

▶ Getting Ready for That First Day on the Job

The good news is you've gotten your first teaching job. The bad news is you've gotten your first teaching job and all the preparation and information overload that goes with it. Use your mentor and your association to help you complete the following activities before school starts.

- **Visit your classroom.** Set up student desks, work stations and your own desk.
- **Develop a seating chart.** Consider traditional student seating in rows until you get to know your students. It will make your teaching life much easier.
- **Create lesson plans for the first week.** Plan for twice as much material as you think you can cover in a day. This will help when the lesson you thought would take an hour only takes twenty minutes.
- **Decorate your room.** Send a message that's positive and inviting. Inspirational thoughts and words of encouragement can motivate.
- **Develop routines and standards for the day.** Think about how you will handle discipline, classroom interruptions, recess. Talk to your mentor for ideas.
- **Develop routines for the beginning and end of class.** Decide how you will take attendance, distribute work and dismiss the class. Consult your mentor.
- **Decide how to handle and organize information on absences, tardiness and other student information.** Set up a system for your grade book and/or computer.
- **Establish instructional activities and routines.** Decide how much time you will spend on a particular lesson, on group work and on individual work.
- **Prepare for fire drills and lockdowns.** Know the procedures for every room you use.
- **Develop a routine or standard for how you will manage your own paperwork.** Think about how you'll handle deadlines, incomplete work, grading papers, extra credit, and assignment due dates.
- **Develop a communication system.** One of the most important partners in this job is parents. How will you communicate both the good and the bad news about their children to them? Decide if a newsletter, personal notes, e-mail, a Web site or all of these methods can be used.
- **Develop a schedule and expectations for homework.** Think about how students will get their missed assignments or make up missed work.