

Hi everyone,

I have been asked about grandparents day this year - whether or not we plan to have a Family Engagement event supporting this day in the building. So I thought I'd include everyone with the answer:

In past years, we have set aside a day to honor grandparents with a meal and special time with their grandchild. This year marks a decided shift away from events like this as we focus (like a laser) on the goal of increasing student achievement. Student achievement is the impetus for everything that happens under the umbrella of Family Engagement in our building.

So does that mean we don't want to honor special people, which is to say, the culture of our students? No, not at all.

Teachers, you may want to invite the grandparents of your students to come to your classroom and read to their grandchild during the read aloud/conferencing time of the WERM. Or, perhaps there is a story your children have been writing and the opportunity is ripe for the grandparents to come help edit that work. If there isn't a 100% response by the grandparents because they have other obligations, a couple of grandparents could team-up to work with a group of students. And don't forget data...You can invite grandparents to come to your room for a student-led presentation of current performance data (on math tests, behavior across multiple environments, reading assessments, etc. Then, they could ask questions that students raise hands to answer).

These are things that include (and thus, honor) grandparents while serving secondary to a larger purpose: increasing student achievement in every classroom. These are just my thoughts. You'll have your own ideas of something that can work in your room, but keep in mind:

- Honoring someone doesn't have to cost anything and it doesn't have to be an "event."
- Honoring someone comes best in the form of including them in something you/we already do.
- Honoring someone can be as simple as saying "thank you."

I know it's hard to let go of established patterns, but I hope you'll agree that tradition can sometimes distract us from purpose. In the case of Family Engagement, it's all about student achievement; moving our kids from where they are to where we know they can go.

Thank you and have a great day! ☺ Therese