

New Teacher

Handbook

*A success guide for Tennessee Education
Association members beginning their careers*

TNEA.org

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TEA Member Resources

As a member of the Tennessee Education Association, you can start your career as a public school educator with confidence that your association has your back.

TEA Legal Resources

TEA has a team of education law experts ready to assist members through benefits like:

- Professional representation;
- Monthly “After School Special” webinars with TEA lawyers on hot topics; and
- Liability coverage.

Award-winning Professional Development

TEA is one of the largest providers of high-quality professional development and leadership trainings for educators in the state. TEA covers everything from classroom management and teacher evaluations to leadership in organizing and advocacy work.

NEA Student Loan Support

NEA’s Student Debt Navigator powered by Savi offers a free online student loan evaluation tool to determine eligibility for federal programs to help you manage your student loan debt. This exclusive benefit has saved association members thousands of dollars!

Exclusive Member Discounts

TEA provides a mobile discount benefit for members that offers on-the-go savings of up to 50% on everyday purchases at thousands of local and national retailers. The TEA My Deals mobile app is available on Android and Apple devices.

Members can sign up with their email address and TEA Membership ID, and if prompted for the Organization Name enter TEA-Tennessee Education Association.

Also be sure to visit NEAmb.com to explore member discounts on everything from travel, insurance, appliances, car-buying and more!



Getting Organized

Maintain a professional file containing papers and documents related to your employment. Keeping good records can help clear up misunderstandings before they become problems. Proper documentation can also help with your evaluation and help ensure you're paid correctly.

Consider keeping these documents in your professional records file:

- Teaching license
- Letter of employment
- College transcripts
- Updated resume
- Teaching contract, including contracts for supplemental duties
- Years of service
- Local negotiated collaborative conferencing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), if any
- Retirement benefit records
- Insurance records, including your association-provided liability policy
- Leave records (include dates / reasons for leave)
- Teaching schedule and other assignments (retain for several years)
- Salary schedule and yearly salary notice
- Correspondence to and from the administration
- Letters of praise or complaint
- All evaluation records, including student claiming information for TVAAS
- Awards, honors and commendations
- Records of job-related workshops and seminars
- School system policies
- Records of incidents of student discipline
- Records of student referrals
- NEA Member Benefits information
- Proof of membership in the Association
- Correspondence to and from families
- Brief summaries of family conferences
- Brief summaries of conferences with supervisors

Back-to-School Checklist

Double check

- School hours for students and for teachers
- Your classroom and curriculum duties and responsibilities
- Additional duties and responsibilities such as bus, hall, and lunch duty
- District and school policies for
 - Assigning homework
 - Make-up work
 - Dispensing medication
 - Using email and technology
 - Using copyrighted materials
 - Students leaving class
 - Grading
 - Collecting money/accounting policy
- The school procedure for
 - Duplicating materials
 - Purchasing
 - Taking sick and personal leave
 - Reading something over the intercom
 - Getting classroom supplies
 - Putting information in the daily bulletin
- The policy for referring students for
 - Special education, including speech
 - Gifted and talented classes
 - Title 1 assistance
 - Section 504 services
- Who to contact in case of classroom emergencies when CPR, first aid, or security might be needed
- When faculty, team, grade level, department, and other regular meetings are held
- How and when to fill out progress reports and report cards
- How to fill out school forms – what information should be included on each and when they are due
- How and when you are paid
- What insurance coverage you have
- Information about your retirement system (TCRS)



Must haves

- Required district forms like your W-2, insurance enrollment, teaching license, physical examinations (keep copies of all forms you submit)
- Grade book or other student record forms
- Lesson plan book
- The forms you may need during the first week of school, such as:
 - Student accident forms
 - Student absence reports
 - Hall passes
- Calendar and personal organizer

Starting Strong

Make a detailed schedule for yourself for the first week. At the elementary level, include times for each subject, restroom and lunch breaks, and other times your students will leave the room. At the secondary level, include times of assemblies, each day's schedule, and times of faculty or department meetings. Also include time for paperwork and a breather for yourself.

Plan the drive to school. Make the drive at least once to check traffic patterns and find the best route before school starts. Allow extra time for rush hour traffic.

Get to school early. You'll have time to ask any last-minute questions, go over final plans, put out materials and relax before students arrive. Before class begins, write your name on the board along with the day's schedule, procedures and class rules.

Familiarize yourself with the school building. Locate the exits, office, gym, health room, cafeteria, supply room, faculty work room, lounge, and media center.

Set up furniture and equipment in your classroom to encourage the kind of learning environment that is welcoming and suits your teaching style. The classroom arrangement should promote individual and group learning with supplies, equipment, and resources being easily accessible.

Enter student names in your grade book in pencil. Some teachers maintain a temporary grade book for the first week or so while student schedules are being finalized. Some teachers also wait to issue textbooks for the same reason.

Create lesson plans for the first week. Plan at least twice as much as you think you'll have time to cover. Write down everything, including procedures. Give work at which all students can be successful and which you can quickly grade. Plans should be aligned to state content standards and include assessments of student learning.

Plan several extra individual activities in case some or all students zoom through scheduled activities more quickly than expected.

Put up bulletin board displays and posters. Leave room for student work and allow displays to reflect diversity.

Decide how to deal with interruptions such as office announcements and personal emergencies.

Familiarize yourself with emergency procedures for fire drills, severe weather, and lock-down drills.

Establish classroom rules and routines with your classes. Practice routines and post rules in the first days of the school year.

Model appropriate behavior, demeanor, and dress. Your students are always watching.



Succeeding on the First Day

First-day tips for elementary teachers

Greet the children at the door and point them to their desks where you have already placed two easy-to-read name tags, one for them to wear and one to leave on their desks.

Plan a get-acquainted activity to help students (and you) learn each others' names. Explain procedures for entering the room each morning: where to hang coats, when to be in their seats, how much conversation is allowed.

Tell how you will start each day. Then have students practice it and tell them whether their behavior met your expectations. Describe how the lunch count, attendance, and other daily tasks will be handled. Explain procedures for absences and late arrivals.

Explain each activity before it occurs, including before they leave for P.E., lunch, or other outside activities. Review procedures as soon as you complete them.

Read the rules for behavior along with consequences and rewards. Point out the poster, bulletin board, or area where these are posted.

Give students a tour of the room and show them materials they may use. Establish a specific location on the white

board or bulletin board for daily schedules, homework, etc.

Explain how you will determine students' grades. Send this information home and ask parents to sign and return.

Take students on a tour of the school, pointing out restrooms, lunchroom, office, gym, playground, and library.

Vary activities and the pace of lessons every day. Students' attention spans are shorter than you may expect.

Demonstrate the procedures for getting materials out and putting them away. Explain what students should do if they finish their work early.

Reserve the last 15-20 minutes the first day to clean up and review what has been covered. Hand out any notices for parents, or tape them on younger children.

Explain procedures for dismissal and bus loading. Be sure to allow enough time for the latter. This procedure may be confusing at first, and buses must leave at scheduled times.

First-day tips for middle and high school teachers

Introduce yourself, including your background and special interests. Then have the students introduce themselves to you and one another in a similar manner. Post your school website if there is one.

Have students write on note cards their addresses, phone numbers, names of families/guardians, email address, and one interesting fact about themselves.

Outline your procedures for recording attendance and tardiness, giving assignments, collecting papers, making up work, and issuing hall passes.

Post rules for classroom behavior on a bulletin board. You may want to have the class help make the rules.

Establish a uniform heading for papers. Check with team or department members for consistency.

If you give homework, give some the first week, making it

simple and easy to grade. This will give you an opportunity to determine if students understand your procedures for heading papers, posting assignments, turning in homework, etc.

Explain how you will determine students' grades. Send home this information and ask parents to sign and return.

Tell the class your objectives for the week and year. Tell them what they will study and why it will be interesting and relevant. Hand out the course syllabus, if appropriate.

Review routines for ending class by turning in assignments, clearing desks, straightening the room—including lab equipment and computers—for the next class, etc.

Allow a short period of time for students in each class to ask questions about what is expected of them and about any of the established procedures.

Thriving in Your First Year

The following tips are drawn from advice given by first-year and veteran teachers.

Plan relentlessly.

Instructional plans should include activities, materials, measurable goals, and assessments. Plans should be aligned to state content standards and age appropriate. Create back-up plans and plans for teaching students of varying abilities.

Set high and consistent expectations.

Reinforce positive behavior and academic performance expectations constantly. Notice and say something when students meet your goals. Get to know your students well as individuals.

Teach and model respect.

Teach respect and model it at all times in the classroom and outside of the classroom — always!

Reach out for support early and often.

Don't wait for a problem to get out of hand. Communicate with families early, even before the school year begins. Ask your local education association for help. Document everything and let administrators in the school know about problems before they escalate.

Get involved in school activities.

But don't feel you have to do everything. Participate in an extracurricular activity that strengthens your relationships with colleagues, families, and students and that you enjoy. On the flip side, know when to say no. You — and your students — will be better off if you have a life outside your career.

Support one another and seek wisdom from others.

Look for team teaching assignments and opportunities to work with other first-year teachers so you can support one another.

Find a mentor if you don't have one assigned.

Mentors can be lifesavers. They can also help you keep your perspective. (See page 23 for ideas.)

Be flexible and roll with the punches.

Surprises can be fun. Not only can they be enriching, but you can take pride in knowing you were flexible enough to meet new challenges.

Work closely with other school personnel.

Work closely with counselors and other school staff who can respond to your students' academic and social challenges. Get to know your school secretary, custodian, and other support personnel. All of these colleagues have a positive impact on school climate and student success.

Take care of yourself.

Block out time in your calendar to take care of yourself physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. (See page 9 for suggestions.) Treat yourself the way you treat your students: with patience, compassion and respect.

Love learning, love your students, and love teaching!

Self Care

Remember how stressed you got during finals? Most educators would say that stress was just practice for your career. Stress itself isn't the problem. In fact, a little stress can be good for you, motivating you to organize and do your best. But too much stress is debilitating.

Your challenge as a teacher is to make good decisions about how you deal with the countless demands on you. People who don't make good decisions about stress become ill. Migraines, ulcers, backaches, constipation, sore throat, weight gain or loss and heart attacks can be physical manifestations of stress.

Many experienced teachers have found ways to keep their optimistic outlook and avoid getting burned out. Try these techniques to help you form good habits that will keep you happily teaching for a long and productive career:

Exercise: Shake off the day. A brisk walk or workout clears the mind and heals a tired body.

Eat right: A balanced diet gives your body all it needs. When stressed, the body calls on nutrients for energy. Eat wholesome foods and watch your vitamin and mineral supplements.

Work hardest when strongest: You probably know if you are a morning person or an evening person. Decide if it makes more sense for you to arrive early, work late or take work home. Try not to do all three.

Communicate: Find a friend, mentor, spouse, clergy member or counselor who is a trusted listener. The problems may not go away, but talking them out can

relieve tension. Talk in private where you can't be overheard and misunderstood. Consider keeping a private journal where you can be self-reflective and recognize patterns.

Stop procrastinating: Make a "to do" list. Prioritize activities on the list and then do them. Having something hanging over your head can create more tension than the activity is worth.

Be good to yourself: A bubble bath or creative date with your spouse or a friend or child can perk you up. Keep notes of appreciation you receive in a box or file and read them when you've had a bad day. Find hobbies that you enjoy to help you escape.

Plan, plan, plan: Disorganization breeds stress. Develop your style of getting things done in a calm, orderly way. The time required to plan will result in more available time.

Learn to say no: You don't have to volunteer to do everything, no matter what strengths you have. You don't have to work with every committee, club or group you're asked to join.

Sleep: If you're tired, go to bed early. Take naps. Don't rush out of bed on the weekends. You need more sleep when you are stressed.

Quit worrying: A study shows that only two percent of things people worry about actually deserve worry and 40 percent of things people worry about never even happen. So, quit worrying about how you should have handled Joshua in class.



TEA's Member Assistance Program (MAP) offers comprehensive counseling assistance to members, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The program is free and services are completely confidential. Whether you face emotional or marital difficulties, substance abuse or troubled teens, eating disorders or grief, services are available to help you when and where you need it.



Managing Your Time

- Make a “to do” list every morning. Check off tasks as you complete them.
- Establish routines for regular activities. Have students hand papers in right side up, with their names at the top. Have a basket for each subject or class so papers are sorted.
- Assign each student a partner. When students are absent, their partners gather handouts and assignments for them.
- If students check each others’ papers, ask checkers to sign their names at the bottom. Students are more careful when their names are on the checked paper.
- Assign each student a number that corresponds to the number in your grade book. Ask students to put their number on their papers. You or a student can easily put papers in order. This helps you check for missing papers and quickly enter grades.
- For math and other short answer assignments, have students make an answer column along the right margin of papers. You can correct several papers at once by lining up their answer columns.
- Ask for clerical help from families. Choose tasks families can do at home like typing newsletters, preparing teaching materials, and preparing book orders.
- Start class without wasting time. While you take attendance
 - » Put answers on a PowerPoint slide to have students check homework.
 - » Designate one spot in the room where you post what students should do as they enter.
- Write frequently used directions on a chart. When needed, hang the chart on the board. Use for assignment guidelines, book report outlines, paper heading, and studying for a test.
- Design your own lesson plan book. Take a page from your book and put in everything that does not change from week to week. Duplicate this page and you’ll only have to add the lessons for the week.
- Identify your supplies with a piece of colored tape.
- Record your class notes and presentation on PowerPoint slides instead of the board. Then you can use them again and absent students can use them to review what they missed.
- Instead of collecting checked homework every day, have students keep assignments in a folder and collect it once a week for recording.
- If your school does not have a designated day, pick one day each week to send student work home to families.
- Use one calendar to keep track of future events.
- Teach students to do as many clerical tasks as possible.
- Laminate often-used materials for reuse.

Managing Student Behavior

In *Poor Richard's Almanac*, Benjamin Franklin wrote, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." The same goes for student behavior.

Here are some proven techniques for preventing behavior problems:

Be clear. Be clear about your standards and expectations. Set up a system of rewards and punishments and make sure students understand it. Enforce the system fairly, which may mean not treating every student the same. See page 14 for pointers about rules and consequences.

Establish a routine. Establish a procedure for routine tasks, including attendance, pre-class work, distributing and collecting materials, dismissal, and class transitions. Post the procedures to remind students what they are.

Offer choices. Give students the opportunity to help design their own curriculum and choose among several options for learning and showing what they have learned.

Help students see the relevancy of what they learn. Make the curriculum meaningful to students' current needs. Include community service and work opportunities.

Be flexible. Recognize when students have not grasped material and change your approach. Learning is not easy to segment into predetermined time blocks, especially since students learn at different rates.

Recognize student differences. Students have different learning styles. Administer a learning styles or interest inventory to get to know your students better and to enable you to adapt your methods so that they connect with each student. Vary activities and schedules to accommodate student differences. Remember, your goal is not teaching; it's learning.

Learn to recognize stress. Illness, compulsive behaviors,

daydreaming, moodiness, and fidgeting can all signal student stress, which may prevent learning and result in behavior problems.

Give written instructions. Be explicit. Remember that students may misunderstand or forget oral directions.

Eliminate surprises. Test only information that you have taught and avoid pop quizzes. If you know of disruptions to the schedule, tell students in advance. Let students know how long you expect to work on a topic. Post daily and weekly activities. Have a definite seating chart and insist that students sit in assigned seats.

Use humor. Inject this best-known stress buster through nonsense answers, puns, laughter at yourself, and funny stories. Of course, avoid humor at someone else's expense and sarcasm. Make your classroom a fun place for students and yourself.

Play music. Set the tone for class by using soft, soothing music during work time, transitions, and between classes.

Set a good example. Students learn to behave appropriately by observing respected adults. Show students how a well-balanced adult handles conflict, anger, and stress.

Strengthen Your Classroom Management Skills

Attend a TEA professional development session to learn best practices from experience.

Check with your local president or TEA UniServ for when professional development will be offered in your local Association or region, or check the Events section of the TEA website at TNEA.org.



TEA Instructional Advocacy

Responding to Behavior Problems

All teachers have students with behavior problems, even teachers with the best prevention techniques. Some students will choose to disregard rules and test the limits. Know school and district policies for dealing with specific behavior issues or rule violations. When that happens, remember that all discipline problems are not alike. Effective teachers match approaches to problems. Here are some approaches you may want to try.

Eye contact

Simply looking a student in the eye for prolonged contact while you continue your lesson sends a non-verbal message: “I saw what you did, and I want it stopped.”

Proximity

Continue your lesson while you move around the room, pausing near trouble spots. This lets students know that even though they are not near your desk, they are still expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior.

Pause

The continuous sound of teacher talk can provide students with a noise screen for their own conversation. A few seconds of silence can bring an off-task student back into focus.

Gesture

For younger students, add this to give emphasis to your eye contact, proximity, and pauses. Be highly mindful of appropriate gestures and interactions with students.

Ask for a response

Hearing our name can be attention getting, even if we're not paying attention. To help preserve the student's dignity, say the name first and then ask a question. The purpose is to get the student's attention, not to embarrass.

Active participation

Having students respond to a question or become involved in an activity can eliminate undesired behavior. Ask for a show of hands, have students perform a physical activity, or ask each student to write a quick answer to a question. Thumbs up, thumbs down, or individual white boards are ways to quickly assess learning and participation.

Reinforcement

Reward students with an enjoyable activity that is contingent on appropriate behavior from the whole class. For example, “If we finish this chapter by 9:45, we'll have time to play the map game.” Peer pressure will help reinforce your expectations. Give incentives for positive behavior rather than taking away privileges.

Severe discipline problems

Even though you may have planned your day to avoid down time, developed a stimulating lesson, and taught the rules, you may still encounter a situation with severe misbehavior.

Consequences, whether for major or minor problems, should be logical, natural, and related to the infraction. Now is the time to think about your options:

- Can you keep students after school?
- Does the school have a supervised suspension room?
- What is the procedure for getting assistance from the office?
- In what cases should the principal be involved in discipline?

Enlisting the assistance of parents/families is an important strategy. Your approach will depend upon the level of cooperation you might receive. While few families object to a teacher approaching them with an idea that shows the teacher's commitment to the success of their student, families may react negatively when told “Here's what your child did today.” Consider families as support for a mutually agreed-upon solution to discipline problems.

Rules, Rewards & Consequences

Like other instructional activities, rules have to be taught, reviewed, and reinforced if they are to be remembered. Introduce each rule and discuss the variety of behaviors it might include. Reinforce students who are following the rules. In elementary grades, reinforcement can be done aloud; in upper grades, thank students quietly and privately.

Be sure your classroom discipline policies are consistent with school and district policies. Consider giving a copy of your rules to your principal.

Tips for rules

1. Limit yourself to three to six rules
2. State rules in positive terms when possible
3. Remind the class of the rules at times other than when someone has misbehaved
4. Keep rules short, precise, and easy to understand
5. Post rules and send copies home
6. Consider using role play or a quiz to teach the rules.
7. Enforce the rules in ways that preserve student dignity

Sample rules for all levels

1. Enter class quietly
2. Walk in the halls and classroom
3. Listen when the teacher talks
4. Raise hands to talk
5. Bring materials to class

Sample elementary rules

1. Be polite
2. Let others work
3. Work quietly

Sample middle school rules

1. Work quietly
2. Respect the rights of others

Sample high school rules

1. No put downs
2. Respect others

Tips for consequences

1. Be clear and specific
2. Have a range of alternatives
3. Relate consequences to the rule
4. Don't threaten consequences you can't reinforce
5. Make consequences natural, logical and progressive

Sample consequences

1. Students retrace their steps, walking
2. Students describe the appropriate behavior
3. Students who come to class prepared receive rewards
4. Don't respond to student who doesn't raise hand to talk
5. Students not following rules are the last dismissed for lunch or recess

Sample rewards

Allow deserving students to

1. Pass out papers or books
2. Choose the music played during study time
3. Be first in line for lunch or recess
4. Get extra computer time
5. Play word games or number games
6. Get media-center pass

Focus on the Positive

Most people respond better to positive feedback than negative. Your students will, too. Oral and written feedback are equally important. Students can learn to give high-quality feedback to one another.

Negative: Don't run.	Positive: Let's walk. Thanks for observing the speed limit.
Negative: Get quiet. Shut up. Hush.	Positive: Is everyone quiet? If you have to talk, do so quietly. Let's be thoughtful of others. Are we using our inside voices? Everyone, listen carefully.
Negative: Don't interrupt. Don't talk.	Positive: We can all talk, but we must wait our turn.

Ways to Say "Very Good"

While everyone knows a little praise goes a long way, it should be something more than the same few phrases repeated. Students need more than the traditional "good job." Here are some possible options to consider using in connection with a specific action identifying what deserves the compliment.

(For example: "Bingo. You got all 10 multiplication problems right.")

All right	Amazing	Beautiful	Bingo	Bravo	Cool
Creative	Delightful	Exceptional	Fantastic	First class	Great idea
Hurray	I'm proud of you	Imaginative	Interesting	Looking good	Much better
Neat	Outstanding	Phenomenal	Priceless	Quality work	Right on target
Stunning	Stupendous	Superb	Superior	Terrific	That's a winner
Tops	Tremendous	Way to go	Wonderful	Wow	You've got it

Examples of high quality academic feedback:

- These are outstanding sentences because they include our new vocabulary words.
- That's a very good observation. How can you connect it to the theme?
- I'm glad to see you have figured this formula out.
- That's an interesting point of view. Does someone else have another point of view to share?

Written Comments & Feedback

Many school systems require narrative comments on report cards and progress reports, whether they are prepared online or in more traditional form. Other districts advise teachers not to put anything in writing on the report card. **Be sure to follow your district's policies regarding report card comments.**

Generally, report card comments should be short, easy to understand, and avoid jargon. Include no more than two or three. If you write negative comments, make sure you can provide students and families with specific examples of the problem you cite.

Consider using some of these comments:

1. A library book is overdue
2. Grade modified for IEP
3. Classroom behavior needs to improve
4. Low grade due to absences
5. Displays undesirable class conduct
6. Follows directions
7. Needs to complete work on time
8. Lacks necessary class habits
9. Makes low grades on major tests
10. Needs to develop listening skills
11. Needs to pay attention in class
12. Shows potential
13. Talks too often and loudly
14. Displays inconsistent effort
15. Needs to review (list specific skill or knowledge)
16. Follows directions
17. Starts work on time
18. Needs to learn (list specific skill or knowledge)
19. Has potential to improve
20. Wastes valuable work time
21. Respects authority
22. Family conference requested
23. Grade modified for ELL student
24. See ELL report for grade
25. Low grades on daily assignments
26. Displays desirable class conduct
27. Is a pleasure to have in class
28. Well-organized
29. Has poor study habits
30. Works near ability level
31. Needs to complete homework/assignments
32. Working hard and improving
33. Is respectful of others
34. Fails to work consistently
35. Earns good grades on daily work
36. Needs to use time wisely
37. Should prepare more for tests
38. Fails to proofread/correct errors
39. Stays on task
40. Shows above average interest/effort
41. Shows interest/effort
42. Shows positive work attitude
43. Should work to improve (list specific skill or behavior)

Valuing Diversity in Your Classroom

The world becomes more diverse every day. Even if your classroom appears to be homogeneous today, it may be less so tomorrow. Also, your students may someday live near people who don't look or sound like them and come from other cultures. You'll want to help prepare them.

Questions to ask

Ignoring ethnic, religious or other differences among students in your class may send the wrong message. Ask yourself these questions:

- Will this activity in any way either promote or inhibit religion? If so, dump the lesson.
- How does this activity serve the goals of the course or the mission of the school?
- Will any student (even just one) or any family feel like an outsider, not a full member of the community, because of this activity?
- Am I prepared to teach the meaning of holidays to enrich students' understanding of history and cultures, not merely as a religious celebration?

Unintentional slights

Are you hurting any of your students by your assignments or language? See how you're doing:

- Am I giving important tests or assignments that can't be made up on a religious holiday when some students will be away from school?
- What is the Halloween policy at my school? If some kinds of costumes are not allowed, have I shared the policy with families?
- When discussing Thanksgiving traditions like what people have at dinner, will all students have an elaborate meal?
- Can my students name any African-American leader besides Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Do they know leaders who are African-American? Hispanic? Asian?
- Do I allow my students to use derogatory terms?
- Do I help students feel comfortable with differences that exist among them? Is my classroom safe for all?
- How will students from single-parent families be impacted if I assign an art project for Mother's Day or Father's Day?

Things to avoid

- Misrepresenting. Don't use activities and books about Mexico to teach about Mexican-Americans, books about Japan to teach about Japanese-Americans or activities about Africa to teach about African-Americans.
- Stereotyping. Don't use images that assume that all people of color are poor, that all Native Americans lived in the past, or that all people from outside the United States dress in traditional attire.
- Disconnecting. Don't read books about people of color only on special occasions or teach about other cultures in isolation from the entire curriculum.
- Tokenism. One black-character book among many white-character books or one ethnic bulletin board is not sufficient.
- Trivializing. Don't organize all multicultural activities around holidays or food or involve families from other cultures only for holidays or cooking.

Gender bias

Studies have shown male or female favoritism in some classrooms. To help avoid gender bias:

- Model gender balance by what you say and do in the classroom.
- Use inclusive language. While "you guys" may be a popular way of addressing a group, it's also an example of gender bias (unless there are no females in the group).
- Maintain the same expectations for all students. Both genders can succeed in math, science, and language arts.
- Avoid stereotypical classroom jobs for students. Ask both boys and girls to clean up and to carry things.
- Review books, posters, and other classroom material for gender balance. Use supplementary materials to provide balance.
- Make the classroom atmosphere one where both girls and boys are encouraged, questioned, and reinforced.
- Never use gender to group students and suggest alternatives to self-segregation by gender.

Welcoming English Language Learners

Learning to “do school” in America requires time, trial and error, and lots of help from other students and sensitive adults. Here are some ideas for easing students’ transition during their first days and weeks of school in this country.

- Speak at a normal rate and volume. We tend to speak louder when speaking to people who use a language other than our own. This may actually impede comprehension. Consistently use an extended wait time.
- Assign a student as a peer ambassador. Ask this student to sit beside the ELL student and demonstrate routines. Have the peer take the student on a tour of the school, identifying people and places, especially bathroom and cafeteria routines.
- Introduce the student to the class as (name) who speaks (language), not as someone who does not speak English — which stresses inability rather than abilities. Call students by their real names, avoiding nicknames that may be easier for Americans to pronounce. Students need to keep their identities in a completely strange-feeling situation.
- Be sure the student has all the materials needed for classroom activities and recognize that families may not understand or be able to provide materials requested from home.
- Incorporate the student’s native language by posting a greeting or map or labels. Try to get any announcements to be sent home translated into the student’s language.
- Establish consistent routines and language describing these activities.
- Provide examples of required work.
- If you have several students who speak the same language, allow them to interact in their native language to provide a sense of belonging. Those who speak more English can help others understand.
- Teach students a standard phrase (such as, “Repeat, please!”) or a non-verbal cue to use when they don’t understand.
- Remember that being accepted by others is a priority. Create opportunities for students to share a classroom task and work together.



Engaging Families

In focus groups, teachers and families were asked what they meant by “family engagement.” Families thought that meant we wanted them to come to school and volunteer lots of time. Teachers wanted families to work with their children at home. Remember to be specific about how families can help their children learn.

- Make sure families know what homework or family assignments to expect students to have.
 - If possible, inform families and students of a week’s worth of homework so they can schedule it when there are fewer other family obligations.
 - Suggest ways families can help with homework.
 - Ask families to read with the child.
 - Ask families to sign students’ homework.
 - Encourage families to drill students on math, spelling, social studies facts, etc.
 - Encourage families to ask children to talk about school activities.
- Suggest things that families and students can do together at home— alphabetize items, balance a checkbook, measure distances in the home, etc.
 - Send suggestions for games or group activities related to schoolwork.
 - Invite families to the classroom to see how you teach the child.
 - Encourage families to take children to libraries, museums, and zoos.
 - In November, send home a list of books for families to consider for holiday giving. Send home a similar list each month for those students who have birthdays that month.
 - Ask relatives to write or record a few memories that relate to the topic you are studying.
 - Send a welcome letter to new students’ families, especially those entering your class mid-year. Include a copy of behavior policies, learning goals, and homework expectations.



Communicating with Families

When asked how they made calls to families, a group of first-year teachers paused. Finally, one spoke up and said that, as she dialed the phone she thought to herself, “Please don’t answer. Please don’t answer.” Communicating with families can be intimidating.

Families want to be on your side. Here are some ways to start the relationship on the right foot and keep it there throughout the year.

How to communicate

- Use technology whenever possible.
- Think through what you are going to say.
- Be professional and avoid gossip.
- Be assertive yet flexible enough to take suggestions.
- Be direct and clear.
- Be friendly and positive.
- Involve families in decision making.
- Use plain English and avoid jargon.

Communication pointers

- Be sure your communications are directed to the legally appropriate person(s) for each student. Consult with your principal should you have any doubt as to who this is. (*Note: It may be a grandparent or it may be two sets of adults, neither of which share the student’s last name.*)
- Keep a log of all family communications.
- If you have any doubts about communication with families, discuss it first with a colleague or principal.
- Inform the principal of any problem as soon as you suspect it. Don’t let them hear about any problem first from families.

Phone calls

- Call families early and often. Calling with good news first makes it easier to call later with not-as-good news.
- Write down all the things you want to include in your call: who you are, why you are calling, behaviors (not opinions or value judgments), solutions, and family suggestions.
- Find a diplomatic way to finish the call.
- Let families know when and how they can reach you.

Email

- Ask families for email addresses and whether they want to communicate through email.
- Use email for very short, frequent notes: “Sonya taught the whole class a math solution today.”
- Do not put anything in email that you would not say in person.
- Keep email short and clear.
- Invite face-to-face or phone communication.
- Don’t communicate serious problems through email. Save those for face-to-face conferences.
- Never send email when you are angry. Save the message and wait until you cool off to decide whether to send it.

Written communication

- Regularly send home good news notes, even to students who have problems. Pace yourself so all your students get at least one good-news note during the year.
- Consider sending short “What we did this week/month” newsletters or post on the school’s dedicated website.
- Make sure every note is legible. Use correct grammar and spelling. Ask another teacher to proofread it.
- As soon as you know the class and school calendars, send them home.
- Keep copies of all correspondence.
- Include a place for families to write their own comments and return messages to school.
- Involve students. Ask them what they think families should know about what is going on in the class. Include student quotes.

Family Conferences

Communicating with families is one of the most important things we teachers do. Working toward common goals, we can improve student's chances of achieving. Consider student-led conferences.

Make contact early: Contact families early in the year, perhaps with information about your class sent home through a newsletter, memo or email. Let families know how and when they can contact you.

Allow time: Give families options for when to meet. First, contact those who need the conference most. You want them to come, so make it convenient. Make sure you schedule enough time. Twenty to 30 minutes is usually adequate. Allow ten minutes between back-to-back conferences. Use this time to make notes about the conference just completed and to prepare for the next one.

Anticipate: Be prepared for questions families may ask:

- What is my child's ability?
- Is my child working up to that ability?
- What gives my child problems?
- What does my child do best?
- Does my child behave?
- How well is my child accepted by his/her peers?

Organize: Come prepared with a printout or grade book, textbook, grading policy, course objectives, samples of student work and student's locker number. Organized teachers impress families. Protect other students' privacy if you show families grade sheets. Have examples of textbooks and other instructional materials. If in a self-contained setting, label each desk with students' names per seating arrangement.

Explain goals: When you request a conference, make clear its purpose. Also state the purpose at the beginning of the conference:

- Getting information
- Giving information
- Solving problems together
- Developing mutual trust

Early in the conference, also tell families your specific reason for requesting a conference.

Location, location, location: Plan where you will meet so you have adult chairs for the adults and you are not behind your desk. Use a conference table arrangement if possible. Make sure the family knows how to get to the meeting and that it is private but not isolated.

Open on a positive note: Make sure you get the families' names right (which may not always be the student's name) and open on a warm, positive note to help everyone relax. Try to maintain that atmosphere throughout the conference.

Never assume: Don't assume that an adult's relationship to the child is birth family. Try to get a realistic picture of the home situation before you make any suggestions. Ask questions to assess whether the family can realistically carry out any suggestions you have.

Ask: Ask families at least as many questions as they ask you. Find out their ideas about the child's strengths and weaknesses. As much as possible, state your own observations in terms that are similar to the family's thoughts. Thank families for their helpful information.

Be specific: Families may not understand if you speak in generalities or jargon. Pin down issues with specific examples. Show student work when it helps illustrate your points.

Speak up: Don't let a family berate you. If a family becomes verbally abusive, simply say that you do not think the objectives of the conference are being met and that you believe another time would be more beneficial. Then schedule the next conference in the office with an administrator present.

End on a positive note: Try to end the conference on a happy note, mentioning things on which the family and you agree. Remind them of follow-up actions to which you have agreed. Follow up with a copy of the written plan of agreed-upon actions.

Involving ELL Families

How can you involve families who are English-language learners? Remember that these families care deeply about their children and may have come to this country seeking greater opportunities. They can become active in their children's education with a caring, enlightened program to involve them. Families want to be on your side.

Every family entering the school system is unique. Some generalizations, however, can be helpful. Differences in levels of involvement may be influenced by multiple factors.

1. Length of residence

Newcomers will likely need considerable orientation to understand school expectations for both students and families. Schools in their native countries may have been considerably more autocratic and less individualistic than American schools. Native language communication, cultural orientation sessions, and the support of others who have less recently arrived in this country can help families during this extremely stressful period.

2. English proficiency

Families with limited English may find it intimidating to communicate with school, to help with school activities, or to help their children with homework. These families can participate successfully when they receive information they can understand. Make sure you see they receive such information and that they know you appreciate their efforts. Face-to-face communication is often more effective than written communication. Because of the situations in some countries from which your students come, the families may not be literate in their native language. Reach out to the ESL teacher and others in their community to assist with family communication.

3. Availability of support groups and bilingual staff

Native language family groups, bilingual school staff, and community groups can make the difference in family participation. These services can assure that families understand information and demonstrate that schools really do want their involvement.

4. Prior experiences

Language-minority families differ widely in the extent to which they are familiar and comfortable with the concept of family engagement in school. Some may have been actively involved in their native country. Other cultures may view education the sole business of school staff and may not want to “interfere” with the school’s authority. Still others may want to work with their children at home but never contact the school. Asking families about their expectations and views can help you see how best to engage them.

5. Economic need

Families who are barely surviving may believe their children’s school attendance is a hardship. They may hold to the belief that their children could improve the family’s financial situation by working if they did not have to go to school.

Promoting Home Language Use

Because many cultures are very family-oriented, the home may be an excellent place for students to develop language skills. Families and teachers should remember

- Developing children’s skill with their home language strengthens — rather than impedes — a child’s ability to learn English. Increased literacy in any language will enhance literacy in English.
- Reading with children and listening to children read is exceptionally valuable, in whichever language(s) the family feels comfortable.
- Children should be given opportunities to write in journals using both English and their native language.
- The best language development programs are built into the daily lives of families.

Working with Colleagues

It is important to build relationships with your colleagues. They are invaluable resources for professional advice and support as you begin your career.

- Get to know your colleagues and your Association representative(s). Be personable and open but not pushy. You don't need to meet everyone at once.
- Talk about positives and avoid gossip.
- Ask co-workers for suggestions. It helps you and makes them feel good.
- Become familiar with the professionalism rubric in your district's evaluation model.
- Offer to help others but don't offer lots of suggestions unless solicited.
- Participate in school activities.

Breaking the ice

- Avoid alienating new co-workers by criticizing the school or the way things are handled.
- Avoid constantly saying, "At the school where I student taught..." Many people are annoyed when someone new comes in and immediately tries to change things, or when someone new seems to think someplace else does things much better.
- Ask another teacher to help you solve a specific problem.
- Ask someone who works nearby and who is experienced at your school about school routines and procedures.
- Try to cultivate one friendship at a time.
- Avoid spending lots of time in the teachers' lounge if it's where teachers go to gossip and talk negatively.
- Keep working at getting to know other staff in your school and district. In a few months when you all get to know each other, you'll wonder why you felt so intimidated at first.
- Prioritize your most important goals and choose your issue carefully before fighting an established policy.
- Remember that you are still learning. Be patient with yourself and others.

Working with the administration

- Remember that your administration hired you and believes you are qualified for the job. Be confident.
- Ask questions to make sure you know what the administration expects.
- Ask your principal to recommend another teacher for you to work with.
- Never gossip or become involved in small talk concerning your administration. You don't know connections among people yet or who may repeat what you say.
- Be cooperative and respect opinions.
- Be open to advice, suggestions, and constructive criticism.
- Make the administration aware of special situations with students and families. Never let them be surprised by a comment from a family.
- Be prompt to school and to all meetings.
- Deal with discipline problems on your own as much as possible. This builds your confidence and the confidence of your administrators.
- Seek to understand the evaluation process, including timelines for observations and what you are expected to do each step along the way. (See page 32 for more information.)

Working with education support professionals

If you think the principal runs the school, think again. The school secretary, custodian, teaching assistants, and cafeteria manager can save your life in innumerable ways. They may have deep ties to the community and can help you understand your students and their families. They usually have lots of information about the entire school — who does what, how to get things done and where things are stored.

Education support professionals share your dedication to your students and want to work with you to do what's best for students. Many of them may be as well educated as you, having taken college courses and earned a degree. Don't underestimate their abilities and contributions.

Learning from Your Colleagues

You'll soon discover that your colleagues are among your most valuable resources. You can learn much from educators in your school and district, as well as teachers across the state and nation, who've confronted many of the same challenges you'll be facing.

TEA Instructional Advocacy Trainings

TEA's IA team offers a variety of trainings on everything from classroom management to evaluations and more. TEA members have exclusive to online trainings the can be completed at home for PDP credit. The IA team will also bring trainings to you in your district! Use the QR code below to request a professional development training in your area.



NEA Micro-Credentials

Looking for a way to skill-up and take your teaching to the next level? NEA micro-credentials are the way to go. Plus, TEA members can take advantage of this professional learning opportunity at no cost!

NEA offers over 175 micro-credentials that have been created by educators for educators. A micro-credential is a short, competency-based recognition that allows an educator to demonstrate mastery in a particular area. NEA micro-credentials are grounded in research and best practice and designed to be:

- Personalized: You can create your own learning journey, based on your interests and career goals; gaps in your skills; and the specific needs of your students, school, and district.
- Flexible: You can study when it's convenient for you, alone or with your peers.
- Performance-based: Unlike "sit-and-get" certifications, NEA micro-credentials are awarded based on demonstrated mastery of the subject matter, not just for showing up.

Learn more at www.nea.org/professional-excellence/professional-learning/micro-credentials.

Resource Library on NEA.org

- Lesson plans and activities — Use the custom lesson plan search to explore thousands of lesson plans from across the Web, hand-picked by the NEA search editor.
- Classroom management tips — Expert advice on organizing and setting up your classroom, character education, discipline and behavior management.
- School life — Articles written by educators about how to manage and navigate day-to-day school culture.
- Teaching strategies — Get access to teaching strategies that work and will help you as an educator.
- Advice and support — Answers to your toughest problems from thousands of pros—educators like you.

Working with a Mentor

When asked how they survived their first year, most teachers talk about the students they taught and the teachers with whom they worked. A good mentor can make the difference between a good year and an awful year.

Tennessee law urges that each new teacher be assigned a mentor. In some schools this is done formally, with another teacher assigned to assist you. More often in Tennessee however, mentoring is informal, with experienced teachers volunteering to help new teachers learn the ropes and with new teachers themselves seeking out assistance.

Seek out mentors

Even if you have not been assigned a mentor, seek help from other teachers. You can have many mentors: one whose classroom management you admire, one whose grasp of subject matter is top-notch, one who is especially sympathetic, and another who is in the second or third year of teaching and remembers well. With a large supporting cast, you'll always find someone who can help.

Be specific

When you ask for help, be as specific as you can. Don't just say, "I'm having trouble with discipline." Instead ask, "Can you give me some ideas for getting my students to work as soon as they enter the classroom?" Sometimes you may just want someone to listen and hear your story, without giving advice or making suggestions. At other times you may want very concrete help with a technique or a second opinion on whether you are seeing the same thing.

Observe

If you and your mentor have different planning times, ask to observe her/him during your planning time. Talk with your mentor in advance to learn on what the class will be working. Then watch for only two or three things, like how she distributes papers or how he manages cooperative groups.

Be observed

Invite your mentor to sit in on your class. Plan a lesson that may show one of the things on which you'd like help, so the mentor can see firsthand what is causing you difficulty. Also ask your mentor to teach a short lesson to your class, so you can observe how he/she handles a similar situation.

Use variety

Communicate with your mentor(s) in various ways. Consider creating a joint journal that you both write in and exchange periodically. Consider using email to reduce the amount of time you have to squeeze in for face-to-face conversations. Some things are easier said in email. Sometimes two-minute conversations in the hall can be very helpful. All mentoring does not have to take place in formal conferences.

Learn together

Find out what workshops your mentor is planning to attend this year and ask if you can go along. Sit together and discuss how you will use what you learn. After you've begun implementing what you learned, share your successes and challenges with your mentor.

Teach

Remember that you have lots to share with your mentor. Your enthusiasm for teaching and fresh outlook can be a real shot in the arm, helping mentors remember why they love teaching. By the end of the year, your relationship should feel more like a partnership of peers than a mentoring relationship.

Pass it on

The best thanks you can give those who help you during your first years is to help those who enter the profession after you. You'll find that you learn as much from mentoring others as being mentored. And, of course, the students will ultimately benefit from better teaching.

Preparing for a Substitute

Face facts. You're not going to be at school every day. This is the ideal time to plan for a substitute since they will have a lot of the same questions you have now.

- Prepare a sub folder ahead of time with everything the substitute may need. Place the folder so it is easily visible. Provide the daily schedule, classroom rules, class seating chart(s), and information about children with special needs.
- Consider not asking the sub to follow your regular lesson plan. Many teachers have several stand-alone lessons that are easy to follow, prepared just for subs and left in the substitute folder. Once a sub has used such a lesson, take it out of the folder so other subs won't use the same lesson.
- On a day you know you'll have a sub, be cautious about incorporating manipulatives, lab supplies, or other objects you don't want to disappear.
- Don't assume the substitute will know your subject.
- Include plans for short activities in case the substitute is left with unfilled time.
- Find out if you can request a specific substitute. Ask colleagues for recommendations.
- Try to avoid absences on Mondays or Fridays when there are fewer subs available.
- Pair up with a colleague to welcome and assist each other's substitutes. When you return, check with your partner to see how effective the sub was.
- Remember that you don't control what the substitute does or does not do during the day. Don't judge your effectiveness by someone else's performance.
- Substitutes are people, too, and often feel alone. Make them feel welcome. Call them by their name. Don't say, "Oh, you must be Ms. Smith today."
- If you know in advance you will be absent, prepare your students for your absence.

Preview the day's assignment and expectations for

behavior while you are away. Let them know you are confident that they can handle your not being there. Include in the sub folder a letter from you which your substitute can read to your students at the start of the school day or at the beginning of each class during the day if you teach multiple groups of students.

- Leave money in the sub folder and invite your substitute to get a snack or drink in appreciation for taking your class. They will do a better job knowing you appreciate them and may be more likely to volunteer to sub for you in the future.
- Use a digital camera or cut pictures from last year's yearbook to put student pictures on your seating chart so student names are easier for the substitute to learn.
- When you return, ask the students how the day went and then put it behind you.
- If you are not satisfied with a substitute's performance, discuss this with your principal. You may want to request other substitutes in the future.
- If you are attending a workshop on a school day, do not go to school during the lunch break. It will unsettle both the students and the substitute. If you must go by school, do it either before or after the students are there.
- Create a "Sub Tub" in your classroom. You never know when you will suddenly need to be absent. The tub can hold review and activity packets for students to use throughout the year in the event of your absence.

Taking a Field Trip

Field trips are great opportunities to use the community as a resource for teaching and learning. While you'll want to develop your own checklist to meet specific needs, the lists that follow are good places to start.

- Review and follow district guidelines for field trips
- Identify educational objectives
- Obtain administrative approval
- Complete and confirm transportation arrangements
- Complete insurance clearance
- Schedule supervisory/chaperone help
- Collect signed consent forms for each student
- Inform other faculty of schedule changes and list of students participating
- Make arrangements for any non-participating students
- Have family home, work, and cell phone contact information for each student on trip (most situations can be dealt with if a parent/guardian can be contacted quickly)
- Note any special physical, allergy, or dietary needs a student may have
- Confirm that any student on medication has the medicine they need for the trip
- Establish roommates and lodging rules for overnight trips
- Hold a family meeting prior to overnight trips to review expectations and rules
- Pack bags for garbage and illness when traveling by bus
- Pack first-aid kit
- Complete restroom arrangements
- Complete eating arrangements
- Plan follow-up activities
- Communicate arrangements with principal

Information for parent/guardian consent form

- Date of trip
- Destination and purpose of trip
- Departure time
- Return time
- Host information
- Cost, access to gift shops, or additional expenditures
- Mode of travel
- Eating provisions
- Student medical needs and preferred physician
- Emergency medical aid release
- Space for signature and date
- Space for emergency phone numbers and contacts

Discuss with students before trip

- Make-up academic assignments for missed classes
- Itinerary/agenda
- Safety rules
- Student conduct (language, respect for property, etc.)
- Use of electronics
- Food and drink regulations
- Provisions for students with physical challenges
- Money for eating
- All school and district rules apply and will be enforced while on field trips
- Appropriate dress for students as representatives of your school

Students with Special Needs

Federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), governs how schools and families educate children with special needs. In addition, state law and local board policy determine how IDEA is implemented.

IDEA clarifies that special education is a service, not a place. It may occur in schools, homes, hospitals, and other locations. Special education is instruction designed specifically to meet the unique needs of students with special-needs, aged three to 21. Children with disabilities are expected to progress and participate in the general curriculum and extracurricular activities as fully as appropriate.

Referring a student

The process begins when a teacher or family refers a student, who is then evaluated by qualified professionals. To qualify for special education services, children must meet criteria in at least one of 13 categories of disabilities.

Creating the educational plan

Once a child qualifies for special education, a team develops an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for that child. The team includes a family or family member, at least one general education teacher (if the child is going to be in general education), a special education teacher, a school district representative, someone to interpret evaluation results, others requested by the family or school board and the child, when appropriate.

The IEP team must consider the child's strengths, family concerns, evaluation results, and other factors.

The written IEP must include:

- The child's present level of performance
- Instructional accommodations and modifications
- Annual goals
- How the child will participate in state testing
- Short-term objectives
- Needed transition services (mandatory by age 16)
- Special education and related services
- Explanation of any reasons why the child will not participate in general education

An IEP is a federally mandated and legally binding

document. All school personnel must carry out the requirements of an IEP. Families and teachers should request an IEP meeting any time they feel a change in services is needed. In addition, a family who does not agree with an IEP may request a due process hearing which is conducted by a hearing officer appointed by the state department of education.

Tennessee is unique in that gifted and talented students are also covered by IEPs. (This is a state option not mandated by IDEA.)

Not all students with special needs require specialized instruction (and an IEP). For students with disabilities who do not require specialized instruction but need the assurance they will receive equal access to public education and services, a 504 Plan is created to outline their specific accessibility requirements. Like the IEP, a 504 Plan should be updated annually to ensure the student is receiving the most effective accommodations for their situation.

Disciplining students with special needs

School personnel can remove students with special needs who have IEPs and who commit serious offenses for up to ten school days. A suspension for more than ten days constitutes a change in placement and requires a change in the IEP.

A student who possesses a weapon or drugs at school can be placed in an interim alternative setting for up to 45 days if school personnel determine that the current placement is likely to result in harm or injury to the child or others. While a student is in an alternative setting, the IEP must continue to be implemented.

If discipline problems persist and a short suspension has not helped, the school district should conduct a functional behavior assessment and implement a behavior intervention plan. This plan must be completed once a student has been suspended for ten days.

It is extremely important for you to keep accurate anecdotal records of the student's behavior as well as the strategies you have used to change the behavior. Also keep the family informed about the behavior and your strategies. TEA encourages you to talk to other teachers, families, principals, and counselors for advice in behavior management strategies.

Smart Technology Usage

Students today are very tech-savvy. They have the ability to disseminate your postings to their friends and your employer. As a new teacher, carefully monitor your online presence and learn to use proper boundaries when integrating technology into the classroom and your personal life. Be mindful of district policies on internet use and social media.

School computers and email

The school board is the owner of all technology equipment purchased with public funds, donated to the system, or received through grants. Lists of internet sites visited on a computer can be harvested by the school system. SMTP (simple mail transport protocol) mail is downloaded on the system's server and can be easily monitored.

Other personal email accounts — even home email — read over the internet at school can be monitored by the school system. This mail is stored on the computer and can be retrieved by the district or law enforcement.

Email sent over a school system computer is subject to reading, copying, or printing by the employer.

Email messages can be used against an employee in court or during a school board hearing.

In short, you should be very cautious if using your school computer for personal internet use. This should not be done during time when you should be working, including your planning time. The best policy is to check personal email and conduct personal online business from your own computer outside the school day using your wifi and data plan.

Social networking

Some employers “Google” potential applicants. Your online blogs, social media profiles, or websites may be viewed. There have been many examples of applicants being turned down for jobs due to inappropriate online material. Teachers have lost their jobs due to material posted online. Examples that have caused trouble for teachers include posting candid photos of students, sexually explicit writing, inappropriate photos, and references to alcohol and drugs.

Social networking sites can be very detrimental to your career as a teacher. Practice caution and NEVER allow students to view personal blogs or pages. Do NOT write about events at school or students on your blogs or social media platforms. Courts have ruled that school employees can be disciplined for off-duty conduct if the school district can show that the conduct had an adverse impact on the school or the teacher's ability to teach.

Cell phone and email communication with students

Refrain from communicating with students via cell phone or text messaging. Although many see this as a rapid way to communicate with groups of students, text messaging can be easily misconstrued. You should never text your students and you should refrain from giving out your cell phone number. Use your school provided technology and email address when communicating with students and parents.

Email communication with students should be limited to school work.

If conversations and emails are strictly about school work, then the communication is probably appropriate. Practice caution in any outside communication with students and know what your district policy says. Use services like “Remind” where there is one way communication. It's available at Remind.com.

Other technology tips

Familiarize yourself with the capabilities of all software programs required by your district (electronic grade books, attendance software, etc.). Determine who to consult in your building if you encounter software issues.

Be sure to back up your data in several locations.

The ABCs of Public Education

The field of education is a culture and, like any culture in the world, it has its own language. Comprised of acronyms, abbreviations, initials and alphabet soup, this language represents educators' professional way of life. Common terms used often by many educators in Tennessee include

ACT	College admissions test produced by the American College Testing Program	NABSE	National Alliance of Black School Educators
ACTE	Association of Colleges for Teacher Education	NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
ADA	Average Daily Attendance	NAESP	National Association of Elementary School Principals
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	NASSP	National Association of Secondary School Principals
ADM	Average Daily Membership	NBCT	National Board Certified Teacher
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder	NBPTS	National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	NCATE	National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education
ADP	American Diploma Project	NEA	National Education Association
AEW	American Education Week	NRT	Norm-Referenced Test
AP	Advanced Placement	Para	Paraprofessional
AR	Association Representative	PD	Professional Development
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress	PDK	Phi Delta Kappa
BEP	Basic Education Program	PDPs	Professional Development Points
CAI	Computer-Assisted Instruction	PECCA	Professional Educators Collaborative Conferencing Act
CEU	Continuing Education Unit	PLAN	Pre-ACT test given during fall of sophomore year
CLD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	PTA	Parent Teacher Association
CRT	Criterion-Referenced Test	PTSO	Parent Teacher Student Organization
CTE	Career-Technical Education	RA	Representative Assembly
CUMS	Cumulative Records	RAA	Read Across America
DEAP	Distinguished Educator Awards Program	RTTT	Race to the Top
EE	Exemplary Educator	RTI	Response to Intervention
EIR	Educator Information Record	SACS	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
ELL	English-Language Learner	SAT	College admissions test administered by the College Board
EMAC	Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee	SBE	State Board of Education
EOC	End-of-Course Exam	SCORE	State Collaborative on Reforming Education
EPP	Education Preparation Provider	Sect. 504	Civil Rights Law Protecting Individuals with Disabilities
ERIC	Educational Resources Information Center	SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act	SES	Supplemental Education Services or Socio-Economic Status
ESL	English as a Second Language	SIP	School Improvement Plan
ESP	Education Support Professional	SLA	Summer Leadership Academy
ESSA	Every Student Succeed Act	SPED	Special Education
ETS	Educational Testing Service	STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
EXPLORE	ACT's college-readiness test for 8th and 9th graders	S-TEAM	School Support Team
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act	SREB	Southern Regional Education Board
GED	General Education Development diploma	SRO	School Resource Officer
GR	Government Relations	STEA	Student Tennessee Education Association
HBCU	Historically Black Colleges and Universities	TASL	Tennessee Academy for School Leaders
HCR	Human and Civil Rights	TCA	Tennessee Code Annotated
HQT	Highly Qualified Teacher	TCAP	Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program
HR	Human Relations or Human Resources	TCRS	Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System
IA	Instructional Advocacy (<i>Formerly IPD</i>)	TDOE	Tennessee Department of Education
IB	International Baccalaureate	TDP	Tennessee Diploma Project
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	TEAC	Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee
IEP	Individualized Education Program	TEAM	Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model
ILL-A	Instructional Leadership License-Aspiring	TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
ILL-B	Instructional Leadership License-Beginning	TFA	Teach for America
INTASC	Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium	TISA	Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (<i>TN funding formula</i>)
ISI	In-School Isolation	TLO	Teacher Leader Organizer
ISLCC	Interstate School Leaders Consortium	TLN	Teacher Leader Network
ISS	In-School Suspension	TOSS	Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents
LD	Learning Disability/Disorder	TRTA	Tennessee Retired Teachers Association
LEA	Local Education Agency/Agent	TSBA	Tennessee School Board Association
LEP	Limited English Proficiency	TSSAA	Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment	TUEAC	Tennessee Urban Education Association Council
MIP	Moderate Intervention Program	TVAAS	Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System
M-Team	Multidisciplinary Team	UniServ	Unified Services program
		WLTP	Women's Leadership Training Program

Numbers to Know:

School District Names and Numbers:

District central office: _____

School: _____

Mentor: _____

In-class emergency: _____

Substitute request: _____

Classroom repairs: _____

Curriculum supervisor: _____

Professional development office: _____

Personnel office: _____

Payroll and benefits office: _____

Athletic office: _____

Discipline problem: _____

Security problem: _____

Injury or medical problem: _____

Vandalism: _____

My Association Team:

Local President: _____

TEA UniServ Coordinator: _____

TEA Leadership:



TEA President

Tanya T. Coats
Knox County Educator
tcoats@tnea.org



TEA Vice President

Joe Crabtree
Johnson City Educator
jcrabtree@tnea.org



TEA Exec. Director

Terrance Gibson
Former Metro Nashville Educator
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TEA Board of Directors

Scan for board list and contact information

Quick links:

Member Benefits



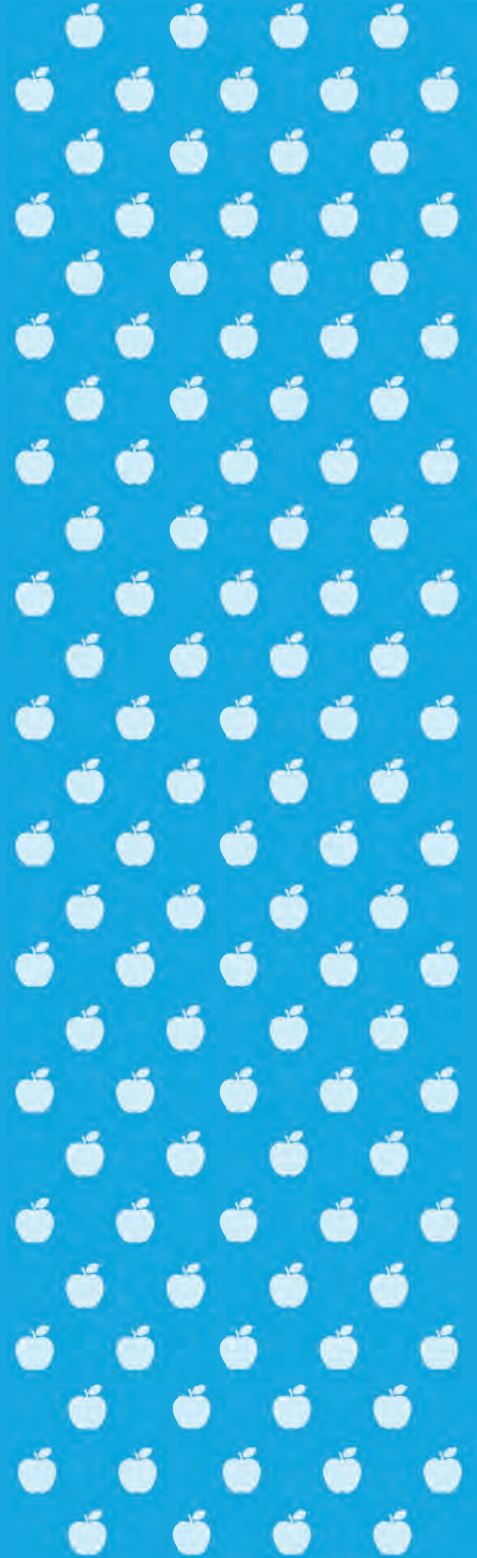
TEA Prof. Devel.



TEA UniServ



TEA Events



Tennessee EA



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