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## Milford Schools Draw Stern Line

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Milford's Make Your Day disciplinary program is based on the radical idea that good behavior should be the rule in schools, not the exception. No wonder it's so controversial in these backward times.

The program, which has been adopted in two Milford elementary schools, runs substantially counter to modern educational practice. Rather than reward students for just doing what's expected of them, Make Your Day sets consequences for students who misbehave and forces them to come to terms with their actions.

A misbehaving student might be asked to sit apart from the class or to stand up. A more serious breach of classroom decorum might merit a parent-teacher conference or even dismissal.

Students are informed that they have chosen these consequences as a result of their behavior and that it's not the teacher's fault. Each student has the right to learn in peace, and that right supercedes other students' right to act up.

In the old days, they called this common sense. But these days it's being called "humiliating" and "inhumane." Some parents say punishing students in front of their peers will damage their self-esteem.

Pshaw! If youngsters can misbehave in front of their peers, they can pay the consequences in front of their peers, too. As for self-esteem well, should kids really build self-esteem around their ability to act naughty and get away with it? That's how we got former Enron chairman Ken Lay and John Rowland.

The only long-term consequence Make Your Day is likely to have is well-adjusted adults with a sense of their place in society, a healthy respect for others and a knowledge that they must accept consequences for their actions.

Other school districts would do well to emulate aspects of the Make Your Day program. However this should not be read as a wholesale endorsement. Programs such as this applied school- or district- wide offer one-size-fits-all solutions to real-world classroom problems that may vary widely.

They can work as guidelines for teachers but can never replace good classroom skills. Teachers should never be fettered in such a way they can't think on their feet.

Good teaching requires flexibility and, above all, creativity.