

Questions to Ask A Mentor

TIMES

Beginning of the Year

*"It isn't the mountains ahead that wear you out;
it's the grain of sand in your shoe."*

--- Author Unknown

The following questions are intended to focus your thinking on typical teacher concerns. Please visit with your mentor, department head, a fellow teacher or administrator to determine how these questions should be answered.

- _____ How do I get supplies for my room?
- _____ How do I address the principal? Ms., Mrs., Mr., Miss, Dr., first name?
- _____ What should I do if I am ill and cannot come to work?
- _____ Is there money to buy supplies that are not in the building?
- _____ How can I get things like desks or furniture moved in my room?
- _____ May I bring my own chair or rug to put in the room?
- _____ What should I do if my room is too cold or too hot?
- _____ Are there restrictions on how much I can duplicate?
- _____ What can I ask a paraprofessional to do for me?
- _____ Who will be evaluating me?
- _____ Do I need to purchase liability insurance?
- _____ How do I get a bus for a field trip?
- _____ What can I do if I get sick in the middle of the school day?
- _____ Do I have to join the Local Education Association?
- _____ Do I have to get approval before I buy something for my classroom?
- _____ If I spend my own money to purchase something for my classroom, is there some way for me to get the money reimbursed?
- _____ If I am experiencing some personal dilemmas, is there a confidential resource that I may talk to?
- _____ Am I expected to get a certain amount done by the end of the school year?
- _____ Can I make additions or deletions to the curriculum?
- _____ Are there any restrictions on whom I invite as a guest speaker?



Questions to Ask Your Mentor

- _____ May I have animals in my classroom?
- _____ What should I do if I don't have enough books or workbooks?
- _____ Is there a standard for grading that I must follow?
- _____ Are there rules about make-up work for students who miss school?
- _____ What can I ask the media specialist to help me with when preparing a lesson?
- _____ What type, if any, lesson plans do I need to have?
- _____ If I have a substitute teacher, what do I need to do?
- _____ What is my relationship to the department head or team leader?
- _____ How do I handle curriculum questions?
- _____ How do I know when I am responsible for various building duties?
- _____ Do I need to check at the principal's office when I arrive and/or leave the building?
- _____ Where do I make personal telephone calls?
- _____ May I have a key to the building?
- _____ When can I work in the building outside of normal school hours?
- _____ May I lock my classroom door at night?
- _____ May I take school equipment home to use?
- _____ What time may I leave the building after the students leave?
- _____ Are there restrictions on who uses which copy machines in the building?
- _____ Where should I get the paper when I need to copy materials?
- _____ What do I need to do if I want to eat a hot lunch from the school cafeteria?
- _____ How do I get help when a student throws up in my classroom?
- _____ If I have something heavy to carry, may I ask for help from the custodian?
- _____ Are the spaces in the parking lot assigned?
- _____ May I go to the teachers' lounge during my planning time, or do I need to spend planning time in my classroom (office area)?
- _____ What should I do if a window, window shade, door, or something else is not working properly?
- _____ Is there a building hospitality fund?

Questions to Ask Your Mentor

- _____ What do I do if I need to be away from school to attend a meeting or conference?
- _____ What should I do if I am having personal problems with a team or department member?
- _____ What should I do with a student that I cannot discipline?
- _____ Am I required to attend parent organization meetings?
- _____ What are my responsibilities if I have a special education student in my classroom?
- _____ What are my responsibilities if I have a gifted student in my classroom?
- _____ May I contact people in the district offices or should I go through the principal's office with my requests?
- _____ Are there funds for workshops outside the district and how do I apply for these funds?
- _____ How do I get involved with district curriculum projects and other projects that are done on a district-wide basis?
- _____ If I want to talk to my principal, should I drop in the office, write a note, or ask for an appointment?
- _____ If I feel that a student is wearing inappropriate clothing, what can I do?
- _____ If a student in my class is experiencing emotional, academic difficulties, whom in the building do I contact?
- _____ Who in the building can assist me in dealing with a "difficult" parent?
- _____ If I am aware of a tragedy/personal dilemma one of my students is experiencing, to whom do I report my suspicions?
- _____ What type of help can I ask for from a curriculum consultant?
- _____ Are department or team meetings required if I have other district duties outside the building?

Setting Priorities

TIMES

Beginning of the Year

Perfection is attained by slow degrees; it requires the hand of time.

---Voltaire

If you have your own classroom:

- ☐ Make bulletin boards: monthly calendar, birthday calendar, assignment calendar, announcements, student work display, welcome back, subject interest displays
- ☐ Plan to have students assist with bulletin boards
- ☐ Organize your desk and filing system
- ☐ Prepare the first week's lesson plan
- ☐ Begin to establish a substitute folder

If you are a "traveling" teacher:

- ☐ If possible, locate a place in each room where you can store large supplies and materials.
- ☐ Organize a briefcase or small plastic crate for use as a traveling teaching kit.
- ☐ Student behavior during independent seat-work
- ☐ Using classroom supplies (pencils, texts, etc.)

Questions to ask before the students arrive:

- ☐ Have I decided on my class procedures and routines?
- ☐ Have I considered when and how I will begin instruction?
- ☐ What are the student jobs in our classroom?
- ☐ What are the rules of respect for our classroom?
- ☐ What are the school rules for lunch room, playground, etc?
- ☐ Where are special classes meeting? (library, learning center, music, etc.)
- ☐ Where are school facilities? (lunch room, nurse, custodial room, office)
- ☐ What are the procedures for sending students to other rooms?
- ☐ Do I have all your text books? teacher editions? supplemental materials?
- ☐ Am I familiar with the district report card and scheduled grading periods?