Hi, Amy—

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| OPENING | Thanks for meeting with me today as planned. As you know, I’ve been working with you this semester to help you improve your classroom management and student engagement, and to help you respond to inappropriate and inattentive behaviors from students in your class. Part of today’s conversation is to review my most recent visit to your class and talk about the data I shared with you. In addition, though, it’s time for us to summarize and connect this semester’s observation data and feedback conferences and discuss next steps for both of us. Ultimately, my goal is to help you address your concerns and improve your teaching. I know you’ve been frustrated and I don’t think that’s contributing your overall feeling of satisfaction and effectiveness. Because your time is valuable, I’m going to keep today’s meeting brief—15 minutes—for a quick review, introduction to next steps, and an opportunity for me to address your questions. To help my focus and accuracy, I’m going to work from some notes, but also, I want to be sure that I clearly convey some important points. Okay? |
| FRAME | As I have shared with you and all of your colleagues, it’s my sincere intent to support the good work that you do—* To highlight and emphasize effective practices and to provide tools and opportunities that help you incorporate them. Our focus is achievement of all students, and I know this is one of your goals, too. Among your colleagues, you’re a respected veteran teacher, and you need to know that I value your experience and your support for our school’s improvement efforts.
* To partner with you to reflect upon and strengthen your lesson plans to help your classroom management structure.
* To visit with you in your classroom to witness student misbehavior firsthand and help you with specific strategies to improve management.
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| EXAMPLE | Regarding this last point, this brings us to my most recent visit. While in your classroom, your choice of language with some of your students is concerning. Quite frankly, the words you used were flatly inappropriate and unacceptable. Almost jokingly, I heard you tell three boys to “Just sit down and zip it.” When the students refused to sit and continued to talk and laugh, you said more loudly in front of the class, “Maybe you need to take your rear ends to the office and sit there for the rest of the day?” Finally, when the boys sat down, you looked at me and said openly in front of the class, “See what I mean? This is the nonsense I have to put up with in here.” |
| IMPACT | Amy, when you use these words, you may be communicating a dislike of the behavior, but you also are communicating a dislike of the students. This is neither appropriate nor productive. In fact, taking time to openly embarrass or call out certain students also conveys to children that there’s a way to get under your skin that gets you flustered and keeps them from having to engage in their classwork. If the child’s parent were in the classroom, would you have used those words? Secondly, when you openly disparage the student in front of me—and ask for my help—it draws attention as if I’m expected to discipline the students in your class. It puts me in an uncomfortable situation because you’re telling your students that you expect me to respond to their behavior from only your perspective. That wasn’t my intent for visiting the class, and unless there were an emergency involving student safety or your safety, your focus should be on your students, and not on what you think I should do to assume responsibility for your classroom management.This also undermines your authority as a classroom teacher and contributes to students respecting you less—not more. And none of this contributes to student learning. |
| ACTION | Amy—I need for you to improve in this area immediately. We have discussed classroom management in our recent conferences and its relationship to lesson plans that have far too little opportunity for students to engage in the content, rather than listening to you. As I observed this morning, it took 6 minutes for you to begin your class and have students engaged in an activity—and this time delay invites these students to misbehave. At the 6-minute mark today, as I walked around, I observed that fully 6 of the 24 students in your class had yet to complete the opening activity. And some of these students are hardly behavior concerns at all. This is poor time on task and suggests that expectations for student performance and engagement are far too low. Together, we’re going to outline a series of very specific steps and strategies for you to incorporate, but also, we’re going to address the kinds of language and frustration that you should avoid in class, as well. This is going to be a more formal set of expectations for you to follow closely, and I’m going to help with more targeted instructional support in your class that we can debrief together. To help keep you focused, I’m going to incorporate these specific steps and expected outcomes in an improvement document that we’ll develop together. I know that the thought of a performance improvement plan isn’t what you had in mind; however, the type of behavior you displayed in class today, and the type of disengagement that students are displaying more frequently, must improve. And you’re responsible for that improvement, and I’m responsible for helping you achieve it.  |
| INVITATION TODIALOGUE | So, let’s identify a time on Monday that we can work together on this plan for improvement. We’ll need about an hour. I also want you to think about what I have shared with you today and begin to think about things that you can and will do differently to help students engage in your class. But I also want to help with your frustration, too, and I know you may be frustrated with me. I know I have shared a lot today in a brief time, but I also would like to hear more from you.  |