



# The MEA Teacher's Toolkit

Ideas, advice, and resources  
to help you succeed in your  
profession

**From the Instruction and  
Professional Development  
Committee**

**Maine Education Association  
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# A Teacher's Toolkit

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# Professional Responsibilities

1. Curriculum and Assessment
2. Credentials
3. Exceptional Student Education
4. Record Keeping
5. Legal Rights and Responsibilities

# Professional Responsibilities

## 1. Curriculum and Assessment

As an educator:

- ✦ Teach the curriculum of your school system, which meets the English language arts and Mathematics requirements of the [Common Core](#) and will be assessed by [Smarter Balanced](#).
- ✦ Science teachers will follow the [Next Generation Science Standards](#).
- ✦ For all other disciplines, the [Maine Learning Results](#) apply.
- ✦ During 2013-14 only, students will be assessed by [NECAP](#) and [SATs](#).

# Professional Responsibilities

## 2. Professional Credentials

- ◆ Every teacher needs to be Highly Qualified under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requirements. [Click here to see the Highly Qualified requirements.](#) (Will open a separate window) See excerpt from Maine DOE below:

A “Highly Qualified” Maine teacher is one who:

- Holds a Bachelor’s degree, **and**
- Holds full state [certification](#) (Maine’s Provisional, Professional, or Master level), **and**
- Is competent to teach the subject(s) taught as demonstrated by:
  - Having a major in the content (24 semester hours), **or**
  - Having coursework equivalent to a major in the content (24 semester hours), **or**
  - Having an advanced degree in the content, **or**
  - Being National Board certified in the content, **or**
  - Having a passing score on a content test (PRAXIS II), **or**
  - Achievement of the Maine HOUSSE standard, if eligible for its use.

# Professional Responsibilities

## 3. Exceptional Children Education

- ✦ You must help every child learn, and this includes following the Individualized Education Plans (IEP) of students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELL) and students with other academic plans as defined below.
- ✦ A [504](#) plan creates a plan for students with medical diagnoses.
- ✦ A personal learning plan (PLP) has been defined by the Maine DOE:
  - ✦ “Personal learning plan” means a plan for an individual student to meet the content standards of the system of Learning Results, developed collaboratively by teacher, parent, student, and other professional staff as specified by the superintendent. While a plan is required for alternative education students, it is also permitted for any student pre-kindergarten through grade 12. (05-071 Chapter 127 Maine DOE)

# Professional Responsibilities

## 3. Exceptional Children Education

- For help with exceptional children refer to the [Council for Exceptional Children](#)
- For learning disabilities resources refer to the [Learning Disabilities Association](#) .
- For information about educational issues associated with children with Autism refer to [Autism Society](#)
- For assistance with English Language Learners refer to the [NEA](#), [Maine DOE](#) or [ACCESS](#)
- A wonderful resource for parents with children with disabilities is [Starting Points for ME](#)

# Professional Responsibilities

## 4. Record Keeping

Keep a Copy of:

- Employment agreement with the school district
- Collective Bargaining Agreement from your local association representative
- Job description from your administration if available (*this varies by school district*)
- Completed coursework, contact hours, CEUs, and workshop and training certificates for recertification purposes
- Evaluation, certification and mentoring documents





## Professional Responsibilities

### 5. *Legal rights and responsibilities*

- ✦ Work with a support team or mentor during your first years of teaching
- ✦ Contact your association building representative to obtain the teachers' contract outlining your rights, benefits and salary.
- ✦ Understand Maine laws regarding teacher employment contracts
- ✦ Be familiar with FERPA, which requires you to protect the privacy of students.
- ✦ Know your District policy regarding staff and student use of technology (internet, social media).



## Know your Students & Families

1. *Get to know your students*
2. *Connect with families*

# Know your Students & Families

## 1. Get to know your students

- Make personal contact with students and create an inclusive learning environment for all.
  - Introduction surveys
    - [Elementary](#)
    - [Middle School](#)
    - [High School](#)
  - Understand that Maine classrooms may be diverse in many ways
    - [resources](#) for [culturally diverse](#) students
    - [socioeconomic](#), [gender diversity](#)
    - Resources for closing the achievement gap: [growth mindset](#), [grit](#), [C.A.R.E.](#)
- Review students' prior educational experiences and records in their cumulative folders.

# Know your Students & Families

## 1. *Get to know your students*

- Use activities where students introduce themselves to their classmates.
- Click here for:
  - [first day activities;](#)
  - [how to get to know your students](#)
  - [building classroom community](#)
- [Build relationships with your students.](#)

# Know your Students & Families

## 2. *Connect with Families*

- Develop parent partners. Introduce yourself, the curriculum, and your expectations to parents at the beginning of the school year with a letter.
- Contact parents if you have concerns about their children, and ask them for suggestions.
- Attend school events if feasible.

# Know your Students & Families

## 2. *Connect with Families*

- ◆ Invite parents and other family members to volunteer, speak, or share skills and experiences with your class.
- ◆ Use [parent conferences](#) to strengthen the partnership with families, increase parent attendance, include students in the conference process, and put everyone at ease.
- ◆ Give families [MEA](#) and [NEA parent resources](#) to learn how they can help.

# Classroom Environment

- 1. Be ready for the opening of school*
- 2. Establish rules, routines and procedures*
- 3. Dealing with challenging student behavior*



# Classroom Environment

## 1. *Be ready for the opening of school*

- ◆ Learn key locations in your school
- ◆ Set up your classroom with the student's perspective in mind
- ◆ Learn school policies and procedures (staff handbook)
- ◆ Create “Start of School” checklist
- ◆ Check out NEA Back to School Guide for many useful tips



# Classroom Environment

## 2. Establish Rules, Routines, Procedures

- ◆ Establish rules with your students
- ◆ Bring order to your classroom
- ◆ Successful teachers start each year off by teaching students routines covering classroom needs like:
  - ◆ *Taking attendance*
  - ◆ *Sharpening pencils, distributing and putting away learning materials*
  - ◆ *Dealing with transitions, such as beginning and ending the school day or class period*
  - ◆ *Giving out and handing in assignments*



# Classroom Environment

## 3. Deal with challenging student behavior

### *Prevention*

- ✦ The number one problem in the classroom is not discipline: it is the lack of procedures and routines.
- ✦ Procedures and routines provide:
  - ✦ expectations to students
  - ✦ increased classroom efficiency.
  - ✦ safety and security necessary for learning to occur.



# Classroom Environment

## 3. *Deal with challenging student behavior*

### *Prevention*

- ✦ Create an inclusive classroom where all students feel safe:
  - ✦ Promote gender equity
  - ✦ Celebrate diversity
  - ✦ Watch for sexual harassment and bullying
  - ✦ Be aware of child abuse
  - ✦ Support students with disabilities
  - ✦ See Maine's Civil Rights Team website



# Classroom Environment

## 3. Deal with challenging student behavior

### *Response*

- ✦ When dealing with challenging behavior (defiance, anger, ADHD, depression, mental illness, lack of motivation, violence):
  - ✦ Be aware of what's going on in the classroom.
  - ✦ Eliminate or minimize the behavior immediately; use proximity control and “the look” to help students stay on track.
  - ✦ Maintain students' dignity and self-esteem. Discuss off-track behavior quietly, calmly and privately.
  - ✦ Maintain the momentum of the lesson.
  - ✦ [Ask an expert](#) at NEA

# Classroom Environment

## *Response*

### *3. Dealing with challenging student behavior*

- ✦ *Disruptive students , classroom disruptors*
- ✦ *Defiant students , breaking up fights*
- ✦ *Bullying , Intervention Programs*
- ✦ *Collaborative Problem Solving*
- ✦ *Conflict Resolution*
- ✦ *Fred Jones Tools for Teaching*
- ✦ *Classroom management using Class Dojo*

# Instruction

1. *Design Lessons for Success*
2. *Hold high expectations*
3. *Polish your technique*

# Instruction

## 1. *Design lessons for success*

- Instructional strategies help you move students from where they are to where they need to be.
  - Marzano; *Nine Instructional Strategies*
  - *Math Resources and Instruction*
  - *Read, Write, Think*
  - *Science*
  - *Social Studies*
  - *Health and Physical Education*
  - *Visual & Performing Arts*
  - *Foreign Language and Culture*
  - *Technology*



## Instruction

### *1. Design lessons for success*

- Increase your repertoire of instructional strategies
- Ask colleagues for instructional strategies that have proven successful.





## Instruction

### 1. *Design lessons for success*

- ◆ Begin with clear, short term learning goals based on a theory such as [Bloom's Taxonomy](#), [Webb's Depth of Knowledge](#).
- ◆ Identify the learning you want to occur during a specific lesson: [learning objectives](#), [desired learning outcomes](#), [enduring understandings](#), [essential questions](#).
- ◆ Select [activities](#) that will [engage](#) students in the tasks necessary for learning to occur.
- ◆ Include formative and summative [assessment strategies](#) in the lesson plan.



# Instruction

## 1. *Design lessons for success*

- Provide prompt [feedback](#) on student work using [choice words](#). Ask students probing questions, clarifying questions, critical questions and higher level thinking questions.
- Keep a journal with daily reflections about what works and what needs to change.
- Develop a [record keeping system](#) that allows you to [record and monitor student progress](#):
  - [NEA Authentic Assessment Toolbox](#)
  - [Formative Assessment](#)
  - [Student Self Assessment](#)
  - [Anecdotal Records](#)



## Instruction

### *2. Hold high expectations*

Expectations for student learning come from:

- the teacher's own professional standards
- the school's curriculum and
- the state approved learning standards



## Instruction

### *2. Hold high expectations*

- ◆ Teachers communicate expectations when they introduce an activity to the class, as well as when they provide feedback on assignments to the group or to individuals.
- ◆ Expectations for the class and expectations for individuals may differ.
- ◆ Share expectations with parents and enlist them as partners in learning.

## Instruction

### 3. *Polish your technique*

- ✦ Plan transitions from one classroom activity to another. Use signals to get the class' attention, to cue students when work time ends, or for other routine procedures.
- ✦ Make sure students know what to do when work is finished. Have “sponge” activities (K-5 and 6-8) ready for unexpected blocks of time.
- ✦ Have substitute resources and plans ready for emergencies. (Check your school policies – you may have a required form.)



## Instruction

### *3. Polish your technique*

- Make sure students understand the grading system and rubrics, and procedures for completing and handing in assignments.
- Both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards help students participate in class work.
- Discuss staff roles and responsibilities regularly with educational technicians, specialists, or volunteers.

## Collaboration

Before the end of the first week of school, consider making an appointment to talk with key people:

- ◆ Principal--*about school policies and expectations for your position*
- ◆ Department chair or team leader--*about curriculum, assessments, planned activities for the year, and procedures and routines*
- ◆ Certification support system chair--*about your support team or mentor and your Teacher Action Plan*
- ◆ Association representative--*about Association activities and benefits*
- Custodians and secretaries/administrative assistants--they know the most!

## Collaboration

### *3. Develop your role as a professional educator*

- ✦ Maintain appropriate professional relationships with students, their parents, your colleagues, and community members.
- ✦ Get to know elected officials in the community.
- ✦ Become familiar with places, individuals, and events important in your students' lives
- ✦ Join community organizations

[Healthy Boundaries for Teachers: A guide to appropriate professional relationships with colleagues and students](#)





## Professional Development

### *1. Develop your professional practice*

- Participate actively in the development of your plan for certification, evaluation, and professional improvement.
- Bookmark MEA's web site to stay abreast of trends and events affecting Maine schools
- Consider setting a date for beginning or completing additional coursework or even a [graduate degree](#).

## Professional Development

If your school system requires its employees to set annual goals, take advantage of the opportunity. If not, set your own. Consider some or all of the following:

- ✦ Attend [workshops and conferences](#).
- ✦ Take courses.
- ✦ Join or create study groups and committees.
- ✦ Keep a [reflective journal](#) and review entries periodically.
- ✦ **Read professional books from the [NEA Professional Library](#).**

# Professional Development

## 2. *Stay connected to your professional community*

- Join the MEA and read the [Maine Educator](#).
- Seek out your support team or mentor and your nearby colleagues *regularly* for advice and resources.
- Subscribe to professional journals such as [Education Week](#) and read NEA's monthly magazine, [NEA Today](#).
- Join online forums for teachers with similar teaching assignments

# Financial Planning

- ◆ Practice cash management, have savings goals, and invest in your retirement.
- ◆ Prepare for major financial events: purchase of a home, graduate school, starting a family, retirement, etc.
- ◆ Understand credit and use it wisely.
- ◆ Understand your paycheck, your health insurance, and other benefits.

# How do I lay the groundwork for a long and successful career?

- ◆ *Join the Association and become an active member.*

*Best wishes for your career!*

