
Foreword

At my first meeting with Suzanne Peck, she introduced the idea of applying the expertise she had gained through a successful career in corporate training to elementary and middle school classrooms. I was both impressed by her passion for social justice and a little concerned that her corporate experience might not translate easily to children and into busy classrooms. Any initial doubts vanished, however, over the months that followed. She dug into the experiences of teachers and children, families and school administrators. She met with university faculty experts and developed creative approaches to make her messages of tolerance, celebration of differences, and personal empowerment vital and engaging.

The final product, *STAND TALL*, is an authentic set of resources for educators. Suzanne illustrates her respect for classroom teachers in so many ways through this work. For example, she gives them critical information about the law. How refreshing to share this with educators on the front line. Suzanne has thought through what teachers need in order to successfully accomplish each *STAND TALL* objective. She prepares them conceptually and lists the exact materials and parent communications that will support youngsters' success. She also explicitly links the skills learned through *STAND TALL* with prevailing state academic content and process standards.

The work is a masterpiece of integration. Youngsters who engage with the activities outlined in the book will improve their written and verbal communication skills, gain experiences with meaningful collaboration, learn about themselves and their places in the world (family and community), and develop skills and attitudes for personal growth and peer success.

We may have once thought that being bullied or harassed was a rite of passage to be endured by all children. We now know that all those involved with intolerance and aggression are scarred by the experiences. These are not just personal hurts; they represent a failure of community to nurture all members with care and respect. Intolerance is not new or localized to a few arenas. It's time, however, to speak up, work with others, and act to eradicate it. STAND TALL provides the tools to make this happen.

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