

The Just ASK Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

Using the Checklist

- “V/FF” represents the phrase “**virtual or face-to-face**” throughout the checklist.
- Read through the extensive list of possible mentor actions and identify actions that are appropriate for you or your mentoring team’s work.
- The blank columns provide a handy way to track actions taken.

We Can Do This!

Good mentoring is good mentoring no matter the delivery format!

Personal	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact the new teacher as soon as possible after she is hired. ● Make a welcome bag or basket. p } ● “Escort” new teacher to V/FF orientation meetings, and “sit with” him at those meetings. Explain jargon and references for which he may not have background knowledge. ● As appropriate, provide information and assistance with housing, local services, and recreational facilities. ● Obtain photographs of new teachers and create an Our New Colleagues poster and post it online and in the front office. ● Create a Who’s Who at your school by putting together a short biography of each staff member, new and veteran. List educational background including degrees, certifications, professional affiliations and appropriate personal information such as hobbies, pets, and history. Provide digital access to all staff members. 			

The Just ASK Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

Personal	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organize informal and voluntary V/FF social gatherings for new teachers to network with other new teachers. ● Stop by her V/FF classroom daily to say hello. ● Take a walk around the block at lunch or after school and talk about things other than school. ● Leave a handwritten note in his mailbox or on his desk. ● Share a brown bag lunch. ● Celebrate the completion of the first week of school. ● Invite her to stop by your V/FF classroom at any time. 			
Professional	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain the induction and mentoring program. Include what the new teacher can expect from you and the new teacher's responsibilities as well. ● Discuss professional dress. ● Go over payroll and benefits. If payroll and benefits are explained at the district level, check for understanding. If not covered in other settings, provide sufficient information for the new teacher to make informed decisions about direct deposit, 403(b)s, medical plans, etc. This may be the first time a novice teacher has dealt with these issues. 			

The Just ASK Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

Professional	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have new teacher complete a needs assessment to identify areas of challenge and concern. <i>st</i> ● Use data from the needs assessment to set collaborative goals for the mentoring relationship and professional goals for the year. Revisit those goals at least monthly. ● Explain the teacher performance evaluation system by going over the process and the criteria. ● Help the new teacher prepare for the first observation cycle by doing some form of peer observation together and discussing teaching and learning using the district's teacher performance criteria. <i>st</i> ● Keep the new teacher appraised of professional development opportunities. ● Remind the new teacher to refrain from discussing private issues about students, parents, or colleagues online, in the lounge, and other public places. ● Be a role model by always speaking professionally about administrative staff, support staff, and other teachers. ● Caution the new teacher about the use of social media sites. Remind her that the community can access much of what is posted on those sites. 			

The Just ASK Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Debrief memos and curriculum meetings. Some terms and examples may have no meaning for the new teacher. ● Provide access to, either in hard copy or online, the state standards, district curriculum, pacing guides, and other important instructional documents. ● Explain the UDL planning process. ● Provide exemplars of field-tested units based on the district's curriculum. ● Use the state standards, district curriculum, and pacing guide to assist the novice teacher in chunking the year. ● Assist the new teacher in creating detailed plans for the first week of school. ● Provide an overview of the standardized testing current plan. ● Discuss formative assessment and the role of growth-producing feedback. 			

The Just ASK Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use Just ASK's Distance Learning Collection resources, "Ten Tips for Enhancing Distance Learning" and "Creating and Using Instructional Videos" to support new teachers who are teaching from remote locations. (bit.ly/JustASKdistancelearning) 			
Organizational Systems	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set an online communication system to provide the novice teacher organizational tips throughout the year. ● Point out classroom organization tips ● Explain procedures for reporting attendance and other frequent communications. ● Help new teacher obtain necessary furniture, materials, and supplies. Help him set up the classroom be it virtual or brick and mortar. ● Coordinate with department chair, grade level, or team leader to ensure that the new teacher has necessary materials and information. ● As appropriate, discuss and share examples of bus/hall passes, fire drill sheets, referral sheets, etc. 			

The Just ASK Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

Organizational Systems	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure novice teacher uses a print or online calendar to record important dates for the entire school year. Go over district and school calendars. ● Verify that the new teacher's digital communications systems are functioning smoothly. ● "Trade Spaces." Go into other V/FF classrooms and discuss organization of instructional space.. Ensure CDC guidelines are followed) ● Share strategies for organizing instructional materials. ● Discuss strategies for organizing the paperwork and communication to and from parents as well as school and district offices. ● Go over procedures for collecting fees. ● Provide guidance, and as possible, plans for substitute teachers. 			
Students	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Go over the student demographics. Describe any recent changes. ● Discuss building a learning community in the V/FF classroom. (

The Just ASK Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

Students	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with the new teacher to identify norms, procedures, and routines. Help her plan how to organize for, model, and teach the norms, procedures and routines. ● Encourage the new teacher to get to know students outside the classroom and to attend V/FF events as safe and appropriate. ● Brainstorm strategies for learning the names of all students by the end of the first week. ● Discuss the importance of community building activities during the first weeks of school. 			
Colleagues	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with your principal and other mentors in planning and implementing the induction program. ● Explain to colleagues the role they can play as PLC collaborative team members in welcoming new teachers and helping them be successful and contributing faculty members. ● See Personal section of this checklist for Our New Colleagues poster and Who's Who biography suggestions. 			

The Just ASK Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

Colleagues	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide the new teacher <i>with a</i> list of stakeholders who provide support and services to the school. ● Identify staff members who have expertise in particular areas and who would be willing to help the new teacher. ● Provide the new teacher with a map of the school with teacher and staff member names and their job function written in their main work area or classroom. ● Go over policies, possibilities, and potential pitfalls of working with paraprofessionals. ● Discuss relationships and co-teaching with regular or special educators. (
School and School System	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide an overview of procedures and policies. Use the district or school handbook for procedures and policies to consider. Policies and procedures can be found on the aopelementary website. ● Provide a map of the school layout and take the new teachers on a V/FF building tour. 			

The Just ASK Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

School and School Systems	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide a map of the district with important buildings highlighted. If possible, take a V/FF tour. ● Identify whom to call for what at the district level. Provide a list of names and contact information. ● Explain which resources will and will not be provided. ● Review procedures for fire drills and school safety plans. ● Explain how the special education referral and pre-referral process works. 			
Parents and Community	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use Just ASK's Distance Learning Collection resource "Parents as Partners 2020" to structure discussions about relationships with parents. (bit.ly/JustASKdistancelearning) ● Work collaboratively with instructional technology staff and other colleagues to create a table for students, parents, and new teachers that addresses common tech troubles. ● Explain the importance of early home contact and assist the new teacher in thinking through how to establish positive partnerships with parents. ● Have the new teacher listen in on your parent phone calls. 			

The Just ASK Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

Parents and Community	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take a V/FF tour of community pointing out demographics and local sites and institutions of note. ● Discuss the importance of keeping parents informed about curriculum, course content, and important dates throughout the year. ● Explain how community resources including the school/business partner and other programs can provide additional support. ● Explain how digital communications such as emails and classroom and school websites can be used as communication tools. ● Consult school leadership about Back-to-School Night plans. 			
● Especially for Special Educators	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide an overview of the special education services offered in the school and in the district. ● Ensure clarity around the Response to Intervention (RtI) practice in the district. ● Explain the referral process and pre-referral process used in the district with details about how the process operates in the school. ● Supply a list of key personnel at the school and district, their responsibilities, and contact information for each of them. 			

The Just ASK Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

Especially for Special Educators	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain and provide models of “paperwork” requirements, procedures and time lines for child study, evaluations, and accommodation plans ● Coach the new teacher in the use of technology and software programs for accommodations. ● Explain district policies about aligning goals with district or state learning standards. ● Model preparing an accommodation plan. ● Think aloud and model preparing paperwork for a special needs meeting. ● Model and/or co-facilitate an V/FF meeting. ● Discuss methods of documenting progress toward meeting goals and grading policies and procedures for special education students. ● Assist the new teacher in accessing general education curriculum materials including student texts and teacher’s manuals. ● Provide an inventory of supplies and instructional materials available in the department and explain the process for ordering additional supplies and instructional materials. ● Provide overview of alternative assessments available for students with special needs. ● Discuss strategies for early contact with parents and suggest setting up V/FF introductory meetings to establish a positive context for future interactions. 			

The Just ASK Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

Especially for Special Educators	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide overview of the norms and practices around curricular adaptations, inclusion, and co-teaching. ● Assist the new teacher in reviewing his caseloads and reading plans. ● Go over each student's performance in the previous year and discuss performance in relation to established goals. ● Review accommodation forms and guide the new teacher in completing the forms. ● Discuss with the new special education teacher the best way to introduce herself and her students to the general education teachers with whom they will be working. ● Discuss role of teaching assistants, one-on-one aides, and related service providers; either provide or help the new teachers prepare a calendar of when IEPs are due. ● Check on the new teacher's experience with and skills for working with paraprofessionals and provide guidance as appropriate. 			

Just ASK Resource Center

www.justaskpublications.com/resource-center

Be sure to introduce new teachers not only to the **Mentoring Resources Collection** but also to all the amazing free resources in the **Just ASK Resource Center** including online tools and templates, sneak peeks of Just ASK books, libraries of e-newsletters, and much more.



Access the **Just ASK Resource Center** from the QR Code on the left and the **Mentoring Resources Collection** from the QR Code on the right.

