



## The Just ASK Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

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This checklist is organized around seven categories of challenge and concerns new teachers face:

- Personal
- Professional
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Organizational Systems
- Students
- Colleagues
- School and System Policies and Procedures
- Parents and Community

It also features a section titled Especially for Special Educators.

## Just ASK Website

[www.justaskpublications.com](http://www.justaskpublications.com)

The website is organized into areas of focus:

- Best Practice in Teaching and Learning (including Distance Learning)
- Teacher Leaders
- Mentoring and Induction
- Instructional Leadership
- Culture and Collaboration
- Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners
- Supervision and Evaluation



## Just ASK Mentoring Resources Collection

[www.justaskpublications.com/mentoringresources](http://www.justaskpublications.com/mentoringresources)

See the next page for information about the amazing **Mentoring Resources Collection** on the Just ASK website. There are dozens of copyright-free resources readily available for your immediate use!



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# The Just ASK Online Mentoring Resources Collection



Access the free multiple-page resources featured above and a monthly *Mentor's Memo* which includes the current month's mentoring calendar, multiple video clips, and more at [www.justaskpublications.com/mentoringresources](http://www.justaskpublications.com/mentoringresources)



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## 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"> <li>● Contact the new teacher as soon as possible after she is hired.</li> <li>● Make a welcome bag or basket. (See page 85 in <i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor’s Handbook</i>.)</li> <li>● “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.</li> <li>● As appropriate, provide information and assistance with housing, local services, and recreational facilities.</li> <li>● Obtain photographs of new teachers and create an <b>Our New Colleagues</b> poster and post it online and in the front office.</li> <li>● Create a <b>Who’s Who</b> 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.</li> </ul>			

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organize informal and voluntary V/FF social gatherings for new teachers to network with other new teachers.</li> <li>● Stop by her V/FF classroom daily to say hello.</li> <li>● Take a walk around the block at lunch or after school and talk about things other than school.</li> <li>● Leave a handwritten note in his mailbox or on his desk.</li> <li>● Share a brown bag lunch.</li> <li>● Celebrate the completion of the first week of school.</li> <li>● Invite her to stop by your V/FF classroom at any time.</li> </ul>			
Professional	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explain the induction and mentoring program. Include what the new teacher can expect from you and the new teacher's responsibilities as well.</li> <li>● Discuss professional dress.</li> <li>● 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.</li> </ul>			

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Professional	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have new teacher complete a needs assessment to identify areas of challenge and concern. (See pages 242-243 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook</i></b>.)</li> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● Explain the teacher performance evaluation system by going over the process and the criteria.</li> <li>● 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. (See pages 308-311 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook</i></b> for peer observation formats.)</li> <li>● Keep the new teacher apprised of professional development opportunities.</li> <li>● Remind the new teacher to refrain from discussing private issues about students, parents, or colleagues online, in the lounge, and other public places.</li> <li>● Be a role model by always speaking professionally about administrative staff, support staff, and other teachers.</li> <li>● 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.</li> </ul>			

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Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Debrief memos and curriculum meetings. Some terms and examples may have no meaning for the new teacher.</li> <li>● Provide access to, either in hard copy or online, the state standards, district curriculum, pacing guides, and other important instructional documents.</li> <li>● Explain the SBE planning process. (See pages 125-126 and 325 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook.</i></b>)</li> <li>● Provide exemplars of field-tested units based on the district's curriculum. (See pages 132-135 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook.</i></b>)</li> <li>● Use the state standards, district curriculum, and pacing guide to assist the novice teacher in chunking the year. (See pages 321-355 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook</i></b> for instructional planning tools.)</li> <li>● Assist the new teacher in creating detailed plans for the first week of school. (See pages 160-169 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook.</i></b>)</li> <li>● Provide an overview of the standardized testing current plan.</li> <li>● Discuss formative assessment and the role of growth-producing feedback. (See pages 154-156 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook</i></b> and pages 138-168 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b>)</li> </ul>			



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Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use <b>Just ASK's Distance Learning Collection</b> resources, "Ten Tips for Enhancing Distance Learning" and "Creating and Using Instructional Videos" to support new teachers who are teaching from remote locations. (<a href="http://bit.ly/JustASKdistancelearning">bit.ly/JustASKdistancelearning</a>)</li> </ul>			
Organizational Systems	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Set an online communication system to provide the novice teacher organizational tips throughout the year.</li> <li>● Point out the classroom organization tips found in <b>Chapter IX</b> of <i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></li> <li>● Explain procedures for reporting attendance and other frequent communications.</li> <li>● Help new teacher obtain necessary furniture, materials, and supplies. Help him set up the classroom be it virtual or brick and mortar. See <b>My School Supply List</b> on page 212 in <i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></li> <li>● Coordinate with department chair, grade level, or team leader to ensure that the new teacher has necessary materials and information.</li> <li>● As appropriate, discuss and share examples of bus/hall passes, fire drill sheets, referral sheets, etc. (See page 209 in <i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i>)</li> </ul>			

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Organizational Systems	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure novice teacher uses a print or online calendar to record important dates for the entire school year. Go over district and school calendars.</li> <li>● Verify that the new teacher's digital communications systems are functioning smoothly.</li> <li>● "Trade Spaces." Go into other V/FF classrooms and discuss organization of instructional space. (See pages 243-246 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b> for brick and mortar room arrangements. Ensure CDC guidelines are followed)</li> <li>● Share strategies for organizing instructional materials. (See pages 210-212 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b>)</li> <li>● Discuss strategies for organizing the paperwork and communication to and from parents as well as school and district offices.</li> <li>● Go over procedures for collecting fees.</li> <li>● Provide guidance, and as possible, plans for substitute teachers. (See pages 217-218 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b>)</li> </ul>			
Students	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Go over the student demographics. Describe any recent changes.</li> <li>● Discuss building a learning community in the V/FF classroom. (See pages 8-34 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b>)</li> </ul>			



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Students	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 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. (See pages 30-31, 222-227, and 238-242 in <i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i>)</li> <li>● Encourage the new teacher to get to know students outside the classroom and to attend V/FF events as safe and appropriate.</li> <li>● Brainstorm strategies for learning the names of all students by the end of the first week.</li> <li>● Discuss the importance of community building activities during the first weeks of school. (See pages 22-25 in <i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i>)</li> </ul>			
Colleagues	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with your principal and other mentors in planning and implementing the induction program.</li> <li>● 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 pages 293-294 in <i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook.</i>)</li> <li>● See <b>Personal</b> section of this checklist for <b>Our New Colleagues</b> poster and <b>Who's Who</b> biography suggestions.</li> </ul>			

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Colleagues	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consult page 204 in <i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i> for list of stakeholders who provide support and services to the school.</li> <li>● Identify staff members who have expertise in particular areas and who would be willing to help the new teacher. (See page 190 in <i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i> and online <b>Tool-5 Building My Support Team</b>)</li> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● Go over policies, possibilities, and potential pitfalls of working with paraprofessionals.</li> <li>● Discuss relationships and co-teaching with regular or special educators. (See pages 286-291 in <i>Instruction for All Students.</i>)</li> </ul>			
School and School System	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide an overview of procedures and policies. Use the district or school handbook for new teachers. If a handbook is not available, see pages 199-202 in <i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i> for procedures and policies to consider.</li> <li>● Provide a map of the school layout and take the new teachers on a V/FF building tour.</li> </ul>			

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School and School Systems	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide a map of the district with important buildings highlighted. If possible, take a V/FF tour.</li> <li>● Identify whom to call for what at the district level. Provide a list of names and contact information.</li> <li>● Explain which resources will and will not be provided.</li> <li>● Review procedures for fire drills and school safety plans.</li> <li>● Explain how the special education referral and pre-referral process works.</li> </ul>			
Parents and Community	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use <b>Just ASK's Distance Learning Collection</b> resource "<b>Parents as Partners 2020</b>" to structure discussions about relationships with parents. (<a href="http://bit.ly/JustASKdistancelearning">bit.ly/JustASKdistancelearning</a>)</li> <li>● Work collaboratively with instructional technology staff and other colleagues to create a table for students, parents, and new teachers that addresses common tech troubles.</li> <li>● Explain the importance of early home contact and assist the new teacher in thinking through how to establish positive partnerships with parents. (See pages 260-266 in <b>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</b>)</li> <li>● Have the new teacher listen in on your parent phone calls.</li> </ul>			

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Parents and Community	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Take a V/FF tour of community pointing out demographics and local sites and institutions of note.</li> <li>● Discuss the importance of keeping parents informed about curriculum, course content, and important dates throughout the year.</li> <li>● Explain how community resources including the school/business partner and other programs can provide additional support.</li> <li>● Explain how digital communications such as emails and classroom and school websites can be used as communication tools.</li> <li>● Consult school leadership about <b>Back-to-School Night</b> plans. (See pages 267-268 in <i>Why Didn't I Learn this in College?</i> for possible discussion points)</li> </ul>			
● Especially for Special Educators	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide an overview of the special education services offered in the school and in the district.</li> <li>● Ensure clarity around the Response to Intervention (RtI) practice in the district.</li> <li>● Explain the referral process and pre-referral process used in the district with details about how the process operates in the school.</li> <li>● Supply a list of key personnel at the school and district, their responsibilities, and contact information for each of them.</li> </ul>			

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

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Especially for Special Educators	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide overview of the norms and practices around curricular adaptations, inclusion, and co-teaching.</li> <li>● Assist the new teacher in reviewing his caseloads and reading IEPs.</li> <li>● Go over each student's performance in the previous year and discuss performance in relation to established goals.</li> <li>● Review accommodation forms and guide the new teacher in completing the forms.</li> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● Check on the new teacher's experience with and skills for working with paraprofessionals and provide guidance as appropriate.</li> </ul>			

## Just ASK Resource Center

[www.justaskpublications.com/resource-center](http://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.

