

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 new teachers over the past years. Participants should discuss these issues as they relate to their own school & district context to provide or have “just in time” mentoring and ongoing professional learning:

- Which items on the Checklist for Site Orientation are most essential for me to address as I begin the school year?
- How familiar am I with the learning environment and platforms I am moving into (i.e., distance learning, hybrid model) and what do I need to know in order to be successful?
- How am I expected to dress at school/online – even if some experienced 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/online learning space 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 do I integrate the Common Core State Standards or local/site/district standards into my subject area? 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?