

Module One - Agenda

Get your school year off to a great start/personnel procedures

Preparation:

1. Think of humorous or constructive first day/ week of school and/or Back-to-School Night stories that you can share.
2. If you'd like, add your own statements to the "Getting ready for school" discussion sheet.
3. Have copies of building and district policies and the collective bargaining agreement on hand.
4. Gather past issues of the *NJEA Review* and *NJEA Reporter*.

Activities:

1. Getting ready for school—discussion statements
 - a. These discussion statements provide an opportunity to discuss what new teachers need to know and do before the first day of school.
 - b. If you have a large group, consider breaking into smaller discussion groups and/or using a timer to be sure you cover all of the statements.
2. Back-to-School Night Dos and Don'ts
 - a. Ask participants to complete the worksheet in pairs.
 - b. Discuss the answers. Use the Facilitator's Guide for assistance.
 - c. Review any Back-to-School Night policies that may be unique to your school.
3. The association component
 - a. Be sure that participants understand the proper procedures for arriving late to work, calling out sick and requesting personal or bereavement days.
 - b. Review any additional procedures that may be important in your school.
 - c. Show them copies of the *NJEA Review* magazine (professional journal) and the *NJEA Reporter* newspaper (association news and advocacy) so new members will know what to expect in their mail.

Handouts:

SOS materials:

1. Getting ready for school—discussion statements
2. Back-to-School Night Dos and Don'ts (and Facilitator's Guide)

Related materials from NJEA:

1. Back-to-School Night tips, invitations, thank yous and name tags:
www.njea.org/Home/teaching-and-learning/classroom-tools
2. NJEA classroom materials:
www.njea.org/njea-media/pdf/PublicationsOrderForm.pdf?1369771169624





Module One

Back-to-School Night Dos and Don'ts – Facilitator's Guide

After participants have categorized these statements, review each item and discuss as needed. Be sure to stress the following points during the discussion:

1. You only have one chance to make a first impression.
2. You have limited time.
3. Have a plan in place with colleagues who can rescue you if parents insist on “staying after class” to discuss their child.
4. Preparation is key.

DO

Greet parents at the door.

Show a copy of the textbook and other materials you'll be using in class.

Describe your professional credentials and teaching experience.

Review the course curriculum.

Present your policy on making up tests, quizzes, homework, etc.

Explain what information can be found on your teacher website.

Invite parents to contact you with questions or concerns.

Notify parents about upcoming special events, projects or unusual course requirements.

DON'T DO

Tell parents how hard their children are going to work in your class. Stress how much they'll learn, not how hard they'll work.

Provide specific information about each student's performance. This is not the time or place.

Comment on behavior problems you've encountered with this class. Unless you can provide some general advice regarding homework or classroom policies, you should probably not discuss this.

Talk about students or classes from previous years. Unless you are providing an example of how much a group of children can achieve, this is not of interest to parents.

Complain about supplies, technology and/or textbooks your classroom lacks. Parents don't want to hear excuses about why you can't accomplish great things with their children. However, you may want to politely enlist them in your fight for the materials you need.

Refer to the work of administrators or other teachers. It's not appropriate or professional.

Discuss school wide policies, such as safety drills, honor codes, etc. Unless it directly impacts your classroom, you won't have time to get to this topic.

NOT SURE

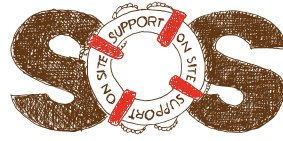
Provide personal information about yourself. It's far more important and appropriate to explain your professional background, advanced degrees, certifications, etc. than to talk about your personal life.

Explain your classroom rules and procedures in depth. KISS--Keep it short and simple.

Provide your cell phone number so parents can reach you during the school day. While it's a matter of personal preference whether to provide your cell phone number, it's important that parents understand you are teaching all day and are generally not available to answer calls and emails.

Provide snacks. Yes, you want to be a gracious host, but it is not necessary to provide snacks. Plus, the school is probably providing light refreshments.





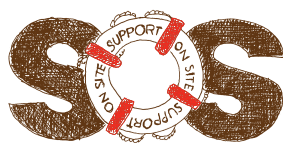
DO

Back-to-School Night Dos and Don'ts

DON'T

	Greet parents at the door.	
	Show a copy of the textbook and other materials you'll be using in class.	
	Provide personal information about yourself.	
	Tell parents how hard their children are going to work in your class.	
	Describe your professional credentials and teaching experience.	
	Review the course curriculum.	
	Explain your classroom rules and procedures in depth.	
	Present your policy on making up tests, quizzes, homework, etc.	
	Explain what information can be found on your teacher website.	
	Provide your cell phone number so parents can reach you during the school day.	
	Provide specific information about each student's performance.	
	Comment on behavior problems you've encountered with this class.	
	Invite parents to contact you with questions or concerns.	
	Talk about students or classes from previous years.	
	Notify parents about upcoming special events, projects or unusual course requirements.	
	Complain about the supplies, technology and/or textbooks your classroom lacks.	
	Refer to the work of administrators or other teachers.	
	Discuss school wide policies, such as safety drills, honor codes, etc.	
	Provide snacks.	

If you're not sure, put "NS" next to the statement.



Getting ready for school – discussion questions

- 1.** Should I contact each student's parent(s) or guardian(s) before the start of the school year?

- 2.** How do I prepare my classroom?

- 3.** What building policies are most important to know right from the start?

- 4.** What are some things I should be sure to tell my students on the first day of school?

- 5.** What are some things I shouldn't say to my students on the first day of school?

- 6.** What are the important dates on the school calendar for this school year?

- 7.** How do I get the supplies that I need?

- 8.** Who are the VIPs I need to know and why?

- 9.** What are my goals for the first week of school?

- 10.** What are my goals for the first month of school?