

Moving Beyond Survival: How to Effectively Teach During The First Days, Weeks, and Months of School



The following are questions, which have been voiced by beginning teachers over the past years. Beginning teachers & support providers should discuss these issues as they relate to their own school & district context:

- ⊙ Which items on the Checklist for Site Orientation are most essential for me to address as I begin the school year?
- ⊙ How am I expected to dress at school – even if some veteran teachers do not conform to these expectations? How do I present myself as a professional educator to my students?
- ⊙ How do I acquire the day-to-day supplies that I need? How do I ask the custodian or other staff for assistance? Is there a protocol for this? Who is the one person on site I should get to know?
- ⊙ How should I set up my classroom for best visibility, accessibility, and limited distractibility? What is essential for creating a safe, accident-free classroom environment?
- ⊙ What do I need to know to be ready for Back-to-School Night?
- ⊙ How do I manage the array of district-adopted, instructional materials? How should I respond when asked to take on “extra duties” or be on school committees?
- ⊙ What do I do if I have a personal emergency during class or while I am at school? How do I arrange for substitutes?
- ⊙ If a student is seriously/dangerously out of control, what are the exact steps I should take? If an angry parent confronts me, how should I respond?
- ⊙ When is it appropriate to voice my opinion, and when should I simply stop and listen? What do I need to know about the ongoing social and political climate within the faculty and district regarding issues that could affect my employment? Are there unwritten rules & expectations?
- ⊙ How do I create a useful and complete grade book? What should be recorded? What student work should I collect and keep as evidence of student progress? How are other teachers, in my grade level or subject area, grading students?
- ⊙ How do I work with an assigned aide, especially a full-inclusion aide? What are my responsibilities regarding supervision and assignment of tasks?
- ⊙ How can I find ways to communicate my strengths to my site administrator?

