

Preparing for the School Year



“Growing Great Teachers”

Duval County Public School
Jacksonville, Florida

DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Jacksonville, Florida

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Chapter One

Getting Started

Tips and ideas for the start of school



Materials and Supplies

Teacher Materials

The materials you will need for your own use may include:

- teacher manuals for all the textbooks
- student editions of textbooks
- an electronic or paper grade book (as designated by school)
- a lesson plan book or template for computer (as designated by school)
- pens, pencils, markers
- tape, scissors, stapler, paper clips, file folders
- a timer or bell to use as a signal for student activities
- a simple tool kit (hammer, screwdriver, pliers)
- overhead transparencies
- A-V equipment (tape recorder, overhead, Elmo, projector, headsets, etc.)
- school-issued laptop

Textbooks

Once you have identified the books needed for your class, you will need to make sure you have a sufficient number of books for your students. Knowing whether students will keep these books in their desks will determine the need for storage or distribution of the books. Having a bookcase readily accessible for students to store shared text or reference books will be handy.

Other Classroom Materials That May Be Supplied By Students

- Paper towels
- Hand sanitizer
- Tissue
- Spray disinfectant
- Disinfectant wipes
- Ruled paper, pencils, crayons, rulers, glue sticks, etc. (elementary)

Room Arrangements

Keys to Good Room Arrangements

- A. Students should **always** be visible to the teacher.

B. High traffic areas should be free of congestion.

- Pencil Sharpener
- Teacher's Desk
- Trash Cans
- Learning Centers
- In-class Restroom
- Supply Areas
- Computers

C. Frequently used materials need to be readily accessible.

- Maps
- Textbooks
- Flag
- Projection Screens, Outlets
- File Cabinets
- Classroom Supplies

D. Classroom library

E. Students need a designated area for personal belongings. (book bags, coats, lunches, etc).

Tips for Arranging Furniture

At the beginning of the year, to minimize distractions, consider placing student desks facing the major instructional areas. As you begin to know your students, you may want to change the environment.

A. Keep in mind possible distractions such as:

- Windows and doors
- Animals and other interesting displays
- Small group work areas
- Whole group gathering area

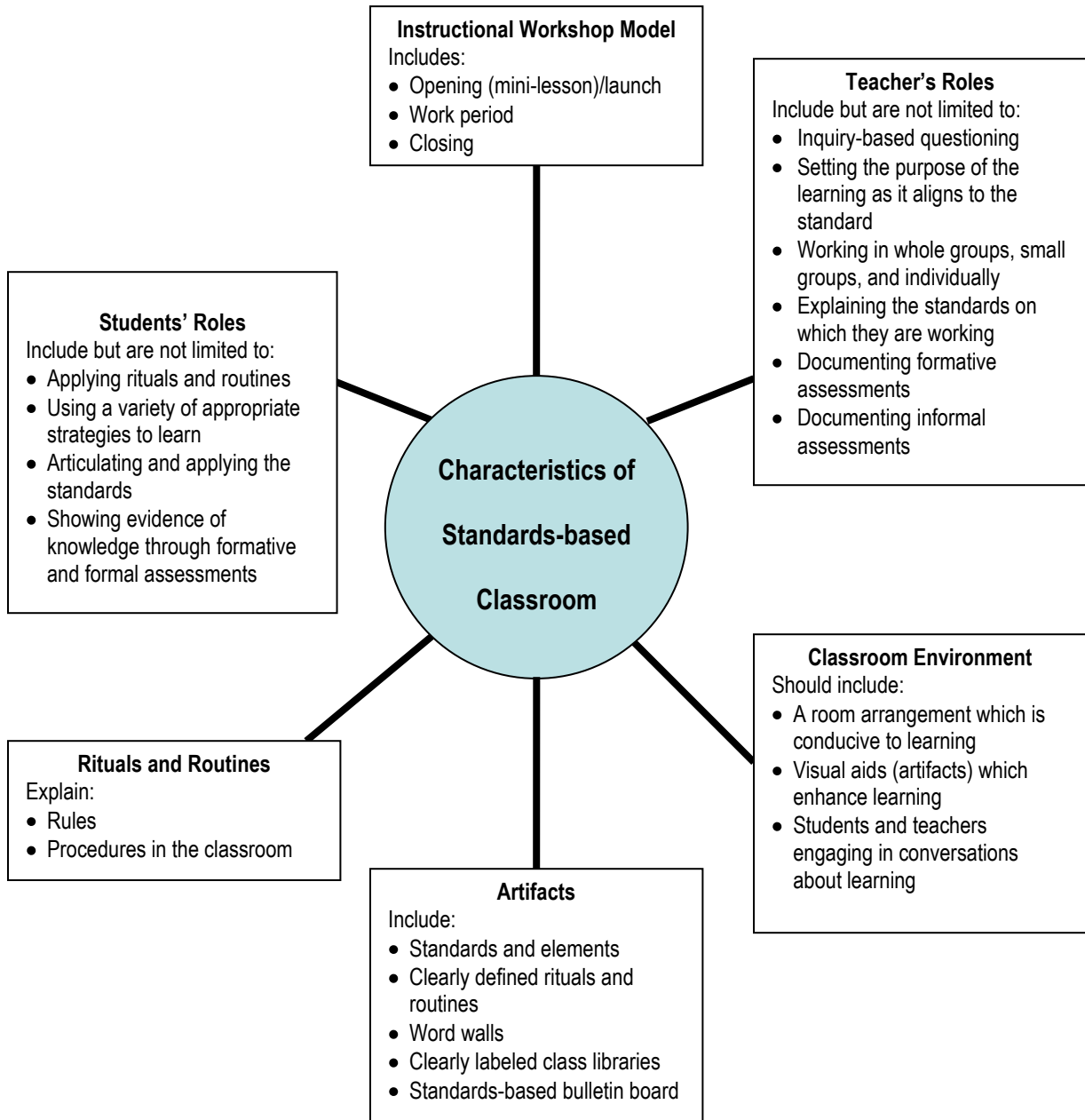
B. Note where electrical outlets are located before you place equipment.

Standards-based Bulletin Boards

Components:

- Standard
- Task—what children were asked to do
- Circumstance of performance (individual/whole group, homework/classwork, etc.)
- Samples of student work
- Teaching/learning rubric
- Commentary—specific ways child met standard

CHARACTERISTICS OF STANDARDS-BASED CLASSROOMS



Beginning of School Checklist

This checklist should help you organize the first days of preplanning.

Item	Check	Notes
1. Classroom keys		
2. Classroom furniture		
3. Rules and procedures (posted)		
4. Availability of assistance		
5. Supplies readily available		
6. Audio-visual materials and equipment safely in place		
7. Informational packet/required paperwork ready		
8. Procedure of dismissal of students in place (elementary)		
9. Student schedules (VE resource, Fast ForWord, Speech, etc.)		
10. Class schedule (resource time, planning, lunch, A/B Day, etc.)		
11. Copier procedures		
12. Emergency procedures (drills)		
13. Procedures for early dismissal/tardies		
14. Procedure for contacting appropriate administrator		
15. Procedure for referral to nurse		
16. Procedure for referral to guidance		
17. Procedure for custodial requests		
18. Map of the school		
19. Lesson plans		
20. Emergency substitute plans		
21. District/school calendar		
22. First day icebreakers		

Rules and Consequences

Give thought to establishing rules, consequences and procedures. Some teachers find it desirable to have children participate in the making of classroom rules—this gives students a sense of ownership.

Tips for Rules

- Limit yourself to 3-6 rules.
- State rules in positive terms whenever possible.
- Keep rules short, precise and succinct to focus in on specific behavior.
- Post rules and send copy home.
- Rules need to be taught—possibly use role-play and/or quiz.
- Enforce rules to preserve student dignity.

Sample Rules

1. Students will walk while in the classroom and halls.
2. Students will not talk when teacher or others are talking.
3. Students will bring all needed materials to class.
4. Students will raise their hands for permission to speak.

Tips for Consequences

- Be clear and specific.
- Have a range of alternatives.
- Consequences should not be a punishment.
- Consequences should be related to a rule.
- Consequences should be natural or logical.

Suggested Consequences for above Sample Rules

1. Students need to go back and retrace their steps by walking.
2. Students will describe the appropriate behavior.
3. Students will not receive reward as do students who come to class prepared.
4. Teacher will not respond to child who has not raised his/her hand.

Procedures

It is important to plan for routines and procedures that happen daily or frequently in the classroom. These procedures should not only be explained, but taught just like any content material. You might also like to use the following “Procedure Checklist” to help determine procedures in your classroom.

Procedure Checklist

- Line-up procedures
- Roll call, absentees, students who leave early
- Tardy students
- Behavior during PA announcements
- Distributing supplies and materials
- Student movement within the room
- Heading for papers
- Degree of student talk during seatwork
- What students do when they are finished
- Dismissing the class
- Cues or signals for getting student attention
- Make-up work
- Using the water fountain, sink, bathroom, pencil sharpener

First Days of School

Opening Day Letter

Establishing expectations includes communicating and building a rapport with parents. A good time to start this is with a note home on the first day. This letter may include:

- Introduction
- Preferred supplies
- Ways to contact you when necessary
- Upcoming events

Activities

If you have followed the suggestions given for planning the first few days, you should now be ready to plan for activities that will help students to feel successful. Initial lessons and seatwork should be kept simple and require only easy directions. This will help students to learn routines and procedures with little frustration.

What you are able to accomplish may depend on interruptions and your accuracy in pacing students' work time. You may want to plan more for the first several days' activities.

Typical Activities

Greeting students

1. Meet students at the door with a smile.
2. Place teacher's name and class name on blackboard.
3. Have nametags available and/or on desks.
4. Provide appropriate seatwork - color picture, dot-to-dot, brainteaser, question/answer, etc.

Introductions

1. The teacher introduces himself/herself with a few personal notes of interests about his/her education, pets, hobbies, family, sports.
2. Students introduce themselves (icebreaker activity).

Presentation of rules, procedures and consequences

1. Teach
2. Model
3. Practice
4. Monitor behavior

Content activities

1. Choose activities in content areas in which children can be successful.
2. Initially, focus on whole group instruction.
3. Avoid ability level grouping for the first ten days.
4. Plan back-up material for those students who complete assignments quickly.

Assessing the First Days

Helping Students Assess Themselves

It is important to take time at the end of each day to direct students to reflect on the day's events. Asking a simple question such as, "What is one thing that you learned today?" can help students to focus on specific activities. Students can share in small groups, whole group, or take the question home and share it with parents. By including this activity in your day, you have increased the students' awareness of what and how much they are learning. Also, you have increased school/home communication by having students focus daily on the academic successes they are experiencing and, in turn, sharing those with their parents.

Websites for New Teachers

Professional Development Cadre
<http://www.duvalschools.org/newteachers>

Academic Programs Website
<http://www.duvalschools.org/static/aboutdcps/departments/acadprog/>

The Learning Village and Destination Success
<http://www.duvalschools.org/static/aboutdcps/departments/acadprog/riverdeep/>

Exceptional Student Education
<http://www.duvalschools.org/static/parents/getinvolved/ese/>

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
<http://www.duvalschools.org/static/aboutdcps/departments/special/esol/>

The Shultz Center
<http://www.schultzcenter.org/>

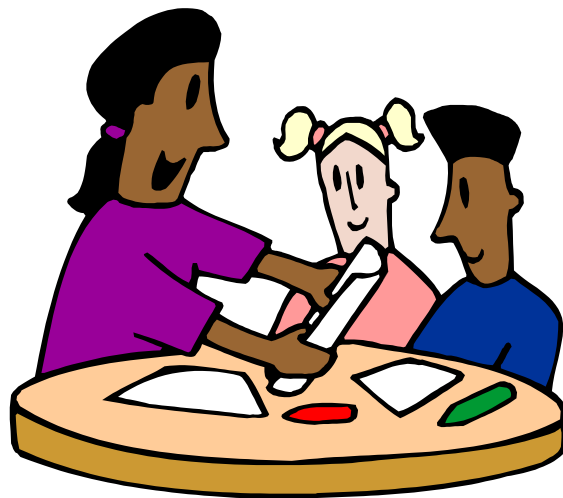
Blackboard
<http://schultzcenter.blackboard.com/>

DCPS WebMail
<https://webmail.duvalschools.org/>

Chapter Two

On Your Way

Information that will be helpful once your class is rolling



Establishing a Positive Environment

A harmonious classroom is developed through a teacher's awareness of how to create a positive learning environment with emphasis on building a child's self-esteem. Through intentional, specific teacher behaviors and strategies, you will make the difference in how your classroom "feels" to you and your students. As you read the following sections on self-esteem and discipline, bear in mind that it is your behavior and your reaction to student behavior that will ultimately determine the climate of your classroom.

Building Student Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is how people feel about themselves. It is their perception of self-worth. If students have positive self-esteem, they feel good about themselves. If students have negative self-esteem, they will not value themselves and will be presented to others as negative. Ultimately, the results of self-esteem show up everywhere.

Since there is a correlation between academic achievement and self-esteem, you become a facilitator of self-esteem. You can make a difference. You can promote a feeling within a child of being lovable and capable. As the teacher, you can create a safe and accepting environment where the child feels free to grow and change.

Tips for Fostering Self-Esteem

- be non-judgmental—accept students as they come to your classroom
- validate feelings
- see uniqueness
- encourage positively—say “You can succeed.”
- reaffirm a child's existence—a smile, a compliment, a nod
- respect others' feelings
- provide undivided recognition
- provide a safe classroom—minimize risk
- foster openness and honesty
- participate, as well as facilitate—share feelings
- keep boundaries that allow give and take
- emphasize what each child knows
- use humor in a positive context
- give children choices
- teach self-awareness

- acknowledge positive qualities
- use “I” messages—“Heather, I hear exciting events in your story.”
- separate the action from the person
- demonstrate appropriate ways of releasing anger
- listen reflectively and genuinely
- give support for growth and change
- develop skills to help a child feel better about himself/herself
- use praise

Praise

Not all children react to praise the same way. Your objective in using praise is to get children to develop an internal focus of control to improve behavior and academic achievement. Suggested uses of praise:

- Give praise for desired behavior, and define the behavior. “Thank you for picking up the paper. You really helped the class save time.”
- Vary your praise and be creative. Don’t use trite phrases such as: *great*, *fine*, and *wonderful*.
- At times, give praise privately to avoid competition, embarrassment, or “teacher’s pet” syndrome.
- Praise needs to be genuine and matched by your body language.
- Draw the student’s attention to his/her effort and ability. “You learned those 10 addition facts quickly. You must have spent a lot of time practicing.”
- Be careful not to compare children to each other. “Gee, you have almost caught up to Karen.”
- Avoid teacher-pleasing phrases. “I really like the way you used descriptive words in your poem.”
- Don’t minimize a child’s success. “Your math assignment must have been easy. You finished so quickly.”

Discipline Principles

In order to develop a discipline program that will work for you and your students, there are some ideas that you need to examine. The bad news is that at some time or another, all children/young adults misbehave. The good news is that all children/young adults *can* behave. Further, you have the right and responsibility to discipline your students. From the beginning, it is important to clarify the difference between discipline and punishment. The purpose of discipline is to teach responsibility, train students in needed skills, and/or correct an existing problem situation. The purpose of punishment, however, is to impose a penalty. The focus of discipline is on behavior and what behavior will occur in the future. The focus of punishment is the misbehaving child

and what has occurred in the past. Discipline can and should be imposed with a positive attitude and concern for the student's dignity. Punishment generally is delivered as a negative response generated by anger or frustration. Maintaining a positive relationship with students that facilitates a good learning situation is an important consideration in how you use discipline with your students.

Guidelines for Effective Discipline

1. Monitor student behavior

Use an "active eye." See what is going on. Don't become preoccupied with someone or something and ignore the rest of the class. It's said that one teacher on his/her feet is worth two in the seat. This benefits your discipline program as well as having an effective teaching strategy.

2. Consistency

Have the same expectations for appropriate behavior for all students. Your students should know that you will enforce rules consistently and apply an appropriate consequence. In order to be consistent, be certain that the consequences you apply are responsible and appropriate.

3. Prompt management of inappropriate behavior

Effective classroom managers know that misbehavior must be handled immediately. There are some strategies that you can employ that deal with behavior in the least amount of time, with the least disruption and the least negative feelings. Effective behavior management provides maximum time for learning and reduces minor behavior problems. The following are some strategies that you can use to minimize behavior problems.

- *Eye Contact*

Looking the student directly in the eye while you continue your lesson sends a non-verbal message that says "I saw what you did and I want it stopped."

- *Proximity*

Continuing your lesson while you move about the room, pausing near students that are displaying inappropriate behavior, can let them know that even though they are not near the teacher's desk, they are still expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior. Sitting at your desk or standing behind the podium can encourage misbehavior.

- *Pause*

The continuous sound of "teacher talk" can provide students with a noise screen for their own conversations. An occasional pause—just a few seconds of silence—can bring an off-task student back into focus.

- *Rewards and reinforcement*

Rewarding students with an enjoyable activity that is contingent on appropriate behavior can be effective in motivating students to commit to the completing of a task. For example, "If we can finish this work by 9:45, we'll have time to play the map game."

- *Asking for a response*
Hearing your name can be an attention-getter, even if you're not paying attention. Including an off-task student's name into a question can often bring the student back on task. It would be appropriate to say the student's name *first*, in order to allow him/her to hear the question he'll/she'll be expected to answer. The purpose is to get the student back on task, not to embarrass him/her.
- *Praising appropriate behavior*
Rather than addressing the negative behavior, praising the students demonstrating appropriate behavior cues the misbehaving students and reinforces the other students.
- *Active participation*
Having the students respond to a question or become involved in an activity can reduce or eliminate the undesired behavior. For example: Asking for a show of hands, having students perform a physical activity or having each student write a quick answer to a question can make all students accountable for an immediate response.

Tips for Effective Discipline

- Give simple incentives for positive behaviors. "The row that is quiet first goes to lunch first." An effective strategy to consider when implementing incentives is the idea of giving rather than taking away.
- Create a warm, friendly atmosphere—the optimum condition for learning. Firmness does not negate a warm, friendly atmosphere. A controlled voice is all you need for most classroom situations.
- Set a good, responsible example. You must consistently model being on time, organized, prepared, cheerful, and polite.
- Start fresh every day. What happened yesterday is finished.
- Listen to what students are thinking and feeling. Students misbehave when they feel angry, fearful, or bored. Teachers who can convey understanding are usually able to short-circuit the disruption.
- Provide instruction at levels that match the student's ability. Misbehavior often arises out of frustration if the work is too difficult or out of boredom if the work has little value.

Severe Discipline Problems

Even though you may have planned your day to avoid down time, planned a stimulating, motivating lesson, and taught the rules, consequences and procedures to your class, you may have a situation where the misbehavior is severe. Consequences, whether for major or minor misbehavior, should be logical, natural, and related to the rule. Now is the time to think about your options. In order to be most effective, find out what limits are in your school.

- Can you keep students after school?
- Is there a detention policy?

- What is the procedure for getting assistance from a counselor or principal?
- In what cases should the principal be involved in your discipline procedures?
- Is writing a referral appropriate?
- Does the child need referred to a behavior specialist or Target Team?

Having this knowledge will make it possible for you to keep your sense of autonomy in handling any situation. Getting assistance from others is acceptable and advisable at times.

Enlisting the assistance of parents is an important strategy to use. Your approach will have a lot to do with the level of cooperation you receive. Very few parents object to a teacher approaching them with an idea that might help their child if the idea shows the teacher's commitment to success of that child. Consider parents as part of the support for a mutually agreed-upon solution to discipline problems.

Parent Communication

A consistent joint effort on the part of the home and school is the key to the total development of the child and a means of strengthening the sense of community. The strong parent-teacher relationship is often overlooked. Through ongoing communication, parents and teachers begin working together and understanding each other's responsibilities and expectations. There are several avenues of communication which you will need to address.

Meet the Teacher

The first formal introduction to parents will usually be in the form of a "Meet the Teacher" activity or "Open House." This may have different names, but usually it is a time to introduce yourself and your curriculum.

1. All about parents

- You will want to talk to colleagues to find out what parents expect from this session.
- You should also seek information regarding the demography of the parent population.

2. About you

- Be prepared to instill confidence regarding your instructional abilities.
- Communicate about your relevant experiences (camp counselor, club sponsor, etc.).
- Let your enthusiasm show!

3. All about your classroom

You might consider discussing the following:

- rituals and routines
- the subject(s)
- goals of the curriculum
- expectations for students
- instructional materials
- behavior management plan

4. Your presentation

You will want to be well-prepared for this session. Some of the following techniques may be helpful:

- outline of what you are going to address and watch your timing to be sure you hit all relevant points (agenda)
- use of overhead, PowerPoint, Elmo, or other technology
- handouts of curriculum, grading procedures, homework criteria, etc.
- sample lessons or activity

5. Working together

- This is a good opportunity for you to identify how home and school can work together.
- Inform parents of when, where, and how you can be reached.
- Discuss how parents can best support their child's learning out of school.

6. Cautionary notes

- Don't let one parent monopolize the discussion or sidetrack you.
- Have a conference sign-up sheet available.
- Don't get caught in a student conference situation. This is not the intent of the session.

Effective Communication

Once you have opened the doors of communication with parents, you are on the road to developing a trusting relationship. There are several ongoing means of communication such as phone calls, e-mails, newsletters, progress reports, notes, happy-grams, volunteering, and conferences (informal and formal). Here are some general tips for fostering effective communication.

How to communicate:

- Be professional in dealing with parents (avoid rumors and gossip).
- Be assertive, yet flexible enough to take appropriate suggestions from others.
- Be direct with parents and clear in what you say. Think through, in advance, what you are going to say.
- Be sure to listen to parents; show respect.
- Be friendly.
- Be positive with parents, even when discussing problems with their child. One way is to involve parents in the decision-making process.
- Be sure to use plain English; don't use jargon a parent might not understand.
- Be sure to have someone proofread any notes and/or newsletters going home.
- Be sure your body language conveys a positive message.

Frequency of communication:

- Communicate on a regular basis. If child is not performing well, notify parents promptly.
- For documentation, keep a record/log of notes, calls, and other communication to and from parents.

- If you have any doubt about the communication you are going to send to a parent, discuss it first with a colleague or your principal.
- Inform the principal of any problems. This way the principal can be in a position to support you in case he/she receives an unexpected communication from a parent.

Tips and suggestions for parent conferences:

- Make clear the four purposes of a conference:
 - Information getting
 - Information giving
 - Joint problem-solving
 - Development of mutual trust
- Let parents see first-hand how their child is doing. Come prepared with a computer printout or grade book, reports, student work, a copy of the textbook, grading policy, course objectives, and anything else that might enhance parents' understanding of their child's progress. Make sure to black out any other children's names on any reports shown to parents. Parents are impressed with teachers who are organized. Remember to protect student confidentiality when opening your grade book.
- Sit in an arrangement where you are not behind your desk.
- Establish positive rapport by making your first and last statements about students positive ones.
- When you are scheduling conferences (elementary), first call those who need the conference the most so that they have the widest range of times from which to choose. You want them to come!
- Make sure the adult present is the person legally responsible for the student (many step-parents and guardian situations occur). Don't assume the adult is the child's biological or adoptive parent.
- Try to get a realistic picture of the home situation before you make any suggestions. Often your perspective is changed when you understand what the student has gone through.
- Ask the parents for their perception of the child's strengths and weaknesses before offering yours. Thank them for their helpful insights and seek their input. Be positive!
- Do NOT compare the student with a sister, brother or friend. Do NOT refer to the whole class in a negative way. Do NOT offer outside services (resource people, tutoring) that you can't guarantee will be available. Do NOT forget what you promised to do, and do it promptly.
- Obtain permission from parent to include VE resource teacher in conference for inclusion children or for additional teachers when departmentalized.
- Do not let a parent berate you. If a parent becomes verbally abusive, simply say that you do not think that the objectives of the conference are being met and that you believe another time would prove to be more beneficial. The next conference should be in the office with an administrator and/or union representative.

- Try to end every conference on a happy note. If some hostility was shown, document it by making a brief written evaluation of what transpired and keep it for future reference. You might want to inform your principal to expect a possible call.
- Stick to your schedule on conference day/night. If a parent seems reluctant to respond to your lead, schedule another time and date to finish up loose ends.
- After the conference is over; you may want to ask yourself the following questions:
 - How well-prepared was I?
 - How well did I use time?
 - Did I start on a positive note?
 - Did I listen attentively?
 - Did I involve the parents?
 - Were follow-up plans made, if needed?
 - Did I gain any insights?
 - What needs to be changed?

Some parents do not have time or the opportunity to get as involved in their child's school as they would like. We should let all parents know how much we value and encourage their support and participation in this important aspect of their child's life. We know they should and probably will respond in a positive way and in any way they can. Once we have reached out to them, exchanged our expectations of each other, and encouraged them to keep us abreast of important happenings in their child's life, we can look forward to a great partnership and a rewarding year.

Suggestions for Positive Parent/Teacher Conferences

Teachers, like most professionals, have developed their own special language. There are many expressions which we use that may leave a false or undesirable impression. Here is a list of expressions which may leave a negative impression, when a kinder, more positive, phrase might be used: (Taken from *Conference Time*, National Education Association)

<u>NEGATIVE EXPRESSION</u>	<u>POSITIVE EXPRESSION</u>
must -----	should
lazy -----	can do more when he tries
troublemaker -----	disturbs the class
uncooperative -----	should learn to work with others
cheats-----	depends on others to do his work
never does the right thing -----	can learn to do the right thing
below average-----	working at his own level
truant -----	absent without permission
impertinent -----	discourteous
steal-----	takes without permission
unclean-----	poor habits
help-----	cooperation
calamity-----	lost opportunity
disinterested-----	complacent, not challenged
expense -----	investment

NEGATIVE EXPRESSION

POSITIVE EXPRESSION

contribute -----	invest in
stubborn-----	insists on having his own way
insolent-----	outspoken
liar -----	tendency to stretch the truth
wastes time -----	could make better use of his time
sloppy -----	could do neater work
incurred failure -----	failed to meet requirements
mean-----	difficulty in getting along with others
time and again -----	usually
dubious-----	uncertain
poor grade of work -----	achieving <i>below</i> their apparent ability level
clumsy -----	not physically well-coordinated
profane -----	uses unbecoming language
selfish -----	seldom shares with others
rude -----	inconsiderate of others
bashful -----	reserved
show-off -----	tries to get attention
will fail him -----	has a chance of passing, if. . .

Student Evaluation

Student evaluation is an ongoing cooperative process among teachers, students, and parents. It begins when a child walks into class the first day and the teacher begins observing daily skills and behaviors. There are many purposes for evaluation, including:

- Gathering information on student progress to report to parents.
- Gathering information on student progress to better meet future instructional needs.
- Making students aware of their strengths and needs.

Evaluations can be done formally, including standardized tests, teacher-made tests, book tests, quizzes, rubrics, daily work, and homework. It can also be done informally by observation or discussion. All forms of student evaluation should be organized and documented appropriately.

Tips for Evaluation:

You will need to have a procedure for evaluating and grading in place at the beginning of the year.

- It will help you determine the evaluation methods you will use.
- You will need to explain this carefully to students and parents.
- Talk with other teachers or administrators on grade level or subject area to learn about appropriate evaluation techniques and school policies.
- It is an important technique as a professional to develop good observation skills, focusing in on the whole child (social, emotional, physical and academic).
- Keep an anecdotal record of specific student behaviors. Example: 3/8/06--Johnny stared out the window for 20 minutes today during instruction.”

- Keep a folder for each student to file samples of daily work, important correspondence to and from home, copies of student self-evaluations, scholarship warnings, and student anecdotal records.
- Refer to student cumulative record to gather information such as: age, family unit, previous teacher's comments, health, and referrals for special services.
- Talk with other professionals (guidance counselors, case workers) who come in contact with the student. Be careful not to be unduly influenced by comments.
- Try to give tests mid-week because students tend to perform better. On secondary level, check to see if a test day has been set.
- Determine a specific objective for each assignment.
- Develop methods for students to check their own papers occasionally. It is not necessary for the teacher to grade all assignments.
- Keep students and parents apprised of school progress with a progress report at the mid-point of a marking period. Your school may have designated times to send home progress reports.

Reporting Evaluations

There are many ways to inform students and their parents of the child's progress in school. It is important to have this kind of communication with the students and parents long before the first report card goes home.

Methods of reporting:

1. Notes sent home
2. Checked and returned work
3. Sending home results from standardized tests
4. Telephone calls home - reporting outstanding performance as well as concerns
5. Progress reports
6. Teacher-student conferences
7. Parent-teacher conferences
8. Student-parent-teacher conferences
9. Report cards
10. Writing comments in agenda

Teacher Evaluation

Teacher evaluations by administrators are often dreaded by beginning teachers. Although you may feel added stress, the purpose of these is to validate the positive features of your lesson and offer constructive criticism on areas that need improving. Keeping this in mind, the following tips may help you.

Tips for Principal Observation

- If possible, teach a lesson in a content area and use a format you are most comfortable with without being overly creative or innovative.

- Be prepared.
- Dress professionally, but comfortably.
- Inform the students that the principal will be coming in to observe and why. Example: “The principal is coming into our class today to watch the teaching - learning process - and how it is taking place in our classroom.”
- Set up observation for a time when you feel the children are most attentive.
- Conduct the pre-conference observation 2 to 3 days before the scheduled observation.
- Don’t push through a lesson that you see is not successful. Make an alternate plan, just in case.

Post-Observation Conference with your Administrator

- Ask for a post-conference soon after the observation.
- Ask for a post-conference scheduled after school so there is ample time.
- Ask for a summary -
 - What did you see as my successes?
 - What did you see as my weaknesses?
- Ask for clarification and examples to be given by the observer during the post-conference.

Quick Teaching Tips

Instructional Tips

Require participation by all students in whole group instruction by using the following strategies:

- Signal the class that someone else may be called on to add to, clarify, or summarize another student’s response.
- While some students are performing a task at the board, require others to do the same task in a workbook or worksheet.
- Ask questions of the class in a fashion that implies that any one of them could be asked to respond.
- Make use of wait time after asking the question and after student’s initial response.
- Have materials ready so that your planning and preparation are not the causes of students being off task.
- To keep students motivated, vary your routines and materials.
- Provide frequent shifts of activities as opposed to long periods of just listening, copying, or completing multiple worksheets.
- Plan for, and provide, appropriate activities for the early finisher and “nothing-to-do” students (not just more of the same).

- Consider provisions to meet the needs of slower-paced students, such as modifying assignments, giving help, or giving additional time. Beware of holding up the majority of the class for these slower-paced students.
- Consider ways to reduce time that students spend waiting for the teacher, lining up, etc. Use effective rituals and routines.
- Move around the room regularly and systemically to ensure on-task behavior and to answer student questions.
- Plan smooth transitions between instructional activities thereby reducing off-task behavior.

Time-saving Tips

- Make a “to do” list every morning. Check off tasks as they are completed.
- Train students to hand papers in, right side up, with their names at the top, into your completed work basket. Have a basket for each subject or class so papers are sorted for you.
- Assign each student a partner. When a student is absent, his/her partner can gather notes, handouts and assignments that the absent student has missed.
- Put answers on transparency to have students check homework while you take attendance.
- Make an answer sheet overlay from which you can cut out the answers to check multiple choice answers.
- Use an answer column along the right margin of the paper when doing math assignments from textbooks or short answer assignments. Have students transfer answers from the problem to the answer column. You can correct half a dozen papers at a time by looking at several answer columns. (Learning to copy answers into an answer column carefully is an important skill, especially for taking standardized tests.)
- When you put student(s) names in your grade book, number the names in consecutive order. Have students write their name and number on their papers. You (or a student) can quickly put papers in order. You can easily see which papers are missing, and when they’re corrected they will be in the correct order to put into your grade book.
- Ask for clerical help from parents. Choose tasks for parents to do at home on a weekly or monthly basis. Ideas include typing newsletters, preparing teaching materials, preparing book club orders, etc.
- For short warm-up activities, cut worksheets into mini-strips containing four or five items. This mini-worksheet can be done in a few minutes and helps to prepare the students for the lesson to come.
- Designate one spot on the chalkboard where you write what students should do as soon as they enter your classroom. Teach students to look there and begin without wasting time. It will give an orderly beginning to your classes. (Good time to use a mini-worksheet.)
- Write frequently-used directions on a chart instead of the chalkboard. When needed, hang the chart on the board (book report outline, assignment guidelines, paper handling, studying for test, etc.).

- If your classroom is far from the office or teacher workroom, keep a supply box “hidden” somewhere. Include pens, pencils, scissors, and class list with student phone numbers, tape, etc.
- Save time by designing your own lesson plan book. Take a page from your book and put in room numbers, times, subjects, special classes and any other constant features. Duplicate this page when you make your weekly lesson plans; you will only need to add the lessons for the week.
- Place extra copies of worksheets in a “homework box.” Students can help themselves for extra credit or extra practice.
- Identify your supplies (pencils, scissors, markers, etc.) with a masking or colored tape strip.
- Use an overhead projector or computer to write class notes and presentations instead of the chalkboard. This way you can date and save them, give them to an absent student, or review them on another day.
- Ideas for “floating” teachers: Make a box or use an AV cart to keep your “desk” materials with you as you travel from room to room.
- Make a poster to keep a daily list of assignments for students who are absent.
- Instead of collecting checked homework every day, have students keep in a folder and collect once a week for recording.
- Designate one day a week to send student work home to parents.
- Re-file your materials as soon as possible so you can find them later.
- Have a bulletin board that includes special class schedules, lunch menu, announcements, etc.
- Laminate often-used materials for reuse in subsequent years.
- Use one calendar to keep track of future important events - pocket calendar, desk calendar, lesson plan book, etc.
- Make two blank copies of student worksheets - one to use, one to file for future reference or to make copies for an answer key.
- Teach students to do as many clerical tasks (lunch count, etc.) as possible.
- Have a personal care kit at school, which might include aspirin, needle and thread, etc.

Professional Tips

- Dress as a professional. An adult coming into the school should be able to tell the difference between you and the students.
- Model respectful behavior towards:
 - Self
 - Students
 - Staff
 - Parents

- Keep student information confidential.
- Be an active participant to improve the teaching profession.
- Remain informed about educational issues:
 - Local
 - State
 - National
- Your actions should reflect your belief that all children can learn. (You are the teacher for all children, not just 80% of them.)
- Be a salesperson for your content area as well as the profession.
- Read journals
- Attend seminars
- Participate in workshops and in-services

Tips for Coping with Stress

It is not surprising that teaching is considered to be one of the more stressful careers. Much of the stress is beneficial in helping teachers live stimulating lives by pushing us to rewarding performance levels. However, there is a point where the pressure can get to us and begin to tear us down. This is called harmful, unrelieved stress or distress. *Over the years, far too many excellent teachers have left our profession because they couldn't cope with the stress. We do not want you to join that group of former teachers!*

Feelings You May Experience Your First Year

- Day-to-day tension with accompanying headaches, irritability, and sore muscles
- Frustration (spinning your wheels); working harder and accomplishing less
- A feeling of being overwhelmed by the demands of teaching
- Routine boredom (the slump or rut that has encouraged many districts to add a mid-winter break to the school-year calendar)
- Lack of fulfillment and dissatisfaction with teaching (“Maybe I wasn’t cut out for this.”)
- A feeling of relief when a vacation break is coming up so you get a chance to catch up and revitalize
- Feeling of isolation (“Does anyone know or care how I feel?”)
- Feeling of being looked upon as different because you are a newcomer (“Don’t worry. You won’t always be a rookie.”)

Handling Stress in a Positive, Healthy, Productive Way

- Don’t let problems pile up. Deal with them, if possible, as they occur.
- Find an outlet for tension reduction that works for you (exercise, hobbies, puzzles, games, etc.)

- Take good care of your health by having proper nutrition and adequate sleep.
- Avoid negative people.
- Schedule quality time with your family and friends and guard it selfishly.
- Learn to say “no” to well-meaning people who want to place demands on you that would cause undue stress. If you get hooked—delegate!
- Come a little early to school to relax and get set for a full day. Also, stay a little later after school to unwind and tie up loose ends. Solitude helps you handle those frenzied situations.
- Set some time-management priorities and make some decisions about your standards and expectations for yourself. You may be your own worst enemy.
- Maintain your sense of humor as you learn from your mistakes.
- Take the initiative to do something about stress. Meet with your mentor or cadre for tips. Find or start a support group to share ways of coping. If you need professional help, consult the personnel office, a colleague, or the Wellness Center. This does not show weakness, but the wisdom to know when outside help is necessary.

Homework Tips

Homework is becoming a growing issue. Consider these purposes for homework. Homework can provide:

- Different ways to monitor student learning other than tests
- Opportunity for practice of a skill or concept that has been taught
- An opportunity to tie in school learning with real world experiences
- Open-ended activities that allow for success
- Means of communicating with the home on student progress
- Ways to actively involve the family in the student’s education
- Preparing the student for in-school activities

Homework Do’s and Don’ts

Do’s

- Have a homework policy and be prepared to communicate it to students and parents.
- Make sure students know objectives of the assignment.
- Give feedback and acknowledgement on completion of homework.
- Hold students responsible for completion of homework.
- Be aware of the resources that are, or are not, available at student’s home in order to complete the assignment.

Don’ts

- Don’t give 25 problems if 5 will accomplish the objective (more is not always better).
- Don’t give homework as punishment.
- Don’t use homework as busy work.
- Don’t assume that homework should be assigned every night. Check on homework policy.
- Don’t assign homework just because a parent requests it.
- Don’t make unrealistic demands on student’s time.

Preparing for Substitute Tips

- Prepare a sub folder ahead of time. Make sure you have enough plans to cover three days of absences.
- Do not schedule a test or a quiz for a substitute.
- While planning lessons, take precautions not to incorporate manipulative materials, laboratory supplies and/or objects, which may be difficult for the substitute to manage.
- Don't assume the substitute will be knowledgeable in your content area.
- If you feel the substitute would have difficulty following your daily lesson plan, leave one day's activities in a special folder for the sub to use.
- You may want to request a particular sub; ask colleagues for recommendations.
- Try not to be absent on Mondays and Fridays.
- Have a "buddy" teacher who can welcome your substitute and offer him/her help. When you return, check with your "buddy" to see how effective the sub was in the classroom. This arrangement can be reciprocal.
- When you return, ask the children how the day went and then put the day behind you and begin anew.
- Substitutes are people too. Make them feel welcome. Call them by their name. Do not refer to them as, "Oh, you must be Mr. Roberts today."
- You may want to inform the children ahead of time that you will be absent. If possible, preview the coming day's assignments. This preparation demonstrates to them your confidence that they can handle your not being there.

Education Labels/Acronyms

ADD/ADHD	Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AFT	American Federation of Teachers
ASCD	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
AVID	Advancement Via Individual Determination
BLA	Building Level Administrator
BOM	Book of the Month
Cadre	Group of educators who support teachers new to Duval County Public Schools; district TIP contact persons
CET	Clinical Educator Training: training for principals and mentors enabling them to coach and observe new teachers
TAI	Teacher Assessment Instrument: data collection instrument used by administrators
CTBS	Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills: test used as an entry and exit test for ESOL students
DCPS	Duval County Public Schools
DCSB	Duval County School Board
DOE	Department of Education: Florida State Department of Education
DSC	District Standards Coach: district resource person for standards-based education
Domain	Area of focus in the FPMS observation system
DTU	Duval Teachers United
EH	Emotionally Handicapped
ELL	English Language Learners
EMH	Educable Mentally Handicapped
ESE	Exceptional Student Education
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FCAT	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test: statewide student achievement test
FDLRS	Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resource System: support system for ESE
FEA	Florida Education Association
FIRN	Florida Information Resources Network: a state education news network
FPMS	Florida Performance Measurement System: classroom observation system used for TIP participants
Formative	Term used to denote a coaching model or assessment
FTE	Full Time Equivalent (Students): student enrollment used for funding schools
GGD	Grade Gathering Document used to record report card grades at the end of the marking period
GKE	General Knowledge Examination: state-mandated test used to prove competency in basic skills
HR	Human Resources
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Plan: education plan for any ESE student
IPDP	Individual Professional Development Plan
IR	Intensive Reading
IT	Instructional Technology

Education Labels/Acronyms (continued)

LEP	Limited English Proficient
NCEE	National Center on Education and the Economy
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NEA	National Education Association
NWEA	Northwest Evaluation Association
OTE	Office of Teacher Education
PDF	Professional Development Facilitator: school-based contact person for TIP program
PEC	Professional Education Competencies: state-mandated program for teachers new to Florida; TIP in Duval County
PMP	Progress Monitoring Plan: state-mandated instructional plan for low-achieving students
SBBB	Standards Based Bulletin Board
SOE	Statement of Eligibility: document from the state department of education which specifies requirements for certification
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
SSS	Sunshine State Standards
SSOI	Screening/Summative Observation Instrument: FPMS observation instrument used by the administrator at the beginning and end of the TIP program
SSP	Student Services Personnel: guidance counselors, school psychologists, speech therapists, social workers
Summative	Term used to denote a final evaluation of performance
TDE	Temporary Duty Elsewhere: work performed away from normal work site; form is submitted for this leave
TIP	Teacher Induction Program: state-mandated program for teachers new to Duval County Public Schools; fulfills the requirement of a PEC program
TMH	Trainable Mentally Handicapped
VE	Varying Exceptionalities
ZIP	Zeroing in on Prevention: workshop concerning distress and abuse