school at the end of a major assignment, a project, a unit, a grading period, or the entire year, and you are likely to see a teacher facilitating student reflection. Reflection in any endeavor is a powerful part of learning from mistakes, missed opportunities, and also maintenance of success.

But reflection isn't just for students. Teachers can also benefit from practicing this invaluable approach for themselves and should be encouraged to do so.

What's most important are the benefits that reflecting and planning can generate for you and your students next year.

With reflection, timing really is everything. If you don't do it right at the end of school, or right at the beginning of summer if your school is already out, there's a good chance that a lot of great ideas will dissipate as your brain engages with however you fill your summer. If that happens, you will likely find yourself at some point next year, as I experienced myself many times, exclaiming, "Doh! Now I remember that I meant to..." It's way better to stroll into the start of the new school year amid all the meetings and preparation and be glad to have a plan to continue to improve your practice—you and your students will be glad you did.

[Read the full article](#)

Building Relationship and Behavioral Skills



6 Ways to Inspire Intrinsic Motivation in Elementary Students

These strategies encourage students to explore, learn, and grow without the expectation of rewards.
by Alicia Sewell

Although the title of this article mentions elementary students specifically, the lessons learned here can benefit learners of all ages!

Building this foundation in the early grades sets the stage for deeper engagement and self-driven learning as students grow. These are practical strategies that Alicia uses to help ignite that inner drive in her students.

- Create a safe and supportive space.
- Model curiosity and passion.
- Encourage goal-setting.
- Give students voice and choice.
- Make learning relevant.
- Incorporate joy and wonder.

[Read the full article](#)

Health and Wellness

Choose Water for Healthy Hydration

by Janine Rethy, MD, MPH, FAAP

All living things need water to survive. Along with milk, plain water is the best drink choice for kids. Why? It's super healthy with zero calories and no added sugar. It's good for the body, keeps joints, bones and teeth healthy, helps the blood circulate and can help kids maintain a healthy weight into adulthood. Being well hydrated improves mood, memory and attention in children. And it's economical—tap water is much less expensive than sports drinks, sodas and juice.

Read this blog for some tips to help your family make water your go-to beverage.

[Read the blog](#)




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Staff Support

3 Questions that can Transform School Culture

Asking these questions can help ensure a more



- "In your perfect world, what would happen?"

collaborative and inclusive school leadership.
By Cristiana Jurgensen

- “What barriers might we face in achieving this vision?”
- “What is the first step we can take?”

In Cristiana Jurgensen's 25 years as an educational leader, she has found these three questions to be powerful tools for fostering collaboration and creating a collective vision. They shift leadership from a top-down directive to a shared responsibility model, encouraging educators to think critically, problem-solve proactively, and engage in meaningful change.

Read Cristiana's article for a real-world example of her Perfect-World Protocol and how she balances collaboration and leadership to empower her staff.

[Read the full article](#)

STEM Activities



Make the Most of the Time After a STEM Challenge

Kerry Tracy: Feel-Good Teaching

So you've wrapped up a STEM challenge—the designs are built, the materials are cleaned up (mostly), and it's tempting to call it a day. But don't stop there!

The real learning happens when students reflect - not just on their final design, but on the process, the teamwork, the frustrations, the aha moments, and everything in between.

That's where post-build group discussions come in. These conversations help students:

- Analyze how and why their designs worked
- Reflect on collaboration and group dynamics
- Connect STEM concepts to the real world
- Build communication and critical thinking skills

Click the link to watch Kerry Tracy's YouTube video in which she shares her eight go-to questions to guide post-build discussions.

[View the video here](#)

Grant Opportunities



Be Healthy School Grant Program from BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama

- Maximum Award Amount: \$20,000
- Application Deadline: July 18, 2025
- Eligibility Requirements:
 - Be located in Alabama
 - Serve students in grades K-12
 - Be a public or private school or a program directly tied to a school

These grants are for the implementation of school-based health and wellness programs that emphasize increased exercise and nutrition education involvement during the school year. Visit the [FAQ page](#) for more info.



[Grant Application Website](#)

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