Guide for NEW K-12 TEACHERS
Welcome to your new teaching job and Our union!

We would like to begin by thanking you for choosing to serve your students and their community by being a part of their educational experience. Educators have a lasting impact on the lives of young people, and the enrichment that you bring to their lives on a daily basis should not be underestimated. You make a difference every single day, and we gratefully appreciate the tremendous task that you are undertaking.

Being a teacher is not simply one job, but a number of jobs put together. First and foremost, you are an educator, leading and guiding your students in the realm of your expertise. You are also an advocate, a problem solver, a communicator, a counselor, and sometimes even a detective. We recognize the amount of effort you put into each week to do your best for students and would like to sincerely thank you and support you throughout the year.

This New Teacher Guide was produced by your union in order to support your first year as a teacher. In addition to negotiating your contract to secure wages and benefits, your union advocates for and defends educators at the local level, and provides ongoing, high quality professional learning opportunities to support your growth as a professional. We are counting on you to engage with your union during your first year of teaching because our collective strength is dependent on each of us — we are truly stronger together.

As you travel through this adventurous first year, we want to you to know that we are proud of the work that you are doing, and we’re ready to step up and support you. The future is in our classrooms and school buildings – our students are counting on us to help them build something amazing.

In Unity-

C. John Larson, OEA President  Reed Scott-Schwalbach, OEA Vice President
Structures of Our Union

1. YOU
2. WORKSITE
3. LOCAL ASSOC.
4. OEA
5. NEA
6. LABOR MOVEMENT
MISSION:
The mission of the Oregon Education Association is to unite the public education profession and advocate for those professionals to ensure quality public education for students in Oregon.

VISION:
The Vision of the Oregon Education Association is to improve the future of all Oregonians through quality public education.

CORE VALUES:
Collective Action: We believe in engaging and organizing our members to work for the common good. Collective action in bargaining, lobbying, and coalition building strengthens each individual voice.

Democracy: We believe the foundation and strength of a democratic society is dependent on a strong public education.

Social Justice: We believe through quality public education the rights and worth of all individuals are respected and defended.

Professionalism: We believe the expertise and judgement of education professional are critical to student success. We maintain the highest professional standards, and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.

Integrity: We believe our core values are reflected and reinforced through our words and actions.

Respect for Diversity: We believe our society is strengthened by public education’s promotion of and respect for the vast diversity of our world.

Collaboration: We believe our goals can be achieved by working with all interested groups to ensure a quality public education.
TIPS TO START YOUR YEAR OFF RIGHT

Build relationships. Introduce yourself to the entire team in your building including the school secretaries, custodians and bus drivers.

Establish rules. If you want discipline to work during the year, establish class rules on the first day. Rules should be posted and behavior should be taught just like any other skill.

Check your district’s policy statements. Review your district’s policy on the use of the internet, including social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. If you intend to teach anything controversial, be sure you are within board policy. Keep personal views on religion and politics to yourself.

Keep records. This helps you be more organized – you never know when you may have to produce a document related to your job. During the year, you may have expenditures that could be deductions on your income taxes. Set aside a place to keep track of them.

Develop resources. Develop sources of information. Know where to get help when you need it. Determine what materials you want for students and when you will need them.

How can you deal with the lack of instructional materials? Keep your eyes open for free or inexpensive materials. Each issue of Today’s OEA (www.todaysoea.org) has a section on sources and resources. Check out OEA’s website at www.oregoned.org, for information and links to professional development opportunities and resources.

Be prepared for all students. You may have students with special needs. Plan how you will address these needs in the best interests of the student, yourself and the class. Ask for ideas and help from veteran teachers and specialists such as case managers.
Find a mentor. Every teacher needs someone to turn to for advice or debrief about challenges. If your district doesn’t have a formal mentoring program, seek out a teacher to be your listening “buddy.” Your colleagues have years of experience and are happy to help!

Communicate with parents. If you teach elementary, send a note home early. Introduce yourself and include your policy on homework. List the process and times for parents to get in touch with you. Consider writing a fun newsletter once a month and sending it home with students. (Always have someone else proofread it before you send it out).

Support your Union. Join your local education association for the support of others who understand your job. Read your contract and your school board policies so you will know your rights. Highlight any portion you have questions about and ask your building representative to clarify.

Set a positive tone. You have the opportunity to help your students realize that school can make a difference for each of them. Extend the positive tone by communicating with your students’ parents or guardians as well. Consider making contact with parents/guardians about positive behaviors and achievements more often than negative ones.

And finally… Keep these three qualities of good teaching in mind: be flexible, be patient, and have a sense of humor.
QUESTIONS TO ASK IN YOUR FIRST WEEKS

School Procedures
- Where and how do I secure supplies?
- What equipment/technology is available for me to use—copier, computer, whiteboard, smartboard, document camera?
- What are the attendance procedures for students, and what are my responsibilities in attendance record keeping?
- What are the grading guidelines for the school system? What documentation must I provide?
- What should I do if I must leave my room during class?
- What should I do in case of a medical emergency in my classroom?
- To whom do I report serious problems with a student’s health or behavior?
- How do I report a disciplinary problem?
- How do I arrange for a substitute?
- When am I responsible for locking my room?
- What are the drill protocols, in the event of a fire, earthquake, etc.?
- How do I make arrangements for a field trip?
- What do I do with any money I collect?
- What are the procedures for taking a class to an assembly?
- What student records must I maintain in cumulative folders?
- Are there any unwritten rules for teachers in my school?
- What type of prep time is available to me?

Personal Questions
- How do I apply for vacation, personal, professional or sick leave?
- What is my salary and what deductions are taken out of each paycheck?
- What is my personnel file, and what is in it?
- Which colleagues can I turn to for constructive feedback and support?
- Where do I go if I am having trouble?
TIME SAVING TIPS

- Be prepared. Organize materials into folders for individuals and groups. The time spent setting it all up will save you time later. Keep your digital files organized as well.
- Use grading sheets or rubrics to grade assignments like essays and limit what you’re looking for in each assignment. You don’t have to grade every single assignment your students complete.
- Digitize as many of your materials as possible. It will save lots of hours over the long haul.
- Check your District policies about timelines for lesson plans. If you are able, complete lesson plans for the following week before you leave for the weekend. Don’t procrastinate, and never head into class unprepared!
- Set priorities. Stick to them. Ask yourself, “Is it urgent? Is it important? Is it both urgent and important?” Prioritize the tasks that are both urgent and important.
- Have a nightly “stop time” for any work-related tasks — anything not done by then can wait. Communicate your deadline to family and friends and stick to it.
- Make and return all phone calls at a set time, such as between 8 and 9 a.m. and between 3 and 4 p.m., unless it’s an emergency.
- If you want to work undisturbed, lock your classroom door or post a sign stating times when you are available. Communicate this with your colleagues as well.
- Learn to say “No.” You can’t do everything, and that doesn’t make you a bad person.
- Clean off your desk before going home, leaving only a to-do list.
- Write something on the board for students to answer or complete as they come into the classroom — this will cut down on transition time and get productive time going right away.
- Date everything you take notes on for future organizing.
- Outline the whole year’s curriculum; change as necessary and refine as you go. Work with your teaching colleagues or a mentor.
- Color-code your calendar with different colors for school and personal events. You’ll get a better idea of the work/life balance. Highlight some days just for you and don’t let anyone or anything interfere with them.
- Delegate, delegate, delegate! You don’t have to do everything yourself. Students can do much of this, depending on their age and ability level.
- Use parent or community volunteers.
- Create an organizational system. Everything should have a place.
Being a good teacher is hard! The amount of work that can pile up in a week is stressful! You could literally work 12 hour days, 6 days per week and still feel like you’re behind. The reality is, you only have 8 hours in a day and working long hours ultimately leads to burn-out. You need to be able identify the things on your to-do list that are both urgent and important and take action on those items. Get done what you can, set a time limit that you stick to, and save the rest for tomorrow.
Recognize what stresses you and what upsets you. If you can do something about a problem, do it. Identify triggers and establish ahead of time a way to calm yourself down.

Set realistic goals for yourself. Divide projects into reasonable chunks and start chipping away at them piece by piece.

Manage your time. Set personal and professional priorities and act on them so that you spend your time on the activities you really value. Plan ahead to anticipate when you will get in a time crunch and don’t be afraid to ask for help.

Do the urgent and important tasks early. If you do the absolute “musts” early in the day, you will avoid feeling frantic. Do important things when you have the most time.

Learn to say NO. You can’t do everything all the time! Be direct, honest and avoid defensiveness. Suggest acceptable alternatives to the asker.

Find someone to talk to. Find a colleague in whom you can confide and from whom you can get feedback, new ideas and inspiration. Find a sympathetic person outside the profession who can help you put your frustrations into perspective.

Be positive. Rather than worrying, focus on what you can do to make it better. Think about the things that went right today and express gratitude to those who help you.

Be healthy. You travel through life in your body. When you are well rested, eat nutritious food and get regular exercise, you will naturally reduce your stress level. Consider when you need to change eating, drinking, sleeping or exercise habits. Prioritize your health! Take advantage of your insurance and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) personal wellness benefits, if it’s available to you.

Create a comfort zone in your home. Establish boundaries between work and home life, and regularly engage in a hobby that brings you joy. Being a teacher is one facet of your identity, but it’s not the whole you. Find balance between your personal and professional persona.
The Four Conditions Necessary for Culturally Responsive Teaching

These recommendations come from “Strengthening Student Achievement,” Wlodkowski and Ginsberg. To read the full article, visit bit.ly/4conditions.

1. ESTABLISH INCLUSION
Norms:
- Emphasize the human purpose of what is being learned and its relationship to the students’ experience.
- Share the ownership of knowing with all students.
- Collaborate and cooperate. The class assumes a hopeful view of people and their capacity to change.
- Treat all students equitably. Invite them to point out behaviors or practices that discriminate.

Procedures: Collaborative learning approaches; cooperative learning; writing groups; peer teaching; multi-dimensional sharing; focus groups; and reframing.

Structures: Ground rules, learning communities; and cooperative base groups.

2. DEVELOP POSITIVE ATTITUDE
Norms:
- Relate teaching and learning activities to students’ experience or previous knowledge.
- Encourage students to make choices in content and assessment methods based on their experiences, values, needs, and strengths.

Procedures: Clear learning goals; problem solving goals; fair and clear criteria of evaluation; relevant learning models; learning contracts;
approaches based on multiple intelligences theory, pedagogical flexibility based on style, and experiential learning.

**Structure:** Culturally responsive teacher/student/parent conferences.

### 3. ENHANCE MEANING

**Norms:**
- Provide challenging learning experiences involving higher order thinking and critical inquiry. Address relevant, real-world issues in an action-oriented manner.
- Encourage discussion of relevant experiences. Incorporate student dialect into classroom dialogue.

**Procedures:** Critical questioning; guided reciprocal peer questioning; posing problems; decision making; investigation of definitions; historical investigations; experimental inquiry; invention; art; simulations; and case study methods.

**Structures:** Projects and the problem-posing model.

### 4. ENGENDER COMPETENCE

**Norms:**
- Connect the assessment process to the students’ world, frames of reference, and values.
- Include multiple ways to represent knowledge and skills and allow for attainment of outcomes at different points in time.
- Encourage self-assessment.

**Procedures:** Feedback; contextualized assessment; authentic assessment tasks; portfolios and process-folios; tests and testing formats critiqued for bias; and self-assessment.

**Structures:** Narrative evaluations; credit/no credit systems; and contracts for grades.
Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement

The following recommendations come from *Culturally Responsive Teaching: A Guide to Evidence-Based Practices for Teaching All Students Equitably*. To learn more and read the full document, visit bit.ly/crttase.

01 Welcome students by name as they enter the classroom.
02 Use eye contact with high and low achieving students.
03 Use proximity with high and low-achieving students equitably.
04 Use body language, gestures, and expressions to convey a message that all students’ questions and opinions are important.
05 Arrange the classroom to accommodate discussion.
06 Ensure bulletin boards, displays, instructional materials, and other visuals in the classroom reflect students’ racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.
07 Use a variety of visual aids and props to support student learning.
08 Learn, use, and display some words in students’ heritage language.
09 Model the use of graphic organizers.
10 Use class building and team building activities to promote peer support for academic achievement.
11 Use random response strategies.
12 Use cooperative learning structures.
13 Structure heterogeneous and cooperative groups for learning.
14 Use probing and clarifying techniques to assist students to answer.
15 Acknowledge all students’ comments, responses, questions, and contributions.
16 Seek multiple perspectives.
17 Use multiple approaches to consistently monitor students’ understanding of instruction, directions, procedures, processes, questions, and content.
18 Identify students’ current knowledge before instruction.
19 Use students’ real life experiences to connect school learning to students’ lives.
20. Use “wait time” to give students time to think before they respond to your question.

21. Ask students for feedback on the effectiveness of instruction.

22. Provide students with the criteria and standards for successful task completion.

23. Give students effective, specific oral and written feedback that prompts improved performance.

24. Provide multiple opportunities to use effective feedback to revise and resubmit work for evaluation against the standard.

25. Explain and model positive self-talk.

26. Ask higher order questions equitably of high and low-achieving students.

27. Provide individual help to high and low achieving students.

Tip #19

Use students’ real life experiences to connect school learning to students’ lives.
Establishing a Behavior Management System

Starting on the first day you should actively teach and reteach behavior expectations in the same way that you would teach any other skill. This is particularly important at the beginning of the year, after long weekends, and especially after vacations. For suggestions on how to structure these expectations and to learn more about Positive Behavior Interventions & Support, visit www.pbis.org or use your district approved curriculum for behavior support.

There are a number of ways a teacher can promote good discipline in the classroom:

- Clearly communicate and consistently enforce behavior expectations.
- Know school guidelines for discipline procedures.
- Be fair, positive and consistent. Be the kind of person young people can trust: firm, fair, friendly, courteous, enthusiastic and confident. Keep your sense of humor.
- Post and provide a list of standards and consequences to parents and students. Make sure they are consistent with district and school policy. When in doubt, ask your principal.
- Get to know your students. Learn their names quickly and use them in and out of class.
- Begin class on time and in a professional and consistent manner.
- Make learning fun, challenging and relevant to the students’ lives.
- Don’t threaten or use sarcasm. Never use threats to enforce discipline or humiliate a student. Be consistent.
- Let the students know you care. Show interest in what students say, whether or not it pertains directly to the lesson.
- Treat students with the same respect you expect from them. Be mobile, walking around the room as students work or respond to instruction.
- Keep your voice at a normal level.
- Keep behavior expectations clear, consistent, and simple.
- When something isn’t working, re-evaluate your rules and policies, tell the class you are making some changes and be consistent moving forward.
- Using “I” statements, asking what is working and not working, engaging in think aloud problem solving to model and help create a classroom community.
- Learn the meaning of slang terms used by students. urbandictionary.com can be helpful. It is not recommended that you visit this site on your work computer or employer network.
Lesson Planning

Few things create nervousness and uncertainty faster than being unprepared to deliver your lesson. The time that it takes to plan in advance will be worth it in the long run, and will allow you to deliver high quality lessons. Students thrive in environments with consistency, predictability, and routine. Do yourself and your students a favor by always coming to class prepared. Here are a few tips:

1. **Plan the big pieces of your unit all at once.** You don’t need to have every single detail of your unit organized, but you should have a sense of where you’re going, what you’ll need, and where you will end. This work is done best with a colleague or mentor teacher. Ask to borrow their supplies, copies, or resources.

2. **Reverse Engineer.** Start with the end, and work back from there. What key skills or understanding will your students have after this unit? What formative assessments or checks are put in place along the way? What interventions will you provide to students who need more support? What will your summative assessment look like, and how will you differentiate it to meet the needs of all students?

3. **Plan a week at a time.** By Friday afternoon of each week, you should have a good sense about what you are going to do next week. This includes making a list of learning targets and outcomes, identifying resources and activities, and outlining what you will do each day.

4. **Review your plans before you leave each day.** Make sure that you have copies of all materials ready the day before the lesson. Know where you can find any media links or resources quickly so you will not have to look for them. Leave knowing you are ready to teach.

5. **Reflect for improvement.** At the end of your unit, take notes on the things that worked, the things were unsuccessful, and reflect on what you will do differently next year. Save examples of high quality student work and keep a folder for this unit next year.
Quality Assessment Practices
from the OEA Center for Great Public Schools

Summative and formative assessments are a regular part of instruction. OEA has been instrumental in helping improve these practices across the state, and continuously provides support for members who would like to improve their craft.

The Oregon Education Association established the Quality Assessment Practices Cadre (QAP) in January 2016 in response to recommendations published in *A New Path for Oregon: System of Assessment for Meaningful Student Learning*. This policy paper – developed collaboratively by the Office of the Governor, OEA, the Oregon Department of Education, and the former Oregon Education Investment Board – outlines recommendations to move the state’s assessment system away from a sole focus on the results from a single standardized test. Establishing the QAP Cadre fulfills the recommendation to develop, fund, and implement professional learning for educators and other assessment users.

Guiding Principles of Quality Assessment

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<tr>
<th>Principle 1: Clear Purpose</th>
<th>Assessment processes and results serve a clear and appropriate purpose.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Principle 2: Clear Targets</td>
<td>Assessments reflect clear student learning targets.</td>
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<td>Principle 3: Sound Design</td>
<td>Learning targets are translated into assessments that yield accurate results.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principle 4: Effective Communication</td>
<td>Assessment results function to increase student outcomes. Results are managed well, combined appropriately, and communicated effectively.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principle 5: Student Involvement</td>
<td>Students are active participants in the assessment process.</td>
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For more information about resources or how to get involved, contact the OEA Quality Assessment Practices team at or-qap@oregoned.org
**QAP Professional Learning Opportunities**

**Online Courses and Face-to-Face Professional Development**
Throughout the year, OEA hosts a variety professional development opportunities, online courses and virtual learning communities for members. In-person workshops vary in length. Online courses run 6 to 12 weeks and some are eligible for graduate credit. To see current offerings, visit [www.oregoned.org/PD](http://www.oregoned.org/PD).

**Assessment Literacy Micro-Credentials**
Micro-credentials are personalized, on-demand professional learning provided at no additional cost with your union membership. The NEA micro-credential catalog includes six micro-credentials on assessment literacy written by OEA members and many others from across the county. Visit [www.oregoned.org/microcredentials](http://www.oregoned.org/microcredentials) to learn more.

**QAP PLC Modules**
Access a series of learning experiences designed for professional learning communities (PLC) and teams of educators learning together. These modules are free to members and housed on the OEA website at [www.oregoned.org/PD](http://www.oregoned.org/PD). All the PLC module materials are published under a Creative Commons license, meaning you have the right to copy, distribute, and make use of the materials for non-commercial purposes.

**ODE Resources**
The Oregon Department of Education has numerous resources available to all educators through its Student Centered Assessment program, including resources on formative assessment, performance assessments, and the statewide summative assessment that compliment OEA materials. [www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/assessment](http://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/assessment).

**Assessment Literacy Texts**
OEA recommends the following texts:

- *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing it Right, Using it Well* (Chappuis, Stiggins, et al)
- *Seven Strategies for Assessment for Learning* (Chappuis)
- *Learning Targets: Helping Students Aim for Understanding in Today’s Lesson* (Moss, Brookhart)
- *A New Path for Oregon: System of Assessment to Empower Meaningful Student Learning* ([www.oregoned.org/newpath](http://www.oregoned.org/newpath))
Building a Team with ESPs

Among the new people you will meet at school are some powerful advocates for the education profession

Educational Support Professionals (ESPs), sometimes called para-professionals, are usually the first people students see when they enter the school. As an ESP, they are on the front lines in every school across the state, working hand in hand with teachers and administrators. Many ESPs in Oregon are members of the Oregon Education Association. ESPs are an integral part of the school system and community. Take time to get to know the support staff your students come in contact with during the school day.

In addition to helping out in the classroom, ESPs may be grounds or building custodians, secretaries, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, library assistants and payroll clerks, health workers, machine operators and more—from kindergarten through higher education.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

Who does what in the front office? Find out who tracks attendance, who calls parents, who routes phone messages, and who controls the copier. If you are expecting a visitor, find out who needs this information.

Who works with you in the classroom? In many schools, classroom teachers have ESP colleagues or volunteers who share the day-to-day responsibilities. The expectations and duties of these folks vary, so you’ll want to know what help is available and exactly which of your responsibilities can be shared. If you don’t have an ESP assigned to you, find out what the process is for using parent or community volunteers.

Who fixes things? A broken pencil sharpener can be as disruptive to a lesson as a fire drill. You need to know how to get help fast. Do you call different people for climate control and broken chairs? How do you place orders for repairs and supplies?

When are the floors washed, waxed or vacuumed? Knowing when your room is cleaned will help determine if projects can be left out or need to be put away. Can students leave projects on the floor? Are chairs to be stacked on top of desks certain days? Who do you call when there’s a spill or accident in your class? Knowing the process for reporting and having the necessary paperwork or phone numbers where you can easily find them will help when you are dealing with accidents.

Who drives the buses? Your interaction with bus drivers will vary with your teaching assignment. Primary teachers will want to meet the drivers and find
A great school includes all of these people (and more) who work as a team to keep the schools running efficiently and to create a positive learning environment. While your classroom is certainly the focal point of your students’ education, it’s the whole school staff family that makes a good education possible. ESPs are an integral part of the school system and community.
out what the bus rules are so they can be discussed and reinforced in the classroom. If you take a field trip, you'll want to include the bus driver in your preparations. Sometimes the bus drivers or in-district mail do courier work between the buildings in your District. Find out how you can take advantage of this service to send materials between buildings.

**Establishing a good working relationship with your school’s ESPs is a must. Here are some suggestions.**

**YOU ARE A TEAM.** You, as the teacher, are responsible for planning and delivering the instruction. You are responsible for what each student learns. The education assistant works under your direction to support your activities. Consider education support professionals part of the education team and take time to plan with them.

**GET TO KNOW YOUR ASSISTANT.** Determine their strengths and how they can complement yours.

**ESTABLISH CLEAR GOALS.** Let your assistant know exactly what you want to achieve with the class. Each school district should have current job descriptions for education assistants. If none are available in your district, encourage your principal to ensure they’re developed.

**DELEGATE SOME OF YOUR DUTIES.** Decide which tasks you must do, and which you can transfer to the other adult. Be flexible. Allow your assistant to decide the best way to handle those transferred tasks.

**COMMUNICATE AND COMPLIMENT.** Keep your assistant up-to-date on your classroom plans. And let that person know when they are doing well! A little praise goes a long way toward job satisfaction.

**DISCUSS PROBLEMS.** If you feel your assistant is performing their job incorrectly, speak to them about it directly and consider beginning and ending with a compliment about their work. If you’d prefer that something be done differently, clearly explain it. If the problem is serious and persists, refer to your contract or contact your building representative about mediation options. If student health or safety is at risk, discuss it with your building principal.

**TREAT YOUR ASSISTANT WITH RESPECT.** Remember that ESPs are important to the team. They help create a positive public school image, enhance classroom learning, and should be included and valued as part of the school community.
Preparing for a Substitute or Guest Teacher

You will often know in advance if you are going to be out of the classroom. When the unexpected happens, it’s best to be prepared for a guest teacher. Be sure to ask your department chair, team leader or principal what your responsibilities are in preparing for a substitute.

Here are some suggestions to always keep ready should you need them:

- Lesson plans or where to find the plan book (include alternate plans in case the lesson depends on resources only you have)
- Location of all manuals and materials to be used
- Your schedule of classes including regular classes, special classes (day and time), and an alternate plan in case special classes are canceled
- Class roster, including your seating chart for regular activities and special work groups
- Classroom rules and discipline procedures
- Opening activities: absentee report, procedures for reporting lunch count, etc.
- Procedures for regular and early dismissal
- Name and location of a teacher to call upon for assistance
- Names and schedules of assistants and/or volunteers
- Names of students who can be depended upon
- Names and schedules of students who leave the classroom for special reasons such as medication, remedial or gifted program, speech, etc.
- Floor plan of the building including emergency drill routes and procedures
- Procedures for use of technology
- Procedures for sick or injured students: location of nurse’s office, policy on dispensing medication, notes on allergies or special needs, etc.
Parents as Allies

When parents or guardians become involved in schools, students do better, teacher morale improves, parents rate the school higher and the entire educational process benefits. Here’s what you can do to encourage parents to participate in their student’s education.

- Take the initiative to reach out to parents and guardians as early as possible so you can start on a positive note.
- Focus on positive student behaviors and achievements. Keep parents informed of these. This will create a relationship before a student engages in negative behavior and you have to contact home.
- Encourage parents or guardians to volunteer and be specific about how they can help.
- Send them a survey asking how they’d like to be involved, their concerns about their child’s education and the skills they could contribute to the classroom.
- Let parents know they can contact you if there are problems or questions.
- Consider creating a regular form of contact for all parents: a staff website or blog, a newsletter, or email to parents/guardians of your students.
- If you choose to text parents, use an app like Remind or get a free Google number so you’re not giving out your personal contact information. This will help establish a clear boundary.
- Suggest home activities that support learning. Encourage parents to provide their children with a quiet study area, a good breakfast, time to read together and supervision over television viewing and screen time.
Tips for Successful Parent/Guardian Conferences

Communicating with parents or guardians is one of the most important things teachers do. When we work with the family, we improve learning. Throughout the year, record information regarding your communication with the student’s parents. Regularly review the files to determine when follow up communication is needed.

Here are some tips to help make your parent conferences productive and successful.

MAKE CONTACT EARLY. You’ll get your relationship off to a good start if you contact them early in the year, perhaps with a phone call, or newsletter sent home. Give an outline of what their children will be studying and let them know you’ll be happy to meet them during the year. Be sure to say how they may contact you for conferences.

INVITE THE RESPONSIBLE ADULTS. Family structures vary, but it’s important for the responsible adults to attend conferences. Misunderstandings are less common when parents/guardians hear what you say, and you’ll be able to gauge the kind of support the child receives at home.

ALLOW ENOUGH TIME. Schedule plenty of time for the meeting. Usually, 20 to 30 minutes is adequate. If you’re scheduling back-to-back conferences allow enough time between them so you can make notes on the just-concluded conference and prepare for the upcoming one.

BE READY FOR QUESTIONS. Be prepared to answer questions such as:

- Does my child have any specific skills or abilities?
- Is my child working up to their potential?
- How is my child doing in specific subjects?
- What are noted positives about this student and their performance?
- What are noted challenges about this student and their performance?
- What are some possible goals or goal categories to focus on this term?
- Does my child follow classroom and school-wide behavior expectations?

GET YOUR PAPERS ORGANIZED IN ADVANCE. Assemble your grade book, tests, samples of student work, attendance records and other data ahead of time. Create a folder for each student. That way you won’t fumble through stacks during the meeting.
BE WELCOMING. You’ll alleviate anxiety and frustration. Nothing is more confusing to a visitor than wandering around look-alike hallways trying to find the right room.

GET THE NAME RIGHT. Don’t assume that Jennifer Peabody’s mother is Mrs. Peabody. Check records to make sure you’ve got the parent/guardian’s names right.

AVOID PHYSICAL BARRIERS. Arrange conference-style seating so you’ll all be equals.

INVOLVE THE STUDENT. If your school or district includes students in the conferences, be sure to involve them in the discussion.

OPEN ON A POSITIVE NOTE. Begin on a warm note to get everyone relaxed with a statement about the student’s abilities, work or interests.

STRUCTURE THE SESSION. As soon as the parents/guardians arrive, review the structure of the conference — the why, what, how and when. Be flexible so that the parents/guardians can get their questions answered, too.

ASK ABOUT THE STUDENT. Ask parents if there is anything you should know about the student, such as study habits, relationships with siblings or important events that may affect school work.

ATTEND TO TIME. Be mindful of the time that you are spending with each family. If a conversation is taking longer than expected and bleeding into your next conference, be respectful to the other parents waiting and suggest that you continue the conversation at another time.

MAKE SPECIFIC COMMENTS. Instead of saying “She doesn’t accept responsibility,” point out “Amanda had a week to finish her report, she only wrote two paragraphs, but the expectation was six paragraphs.”

FORGET JARGON. Education phrases like “performance-based assessment,” “developmentally appropriate” and “least restrictive environment” is double-talk to many parents. Speak on a level that they will understand.

TURN THE OTHER CHEEK. In routine conferences, it’s unusual to run into hostile parents/guardians. But it can happen. Try not to be rude, whatever the provocation. Hear out the parents/guardians in a pleasant manner, without getting defensive. Work out a signal ahead of time with a colleague if you are concerned about a potential interaction.

SUMMARIZE. Before the conference ends, summarize the discussion and what actions you and the parents have decided to take.
Helping Students with Disabilities Thrive

You show up on the first day of school and discover that your class of 25 includes three students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and each of the students’ needs are vastly different, stemming from physical, developmental, cognitive, and behavior disabilities. How do you make sure they are accepted and progressing satisfactorily?

Or perhaps an education support professional (ESP) joins your classroom. How do you determine how to work with students with special needs and the other adult?

The following suggestions adapted from the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration. The suggestions support your success working with students with disabilities:

**WELCOME THE STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES** as you welcome any student. When you refer to your students, make sure they’re all your kids, not “my kids” and “the special ed teacher’s kids.”

**BE SUPPORTIVE AND FOLLOW ACCOMMODATIONS.** Each IEP will have a specific list of accommodations you will need to implement in your classroom. Additionally, you may need to change some of your assignments so your student with disabilities can acquire the same skills or knowledge as their peers. Ask the special education teacher for help if you need assistance implementing the accommodations and modifications in the IEP, or differentiating instruction to meet student needs.

**MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH FAMILIES.** Ask for their support and include them in the learning process.

**BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT TEAM.** Together you can discuss problems and develop strategies for working with students with disabilities. As a member of a student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) team, you will have a say in the goals, which should reflect the most critical items for the student to achieve in the general education classroom.

**IF A STUDENT COMES INTO YOUR CLASS WITH AN ESTABLISHED IEP,** read the document as soon as possible, before meeting the student if possible. Sometimes there are required modifications or accommodations that are listed in the IEP that will be vital for students success. Meet with the special education team and parents if possible, to determine priorities.
BE PREPARED FOR QUESTIONS FROM OTHER STUDENTS. When students ask a question about a student with disabilities, answer it in the context of the classroom. For example, if students ask why a student with disabilities is doing an assignment differently from everyone else, you can answer that everyone learns in different ways. Remember that an IEP is private information, so you can’t discuss details about a student’s goals with the entire classroom.

ENCOURAGE INTERACTION AMONG ALL STUDENTS. Some students may be afraid to communicate with a classmate who has a disability, or simply don’t know how. Show them what to do. Allow all students time to communicate in their own ways. Resist speaking for another or interrupting.

ENABLE YOUR STUDENT WITH SPECIAL NEEDS TO PARTICIPATE. They shouldn’t always be on the receiving end of communication or engagement opportunities. Look for ways that they can share interests and ideas. Participating in an activity, classroom duty or discussion boosts self-esteem and confidence.

SEEK HELP FROM OTHER TEACHERS. Talk to someone with more experience. Find out how others handle specific situations. Look for ways you can support each other. If problems arise, discuss them with the special education teacher, building principal or student support team. Create a collaborative planning team to address classroom issues on a regular basis and also celebrate your own.
Maintaining Your Teaching License

RENEWAL OF THE PRELIMINARY TEACHING LICENSE:
In order to renew the Pre TL, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements must be completed. At least 75 PDUs (professional development units) must be verified at the time of renewal (up to an excess of 25 PDUs obtained in one licensure cycle can be carried over to the next). If the teacher is contractually employed with a school district or charter school, that verification takes place by the employer on the PEER forms. If the teacher is not contractually employed, they must verify their CPD through orepdc.k12.or.us.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) REQUIREMENTS:
One PDU equals one clock hour of professional development. PDUs can also be collected through academic (undergraduate or graduate) so that each one (1) quarter hour of credit equals twenty (20) PDUs and everyone (1) semester hour equals thirty (30) PDUs.

Three Year Licenses require 75 PDU accumulative total during the life of the three year license. This can be generated through PDUs, academic credit, or a combination of the two.

Five Year Licenses require 125 PDU accumulative total during the life of the five year license. This can be generated through PDUs, academic credit, or a combination of the two.

The following are some useful overall tips for licensure maintenance in Oregon.

- Know your license, especially areas of endorsement and renewal date.
- Keep in one safe place the following: your license, email and attachments from TSPC, transcripts, score reports from ORELA/NEW or PRAXIS test,
Continuing Professional Development (CPD log), copy of PEER forms (the form your district sends to TSPC to verify your teaching experience).

- When renewing or filing a licensure application: renew at least 60 days before expiration date, complete all requirements well in advance, apply online and pay fees before the renewal date, and ensure the district has sent PEER forms. All official academic transcripts must be sent directly from the university or college.

**THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF LICENSES IN OREGON:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier One</th>
<th>Tier Two</th>
<th>Tier Three (Optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRELIMINARY TEACHING LICENSE (PreTL)</td>
<td>PROFESSIONAL TEACHING LICENSE (ProTL)</td>
<td>TEACHER LEADER LICENSE (TLL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Year License</td>
<td>Five Year License</td>
<td>Five Year License</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlimited renewal with CPD until you meet both of the following requirements: — the four year experience requirement — ONE of the Advanced Professional Education options</td>
<td>Renew continuously with CPD</td>
<td>Must complete CPD &amp; provide evidence of ongoing teacher leader activities...or... go back to ProTL.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Ask your local association president to schedule an OEA Licensure Workshop near you, so that you can obtain a detailed Licensure Kit and have all your questions answered.
Educator Evaluation Timeline Recommendations

End of School Year/Beginning of School Year
Ask your supervisor/evaluator what training you will receive on the components and processes of the evaluation system. Connect with your mentor and educators in your building to ask questions as you begin to learn more.

Educators self-reflect on practice and conduct a self-assessment using rubric. **TIP:** Be thorough, especially on your first self-assessment. This way you have a clearer baseline off which to track your growth!

Educators write goal(s) for own professional growth based on self-assessment. **TIP:** Confirm how many goals to write and ask when your goals are due. Also check to see if you are able to independently write goals or if they are collaboratively written with your evaluator.

Beginning of School Year
Identify and analyze baseline data for new students to write Student Learning and Growth Goals (SLGGs). **TIP:** Make sure you meet your district’s deadline! And don’t forget, you get to determine what the goals are on, which assessments are used, and whether or not you want to write a goal with your team (evaluators cannot determine these things).

Educators meet formally or informally with their evaluators to collaboratively finalize SLGGs using the **Quality Checklist** (see following page) and discuss observation/artifact/feedback cycle for upcoming year.

Throughout School Year
Observation/artifact/feedback cycle occurs as locally designed. **TIP:** If your evaluator is not following the district evaluation plan, or not meeting deadlines, etc., documenting this and communicating with your local union building representative (“building rep”) is of the utmost importance.

Mid-SLGG Cycle
Educators meet formally or informally to check on SLGG progress about half-way through the timeframe for goals. This might be half-way through the school year for SLGGs that are year-long, but it also may be midsemester, mid-trimester, or mid-term in another identified period of time depending on the educator’s job assignment.
Mid-year or End of Year
Formative cycle: It’s a good idea to meet and discuss overall progress in Professional Practice and Responsibilities standards part way through an educator’s evaluation cycle. **TIP:** If you are struggling in an area, you should be notified (at least) by this time of the areas that need improvement. Seek out help from your Building Rep, mentor if assigned, and fellow teachers. It might be hard to ask for help, but that is the first step to improving! Your union may be able to help you get additional support.

End of SLGG
Educators meet formally or informally to assess progress on SLGG. Could be end of school year, end of semester, end of trimester or end of term as defined by teaching assignment. SLGG may be scored on SLGG rubric (this is no longer required by the state).

End of School Year
For educators on a yearly evaluation cycle or in their “summative” evaluation year (note: your local district might call it something else), a summative evaluation will need to be completed. This will mean:

- Final feedback on an educator’s performance toward all standards held in the rubric,
- Final conversation about SLGGs
- Possible summative rating (1-4) based on district’s locally designed system

**TIP:** If you believe that your evaluation does not reflect your performance or have been told you are being placed on any type of plan to help your performance improve, immediately contact your building rep. and mentor if assigned.
SLG Goal Quality Review Checklist

To ensure consistency in evaluations across the state, all districts must use the SLG Quality Review Checklist to ensure goals are complete for scoring.

Before SLG goals are used in educator evaluations, this checklist should be used in order for the collaborative writing team of the educator and evaluator to approve them. For an SLG goal to be approved, all criteria must be met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline Data</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is baseline data used to make data-driven decisions for the SLG goal, including student information from past assessments and/or pre-assessment results?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Growth Goal (Targets)</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the SLG goal written as a “growth” goals v. “achievement” goal? (i.e. growth goals measure student learning between two or more points in time and achievement goals measure student learning at only one point in time.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the SLG goal describe a “target” or expected growth for all students, tiered or differentiated as needed based on baseline data?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rigor of Goals</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the goal address specific knowledge and skills aligned to the course curriculum and based on content standards?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the SLG goal measurable and challenging, yet attainable?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Using School Technology Wisely

Computers serve as powerful tools to transform and enhance classroom instruction. Whether you’re finding lesson plan resources on Pinterest, following your union on Facebook, or Skypeing with parents after school, technology gives you an invaluable means to further your professional development.

Technology, however, creates a set of hazards for educators. Keep these tips in mind when you access the Internet or use email:

- Check to see if your district has an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for Internet and email use. Your district might have separate policies for student use and employee use of technology. The AUP should define where, when and how long school employees may use school computers and network services.

- Do not access, receive or transmit anything that can be interpreted as obscene or pornographic. Do not use your school’s computers for anything not permitted in the AUP.

- Grades, IEPs and all other private data must be secured, even on a computer. Just as you wouldn’t leave your grade books sitting on your desk, don’t leave your computer data unprotected.

- Do not expect your email to be private. As a public employee anything you send or receive on district email is public record and can be subpoenaed and printed or shared elsewhere — even in the newspaper with or without the context in which it was written.

- Do not send anything you wouldn’t want read by your employer. The school district, your employer, owns and controls the email system. Even deleted emails can be retrieved, and used in lawsuits. Do not send any confidential or private emails at work using work computers.

- You might be held responsible for inappropriate student use of the Internet or e-mail. Check to see if your district has a “reasonable supervision” standard, because it is impossible to supervise student Internet use at all times. If your district makes the teacher responsible for all student use of the Internet, contact your OEA UniServ Consultant.

- Do not use school computers for commercial purposes, such as promoting a summer business you operate.
Social Media Guidance

Social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter provide great opportunities to connect with your colleagues on issues of importance to your school, local association and district. However, be cautious about personal content you share on these sites. Material can easily be intercepted by a supervisor, a parent, or a student and used against you — even if the material is not work-related.

**GENERALLY, THESE “THREE P’S” OF THE INTERNET ARE TRUE:**

**Permanent.** The Internet is permanent. Internet service providers and social networks may be able to retrieve information long after it has been deleted.

**Perfect.** The Internet has a perfect memory. Items posted can be retrieved and you can read or see exactly what was posted.

**Public.** The Internet is public. This is a good thing to keep in mind regardless of your privacy settings.
When You Use Social Media:

**DO** use your common sense.

**DO** consider computer use including Internet, email and social media access at school to be a privilege, not a right. Use school-issued/owned/controlled devices for school-related work; you should have no expectation of privacy in those devices.

**DO** know your school district’s social media and technology use policies before using social media on a district device or as part of your assignment.

**DO** maintain a clear division between your personal activities on social media and your professional presence as an educator. If you create an electronic forum for student participation, start one that relates only to your classroom or create a user profile that contains only school-related information.

**DO** establish ground rules for participation. Just as you set expectations for classroom behavior with your students at the beginning of the year, it is important to set those expectations for electronic formats as well.

**DO** keep an eye on your web spaces. If you do create a website, page or group using a social network that permits students to provide input or comments, consider screening those comments rather than letting students have unfettered discretion to post. Check with administration regarding your rights and obligations for monitoring and editing student comments.

**DO** use privacy and security settings. The settings of social media platforms may change; review your settings regularly and adjust them according to the boundaries you have established.

**DO** monitor what others post about you. “Untag” photos of yourself that you would not want others to see, in or out of a given context.

**DO** consider whether you would want your principal, students or parents to see what you are posting, before you post it. **If in doubt, don’t post it.**
DO NOT accept friend or follow requests or connections from current or potential students or their family members onto your personal social networking page.

DO NOT post vulgar or obscene language, materials, photos or links that may be considered inappropriate or unprofessional.

DO NOT access inappropriate sites on your school-issued/owned/controlled devices at any time, during or after school. You should have no expectation of privacy in those devices.

DO NOT accept friend requests from anyone whom you do not know personally as a friend.

DO NOT post any negative information about your students, co-workers or school administrators. Venting isn’t something that you may want to post anywhere as the internet is permanent.

DO NOT join groups that may be considered unprofessional or inappropriate, and leave any such group of which you are already a member.

Keep in mind that your First Amendment rights can be limited by virtue of your position as a school employee. The general rule is 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. Consequences can be severe, from a written reprimand, to a suspension or termination of employment, to suspension or revocation of one’s teaching license.

U.S. SUPREME COURT DECISION GARCETTI ET AL. V. CEBALLOS

“When public employees make statements pursuant to their official duties, they are not speaking as citizens for First Amendment purposes, and the Constitution does not insulate their communications from employer discipline.”
Keeping Student Information Private

Much of the information you will deal with is private educational data on students and is protected by both state and federal privacy laws. Sharing information when there is no valid educational reason for doing so may subject you to discipline by the district and civil and criminal liability.

When discussing students with colleagues, consider whether the discussion is really necessary in order to provide educational services to the student. Do not discuss individual students outside the school setting. Be sure that volunteers in your classroom know they must keep information on students private.

- Most student data is private and should not be released to anyone but the student, parent or guardians and staff with a legitimate educational interest.
- The statute covers all releases of data. If you can’t release something in written form, you can’t release it verbally.
- If in doubt, when asked for information, withhold the requested information until you check with your principal to determine whether it can be released.
- Be cautious using online resources and apps by checking with your supervisor or other designated district employee when incorporating online services into your classroom instruction or administration.
- Taking photos or videos of students, including for any social media account, even working on projects or in your classroom individually or in a group, likely requires that parents sign a permission form. Check your school district policies or ask your principal.
- If anyone questions you about a student, whether it be the media, law enforcement, or a parent of another student, simply say that the information is private student data and you cannot discuss it (unless your supervisor allows it and to do so would not violate FERPA).
Your Rights as a Union Member

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS: the legal right to union representation during an investigatory interview. It was formally recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1975 in a case called NLRB vs. Weingarten.

If an employee is called in for an interview or discussion or conversation with management that may result in discipline, then the employee has the right to demand union representation at the interview. Contact your building rep or another union representative immediately if you are called into a meeting that you believe could lead to discipline.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE REPRESENTED BY THE ASSOCIATION WHEN:

- An administrator calls a conference with you and you have reason to believe that you will be subject to reprimand or disciplinary action.

- You receive a “does not meet standards” or “unsatisfactory” overall evaluation rating.

- You have a grievance (contract violation). You are entitled to Association representation at every step of the grievance process, including the informal meeting, unless your contract provides otherwise. The earlier you get help the more effective it may be.

- A meeting has been arranged to resolve a complaint about you – if the complainant is someone other than your designated evaluator, and an administrator is to be present.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

An employee always has the right to request to halt any conference or meeting already in progress with any administrator if the conference becomes disciplinary in nature. You may request postponement for a reasonable amount of time to obtain representation. If this request is denied, document this in your notes, stay in the meeting as requested, and do not speak. If the administrator does not postpone the meeting, you are not required to answer questions without a representative present, and you cannot be disciplined for declining to answer. If you need to be represented, contact your Building Rep, an Association grievance representative or call your UniServ office.
Civic Engagement

Students’ learning conditions and our working conditions are impacted by policy decisions that are made at the local, state, and federal level. Together, our union leads the fight to improve public schools in Oregon. Your union membership helps support strong advocacy to lower class sizes, increase school funding, and reduce standardized testing.

As individuals, we have a limited impact on decisions that are made in our districts. Coming together as members of a strong union is the best way to have a seat at the table to fight for students and good working conditions.

Here are some ways that you can engage in your school and community, even in your first years of teaching!

- **Give to OEA-PAC** — Our Political Action Committee is funded by the voluntary contributions of OEA members, not by your dues dollars. Over 10,000 OEA members contribute between $25-$150 per year, allowing us to support the campaigns of pro-education candidates: [www.oregoned.org/pac](http://www.oregoned.org/pac).

- **Volunteer on Campaigns** — From local bonds and school board elections to statewide ballot initiatives and gubernatorial races, your active engagement increases our collective power.

- **Register to Vote** — Public education decisions are made by voters in many different ways. Make sure you are part of the decision-making process by registering to vote ([sos.oregon.gov/voting/Pages/registration.aspx](http://sos.oregon.gov/voting/Pages/registration.aspx)).

- **Cast your Ballot** — Make your voice heard! Local races, state elections, and national politics impact our classrooms. Your vote matters!

- **Share your Story** — Talk to lawmakers about your experience and share the story of your students. OEA will keep in touch about opportunities to raise your voice on behalf of students and the profession. Lawmakers need to hear from you!

- **Run for Office** — By increasing the number of union members in elected office, we can continue to promote and champion policies that reflect our union values. We can support your efforts: [oregonlaborcandidateschool.org](http://oregonlaborcandidateschool.org).
Teaching is a work of heart.