Questions to Ask a Mentor

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 speaker?
- 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 of, 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 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?
• 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 or 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 or 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?