

# THE FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOL

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Instructional Coach, Champaign Unit 4 Schools

# Objectives of session: First Few Days of School

- Setting student expectations.
- Behavior management.
- Setting parent expectations.



# Warm-up

- Pair up.
  - ❖ Label yourselves “Partner A” & “Partner B.”
- Partner A talks for 45 seconds.
  - Partner B: **NO** talking – just listen.
- Partner B responds for 45 seconds.
  - Partner A: **NO** talking – just listen.

Repeat for 30 seconds.

Repeat for 15 seconds.

# Warm-up

After your first week of teaching, when you leave school, what would you like to have accomplished?



# Share-out...



# First days of school.





# Setting student expectations: Room Setup

- Create a LEARNING space
  - Free of clutter, distractions, or other hazards.
  - Classroom library organized.
  - Manipulatives on shelves--if you don't want kids to touch it, don't put it where they can reach it.
- Be intentional!
  - Your walls are learning spaces too...make them worthwhile!
- Remove barriers in room.
- Make things easily removable: magnets, wall putty, Velcro.





# Setting student expectations: Room Setup

- Seating Charts:
  - Begin with “high-fliers” you know of – proximity.
  - Keep in mind diversity:
    - ❖ Gender
    - ❖ Race
    - ❖ Ability levels
    - ❖ IEP/ESL
  - Have name tags on desks
- If applicable, create “seat spots” on the carpet too!





# Setting student expectations: First Minute

WELCOME TO MR. SONDGEROTH'S  
4TH GRADE!!!

\* Find your desk and place your school supplies on it.

\* TAKE NOTHING OUT!!!

\* Sit quietly on the carpet.

# Setting student expectations: First Hours

- You are the teacher. You were paid to LEAD a classroom. Take charge of your room!
- Work on building relationships!
  - Let the students get to know you and get to know them as people.
- Be “real” with the students.
  - Students can smell fear and fake.

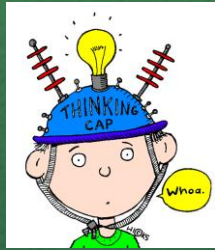




# Setting expectations for students: First Hours

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4<sup>th</sup> grade scavenger hunt



Directions: Put on your thinking cap and take a tour of our classroom (room 34!) to find the answers to these following questions. Some will be easy and some will be more difficult. You may work with a partner. Hints are in the parentheses and prizes may be awarded at the end.....Good Luck ✍️

1. Who are Mr. Sondgeroth's role models? (check the Sondgeroth Star board) \_\_\_\_\_
2. What do you think our first science unit will be about (check the posters next to the In The News Board) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How many pencils should I have sharpened before school starts in the morning and afternoon? (check the Class Rules next to the number line) \_\_\_\_\_
4. What jobs are at the top of the job board? (check the orange job board near my desk) \_\_\_\_\_
5. What color is the math homework tray? (check the homework trays next to the tissues on my desk) \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## 1, 2, 3.....4<sup>th</sup> Grade!!!

Write 1 sentence about what you HATED about 3<sup>rd</sup> grade:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Write 2 sentences about what you LOVED about 3<sup>rd</sup> grade:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Write 3 sentences about GOALS that you have as a STUDENT in 4<sup>th</sup> grade:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Setting expectations for students: First Days

- Set an example early: if you want students to be quiet in the hall, you need to do the same!
- Make classroom expectations clear during those first few days.
  - ❖ Give justifications why.
- Learning is your friend! Keep the students engaged and busy during those first few days!
  - ❖ Keep a consistent schedule.



# Setting expectations for students: First Days

## MORNING

8:35-8:45: Students on carpet

8:45-9:05: Introduce myself

9:05-9:15: Students introduce themselves (name, favorite subject in school, favorite thing outside of school.

9:15-9:45: Put away school supplies

9:45-10:25: Prep period

10:25-10:40: Bathroom/drink expectations

10:40-11:10: Classroom scavenger hunt (ELA)

11:10-12:10: Classmate Interview (Writing)

## AFTERNOON

12:10-12:40: Lunch

12:40-1:40: Being a good classmate/teammate – Math Games

1:40-1:55: Recess expectations

1:55-2:50- Housekeeping Items (lunch choice, mailboxes, homework trays, job board, etc.)

2:50-3:00: Assign ABC's of Mr. Sondgeroth's room as "homework"

Think of the best teacher  
you know.

It could be...

- A former teacher.
- A college professor.
- A cooperating teacher.
- A mentor teacher from the past.
- A parent.



What is one word you would use to describe them?



# Share-out...





Now, think about that one student in your class who was your toughest to deal with on a daily basis...



# A couple of questions about that child:

- Where do they live and who do they live with at home?
- What do they do when they get home from school?
- What do they do on the weekends?
- How do they get to/from school?
- What do they eat for lunch each day?
- What do they enjoy doing at recess?



And...

How would they describe  
you???

# Behavior management in the first days of school

In new situations, children fear...

- Abandonment or rejection.

If you think about it...it's what most adults fear too!

- Being out of control or seeing others out of control.
- Being humiliated.
- Not knowing what is coming next.





# Behavior management in the first days of school

- BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR STUDENTS!
- Be clear and consistent with everything.
- Justify WHY we have certain expectations.
- Be proactive: Deal with small problems before they mount into explosions.



# Behavior management in the first days of school

- **Teach new expected behavior.**
  - ❖ If a consequence is given, make sure the child understands WHY he/she is receiving it and HOW they can avoid the problem in the future.
- **Use a quiet tone of voice.**
  - ❖ Stay calm and do not get into a shouting match with the child.
- **Get on the same eye level as the child.**
  - ❖ Sit next to him/her or kneel. Do not lean over them from above.



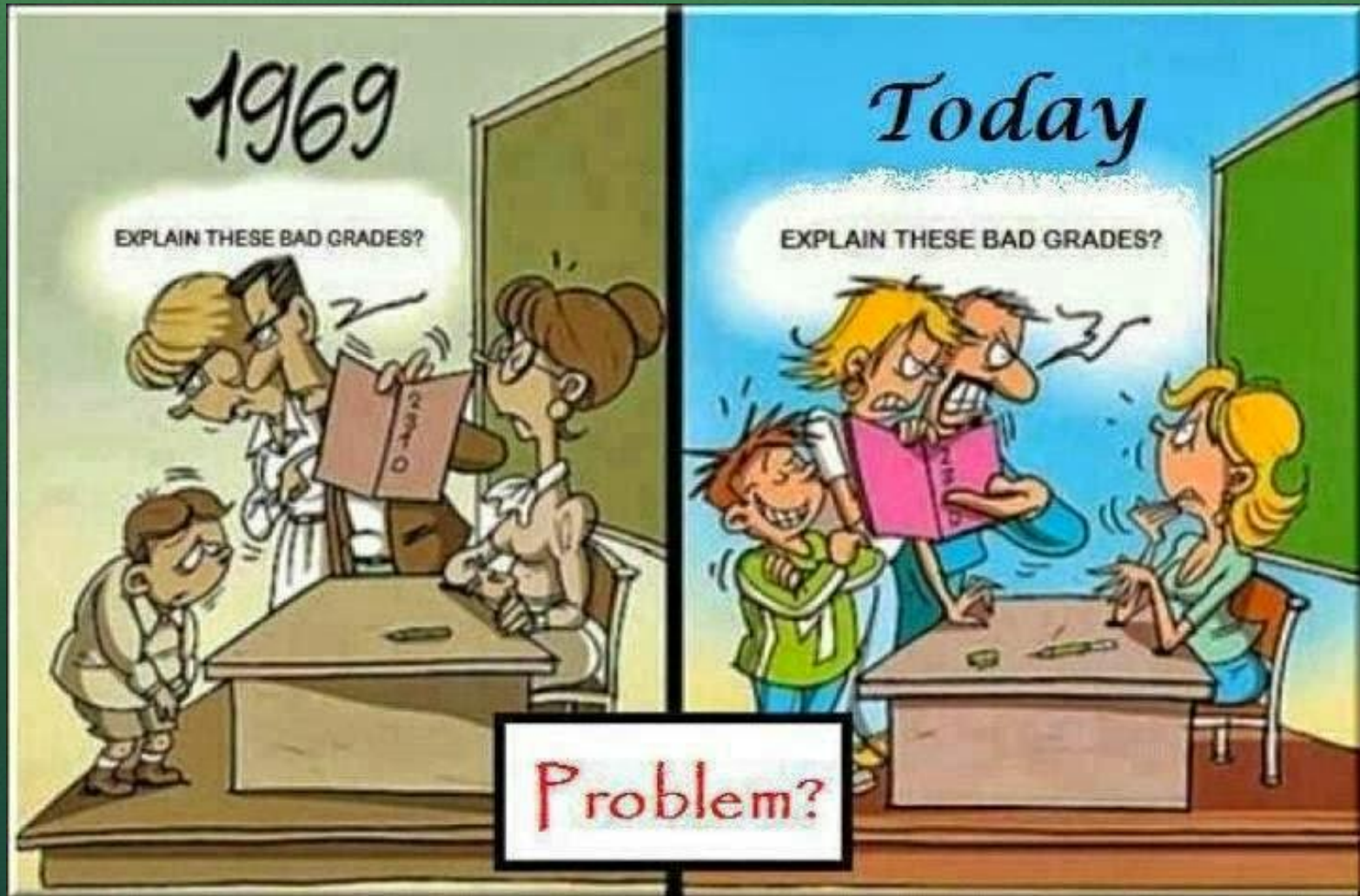
# Behavior management in the first days of school

- Use Guiding Questions & LISTEN

- ❖ Dig into that iceberg! Identify student needs and feelings; Come up with other solutions that the child identifies.
- ❖ When a child says “I hate it at this school” or “It’s not me, but other kids” ask questions that will give you more information: “What is it that you hate?” or “Why do you think you’re getting unfairly blamed?”



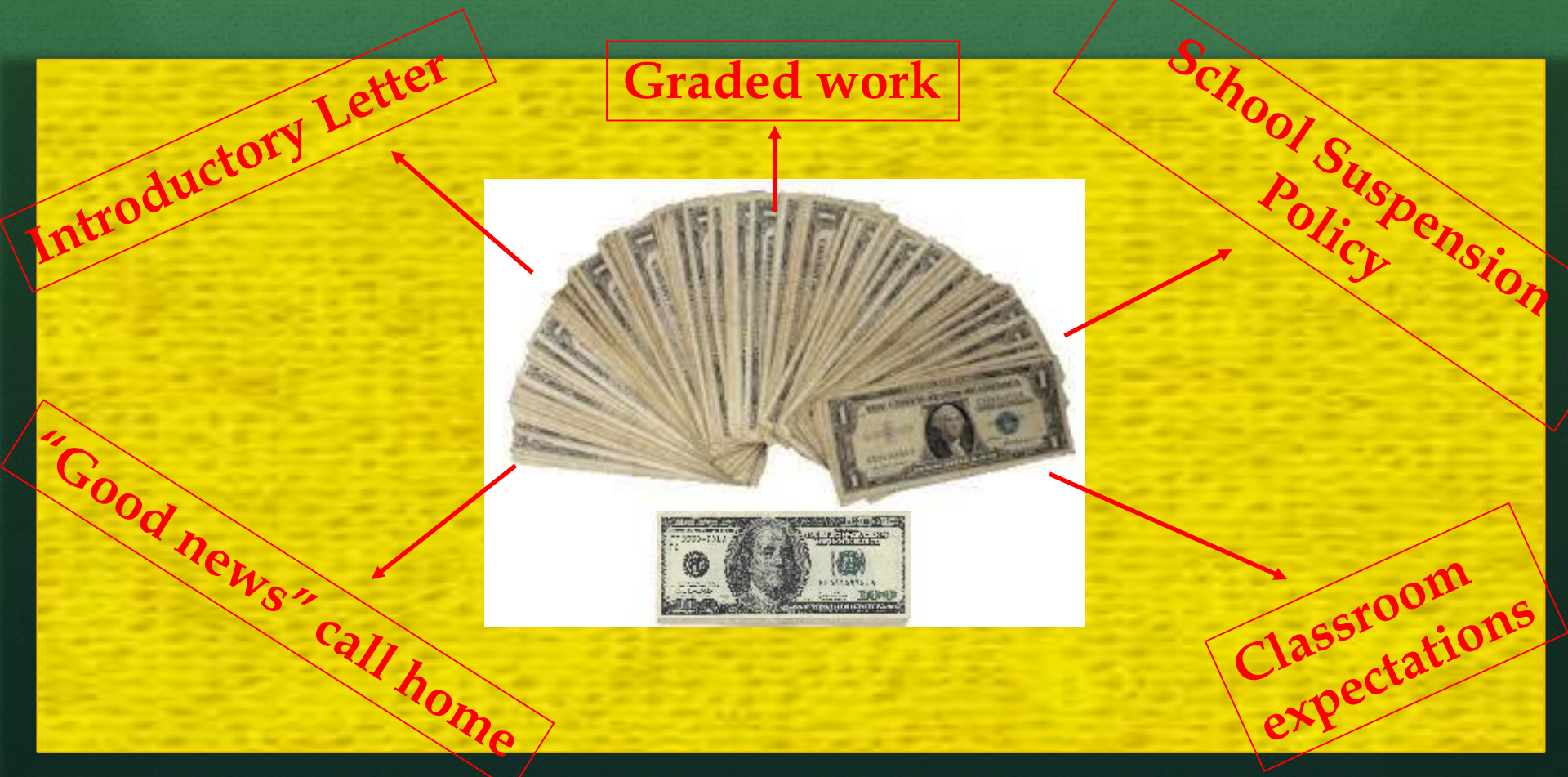
# Setting expectations for parents: First Days





Assuming your “return” is a good relationship with parents, what would you “invest” in your first week?

Invest \$100




# Share-out...





# Setting expectations for parents: First Days

- Set *classroom* policies on the first day of school. Homework, behavior management, snacks, volunteers, etc. 
- Ask parents about their kids!
- Call each parent during the first week of school with a “good news” call.
  - Keep doing this!



## ABC's of Mr. Sondgeroth's Classroom

Mr. Kyle Sondgeroth  
Bottenfield Elementary School  
Phone: 351-3807  
Email: [sondgeky@champaignschools.org](mailto:sondgeky@champaignschools.org)

**Attendance:** Please make sure that your child is at school everyday unless he/she is sick or has a valid excuse (vacation, dentist appointment, etc.) Much of the 4th grade curriculum is a continuous experience and each day's learning builds upon the day before. Inconsistent attendance will not benefit your child's learning experience and chance for success. Also, please make sure that your child is at school on time everyday. School begins at 8:45 and the doors open at 8:35. If you plan to pick your child up and he/she normally rides the bus or you wish for your child to go home with someone else, you **MUST** send a note to school. If no note is written from a parent/guardian we must send the child home according to his/her usual plan.

**Birthdays:** Birthdays will be celebrated in our classroom... hooray!!! If you wish to bring in a treat, please include enough for 26 people (I'd like to partake in the celebration as well!) I do ask, however, that you bring in a healthy birthday treat. Cupcakes, cookies, cake, etc. are not only unhealthy school snacks, but also tend to bring out a lot of "unwanted" behavior later in the day! Invitations to birthday parties, however, will not be allowed to be handed out at school unless your child will be inviting all 24 children in the class. It can be very hurtful to a child who knows that he/she is not invited to a party and we wish to avoid this.

**Communication:** Constant communication is a huge part of my classroom! Each week I will be sending home a "Friday Note" that will include both student and teacher evaluations of how each child's week went. These notes will touch on both academic and social issues. In addition to this I will be sending

# Setting expectations for parents: First Days

Be positive & understanding but also firm.



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Hello and welcome to another wonderful school year! I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. My name is Kyle Sondgeroth and I will be your child's 4th grade teacher this year. I hope that you are just as excited as I am to get this wonderful year started!!! This will be my ninth year teaching at Bottenfield and I feel privileged to be part of such a great school!

As we work closely together this year I am pleased to give you a little background information about myself. I am originally from a small farming community in North Central Illinois. I graduated from the University of Illinois in 2003 with a degree in history and political science. After a brief stay in law school at Michigan State University I returned to my first love in life, helping and working with children. I became a full-time elementary teacher aide for a year in Princeton, IL (near my hometown of La Moille, IL) and absolutely loved it! I came back to the University of Illinois and graduated in May 2006 with a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction along with my elementary education teaching certificate. I recently earned a second Master's degree in 2014 from the University of Illinois in Educational Organization and Leadership with General Administrative certification. I also serve as the grade level chair for all fourth grade teachers in Champaign as well as serve on various school and district-wide committees. In addition to teaching at Bottenfield, I spend much of my spare time reading, playing and watching sports (Go Cubs, Bears, and Illini!), and visiting friends and family.

I am truly looking forward to a year full of achievement, progress, and fun! As a teacher I pride myself on pushing my students to succeed and put forth their very best efforts. At the same time, however, I know firsthand that success and effort come only after you have gotten to know each child as an individual. I take just as much pride in getting to know about my students' lives outside of the classroom as I do about their lives inside the classroom. In this packet you will find the "ABCs" of Mr. Sondgeroth's classroom. **Please read over this packet with your child and return the last page, signed, tomorrow.** Once again, I am very excited to begin working with each and every one of you and helping every student succeed!!!

Yours in learning,

Mr. Kyle Sondgeroth

I have read and discussed the "ABCs of Mr. Sondgeroth's Classroom." I understand that these policies apply to all students and parents in Mr. Sondgeroth's 4th grade class.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature



# Setting expectations for parents: First Days

Explain EVERYTHING –  
and if it is important put it on **bright** colored paper!



## Friday Note

Parents/Guardians,

Attached is your student's Friday Note. This note explains how their week went in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, both academically and socially. It is a very important communication link between the classroom and home. You will find the top portion is how your child graded their week, and the bottom portion is how I graded their week. **THIS NOTE NEEDS TO BE SIGNED AND RETURNED ON MONDAY WITH YOUR STUDENT!!!** It is your student's responsibility to return this note (along with an empty V.I.P. Folder) on Monday or they will lose privileges such as recess minutes. Thank you so much!!

-Mr. Sondgeroth

## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Study Guides

Attached is a study guide for our first math test. This test will be on Tuesday, September 9!!! The study guides reflect the material covered on each test. Students who complete it usually do better on the tests. The study guide, however, is not required work. It does not have to be turned in or even returned to school. It is for your work at home only to help you study for our tests in math, science, etc. Good luck and please let me know if you have any questions.


-Mr. Sondgeroth

# Setting expectations for parents: First Days

Be open, honest, and factual in your communications

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Mr. Sondgeroth's Friday Note



**STUDENT OPINION**

Did you....	Great! No problems!	Ok, but a few problems.	Needs improvement, many problems.
Talk too much			
Complete ALL schoolwork & homework			
Respect self, others, & property			
Have a good attitude			

**TEACHER OPINION**

Did student....	Great! No problems!	Ok, but a few problems.	Needs improvement, many problems.
Talk too much			
Complete ALL schoolwork & homework			
Respect self, others, & property			
Have a good attitude			

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Mr. Sondgeroth's High Expectations Meeting

Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Bottenfield Expectations:	Be respectful & kind	Do your best	Be responsible
Student's choices:	<p><b>GOOD</b></p> <p>* Multiple signer of the "RESPECT" grid.</p> <p>* Sondgeroth Star in September.</p> <p><b>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</b></p> <p>* Not joining the morning meeting-sitting off to the side and not participating.</p>	<p><b>GOOD</b></p> <p>* 6 out of 9 Friday Notes reflected positive weeks. (August-October)</p> <p><b>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</b></p> <p>* Head down in reading groups.</p> <p>* Notebook and pencil taken away during reading groups. (11/20/14)</p> <p>* Unwilling to participate in small group discussion. (Weeks of 11/10-11/17)</p> <p>* Unwilling to write anything on slate during math. (11/19/14)</p> <p>* Wrote "I don't know, I don't care, Stupid equation" on math homework. (11/19/14)</p>	<p><b>GOOD</b></p> <p>* Most homework has been turned in complete and on time.</p> <p>* 84% average on math homework.</p> <p>* 97% average on spelling tests.</p> <p>* ALL Friday Notes have been brought back on time.</p>

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Outcomes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



# Session Reflection

Gots

Something you  
“got” from today’s  
session.

Wants

Something you  
“want” to do in  
August.

Thank You & Good Luck!



-Kyle Sondgeroth  
sondgeky@u4sd.org