



Dear Teacher,

As you may know, _____ is a student at Traditional Martial Arts Academy (TMAA). Our children's program is designed to support parents and teachers in guiding the growth and development of their children. One of the approaches that is part of our curriculum at TMAA is the use of a striping system. Students receive stripes on their belts for effort demonstrated in specific areas of their lives. The red stripe is earned by work applied in school.

I specify effort because our program emphasizes effort over achievement. By doing this, children are better able to be more engaged in the process and less fixated on the outcome. The practical result of this strategy is that children respond to failure with much greater resilience. If they stumble and fall on the way to the goal, it is easier for them to get up and start over, because being in the process is what engages them. If we focus on achievement, children can project more of their sense of identity and self-esteem on the outcome creating anger, disappointment and an unwillingness to go on when they fail. Our intention is that by not making a big deal of the goal, achieving it will be made easier.

The children in our program are very motivated to do well and progress. Because of this, the stripes serve as an excellent method for positive reinforcement. When we identify areas of effort that parents and teachers want to see more often, the striping helps to focus children and keep them mindful of what they are working on.

My hope is that it also provides a helpful reference point for parents and teachers to collaborate around, using the motivation of the stripe to communicate what you and the parents want to see. If there is a specific area that you feel needs work, please communicate it to the parents and they can set it as the "school stripe" requirement. It is important to note that the area of focus need not be grade-related. For instance, if you want to limit class disruptiveness, you can select specific behaviors, such as speaking without permission. When attention and effort is suitably demonstrated in talking only when it is appropriate, you can write a note recommending a school stripe.

It is important for me to mention that stripes are given based on current status only. If a child begins to backslide in an area, a stripe can be removed and they will be required to re-earn it. If you see regression after making a recommendation, please let me know and I can suspend the stripe.

For a child to receive his or her stripe, they need to bring me a note from their teacher describing what their target area of effort was and how they have applied themselves to it. The note can be as brief as you want it; I know that you are very busy. My intent is for the stripe to provide you with a useful tool, not to create a burden.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please to not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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