

# Decorating Your Classroom

*It is very exciting (and overwhelming) to decorate your classroom. Consider these tips as you plan for and personalize your room:*

- Think safety first – be sure that there is appropriate space around student desks and a clear path to the door(s) and any place that students (and you) need to move to.
- Focus on key aspects – you don't need to have every inch of your room decorated to start the year. Leave space for student work.
- Shop dollar stores, garage sales, and sales for decorations and supplies. Find less expensive options like making your own posters if your school has a poster maker and laminator.
- Be careful about items that are personal or breakable. Accidents happen.
- Consider a theme – books you plan to teach, units of study, social-emotional learning, etc.
- Use Pinterest sparingly – it is more important to be a great teacher than have a picture-perfect room.

## Bulletin Boards

*To be effective, bulletin boards should be simple, attractive, functional, appropriate, and sometimes changed. Bulletin boards don't need to be extravagant, simple goes a long way. Consider allowing your students to design and post the bulletin board. Create just a border and leave the center for student work. Bulletin boards are part of the overall décor of the room, don't overthink it. Don't recreate the wheel. Reuse your bulletin board materials to save time and money. Use resources you have such as die cuts or color printers at school. Shop at dollar stores. Shop sales after various holidays to get inexpensive décor.*

**Determine an appropriate filing system to save your materials:**

- **School month files** (months, periods of time like "Back-to-School")
- **Alphabetical order**
- **Holidays** (alphabetically or chronologically)
- **Subjects** (academic or other)

Regardless of the file method you use, include a computer file or notebook in your system. Jot down bulletin board ideas for future use, and don't let a brainstorm slip by. Store bulletin board letters in shoe boxes. Don't throw sets of letters away; keep them for a repeat of the same board or a slight variation. Use your students' work. Explore the possibility of commercial materials. Check with retiring teachers, as many have useful materials they would rather share than throw away.