

NEST speech plan: June 26<sup>th</sup> 2024

After [REDACTED]

Thank you for taking the time to be here and listen to our experiences and testimonials. I have been working in NEST for a year now, prior to joining the NEST project, I ran a room called “Reset Room” since 2021, where students would come to me for support and guidance for their socio-emotional wellbeing.

Sometimes students may “act out” due to underlying trauma that we as staff may not be aware of or understand. I’ve often had students sent to me for stealing snacks or running away and hiding, refusing to do their work. While the teacher may see this as disobedience, try thinking of it this way- maybe your student, let’s call him Johnny, hasn’t eaten since he left school yesterday. He is sneaking snacks because he is hungry and does not know how to ask for them or fears he will get in trouble. While we don’t condone stealing or sneaking food, maybe understanding this situation can help us come up with a plan so that Johnny is meeting his physiological needs while also being ready to learn.

When a student is running away from class or hiding, we should first ask ourselves why? What is this child trying to communicate with us that they cannot get out verbally. This is often where I come in and provide these students with a safe space to be heard and work towards being able to return to the classroom regulated.

The NEST project has become a huge resource for [REDACTED] Elementary. It is used as a support for all grades, from K4 through grade 6, and even staff! Here are some videos from students and staff members, expressing their thoughts on their experiences with NEST this past year. (show videos from [REDACTED] Ms. [REDACTED] and Mr. [REDACTED]).

Sometimes children don’t have a safe person or a safe place at home. And while any staff member can be that safe place for them, it’s not always a possibility with time constraints and a room with 25 other students. I strongly believe that having a warm and inviting space like NEST, with a qualified and compassionate person there to support the students, is not only beneficial for their mental health (as we have seen), but sets them up to be ready and willing to go back to class with their learning caps on!

Next: [REDACTED] Psych, presentation.

Question period