

Tool: Curriculum Information

Purpose: To assist the mentor in orienting the novice to expectations related to curriculum

Timing: Early in the school year

- Obtain a calendar/plan book for the school year. Refer to the district school calendar. Mark out holidays, inservice, administrative, and other days when instruction is not possible. Note Terra Nova, Gateway, and any other testing days. Note days that are typically not the most productive in terms of instruction (day before major breaks, field trips when a majority of students are out*, Valentines, Halloween, etc.). **Great days to work on more individualized instruction with the remaining students.*
- For each student on your class roll, create a chart of Mastery and Non-mastery for Terra Nova objectives. [High School teachers should analyze Gateway scores to determine any needed adjustments in pacing and emphasis.]
- Make initial decisions about in class groupings [heterogeneous teams, pairs, or triads for Cooperative Learning activities such as reviews or problem-solving and homogeneous groups for skill based instruction].
- Obtain curriculum guide (learning expectations) for assigned grade level as well as the grade level above and below. Review total year expectations. Work with your mentor and grade level colleagues to make tentative (big picture) decisions about pacing for each grading period and detail out pacing for the first grading period.
- Discuss curriculum priorities such as literacy emphasis for K-3, interdisciplinary units, writing across the curriculum, integration of thinking skills or social skills, etc.
- Confer with mentor and grade level colleagues in setting up a grading system. Determine the sources of data/grades and the relative weights of the various sources (% of the total grade). Determine your policies for make up work and how to assess student effort.
- Create timeframes/schedule for daily and weekly instruction. Lab time assignments must be considered.
- Confer with mentor and grade level colleagues about ways to communicate expectations to parenting adults.
- Make decisions about room arrangement. Decide appropriate areas/locations for learning centers, computer/technology station, in and out baskets, calendar/daily agenda, Problem of the Day chart, student folders, overhead/presentation unit, storage for manipulatives, storage for student folders, etc.
- Obtain daily and/or unit planning forms and inquire about requirements related to planning.
- Prepare a generic/emergency plan for a Substitute Teacher—sometimes the need arrives unexpectedly. Remember that (most) Substitutes should *not* be responsible for teaching new learning. The plan should be for practice and enrichment.