

Going to Bat for Your Students

When you set out to become a teacher, you set out to do more than just learn the skill of presenting information to a group of students. A teacher is much more than just someone who hands out information and then gives tests and grades. When you become a teacher, you become an entirely different kind of person. Becoming a teacher changes you or rather it allows that inner teacher to come to dominance and become what you were put here to be in the first place.

So just as being a teacher is a state of mind, teaching is about more than just giving lectures. One of the joys of teaching is the strong bond you develop with your students. When you take a small group of students through an entire school year of material, you become a partner with them for their success. You become a confidant, a protector and a friend of the students and their families. This is a trusted place in the heart of your students and one that is not given lightly so cherish it and protect it at all costs.

One way that this bond is expressed is in how you will go to bat for a student if the need arises. That is because you can see beyond the outside view of what a kid is. You may have children in your class that have tattoos, earrings, wear gang colors or demonstrate violent behavior outside of class. But to you, that is a child who deserves to be loved, taught and cared for. It is not uncommon for this unique bond between teacher and student to turn a kid around and see him turn away from socially undesirable behavior and begin a long slow growth toward a productive lifestyle that he learned from you, his teacher.

Going to bat for your student means that when you know a child is gifted, you use your influence with the administration to get that child the special educational opportunities that will develop that blessing in that child. If the gift is not in the area of broad educational excellence but in a specialized skill like music, art or athletics, you go to bat for that child to get him or her an audition with the coach over that area of school life. Because of the bond you share with your students, you at first be the only one to be able to see that talent in that child. But when you get her the specialized training she needs and that talent blossoms into a wonderful skill that can bless others and the child's life as well, you will have given her a gift for life.

Going to bat for your students also means not throwing any children away. When young people are put into your care, that is a serious commitment that you are making to those children. There is not one single child in your care of lesser value than the others. So one way you demonstrate your commitment to being a teacher to every child is when one of your students gets in trouble you go to him or her and find a way to save that child's educational career.

The last thing you want to see is a child expelled and sent out into the world with the stigma of "not good enough" for school. You have it in your power to get that child into alternative schools, to get him or her tutoring until this rough patch passes or to get him or her moved into a home school situation so the many years of education for that youngster are not lost over a difficult time in the life of the child.

The place you are granted in the life of your students is one of trust and caring that is a privileged one indeed. Be sure you protect and cherish that gift by going to bat for your students when they need you there. And who knows, down the road your students may come back and go to bat for you in some way when you really need them too.

PPPPP

Word Count 700