

Ten Tips for Back-to-School Readiness

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As the summer comes to a close students and teachers either shrug with anguish or jump for joy! Depending on your teaching views you can fit into either category. The real trick to handle back-to-school jitters or joys is to focus on each task as a small part of the whole! There is nothing more important than being organized; especially on the first day of school. So what do you do to get ready? Here are ten tips to help you get ready for that first day of school!

1. If you are a first year teacher or new to the school you will be teaching in get your classroom key early! Don't wait until the last few days before school starts to begin thinking about your classroom.
2. Get in your room and "CLEAN". Make your room clean and fresh and ready to welcome the students. Uncover those tricky dust bunnies, measure your room, draw up several classroom organizational charts and move the desks around until you have the arrangement you want to start with for the year. You will probably change your mind at least a few times later. Keep in mind your management and teaching style. Do you like to lecture, do group work, isolated learning, etc? Whatever your plans are make the room fit your style.
3. Make your visuals early and get them laminated, hung and picture perfect!
4. Bring in your organizational furniture. Portable bookshelves, rolling carts, your personal books, and things to decorate. I like having family photos, flowers and a lamp on my desk to keep me going when the going gets tough. My family is my inspiration and teaching is my passion; together we make a great team!

5. Two weeks before school starts; make your lesson plans up for the first week or two of school. You know this is the time when you are teaching and re-teaching so keep that in mind when you write your plans. Check with your team leaders and administrators to see if there are any scheduled assemblies, drills or out-of-the-ordinary events occurring in the first two weeks of school. Plan for those events and accommodate them with buffer room in your lesson plans.
6. Speaking of drills; make sure your fire drill procedures are posted, show the students on the first day where they are and explain what they will do in case of an emergency. You will be explaining the rules and policies everyday for the first few weeks anyway.
7. Look over your curriculum materials and district requirements early on (several weeks before school starts). They often change from year to year and you need to keep abreast of the changes as soon as they happen.
8. Email or phone your district chairpeople and introduce yourself (especially if you are new); ask them questions you can't get answered after going through the channels. Let them know who you are and your love of teaching.
9. Get your handouts and materials prepared well ahead of time. In elementary level we have lots of things to get prepared for. Make sure you have enough supplies to start the year. The students will inevitably not have their supplies in full the first two weeks and some students may be in a position where they will not have supplies at all. Take this into consideration.
10. Finally, RELAX and take time to spend your last day before school starts doing a "look over" of your preparation. Go home, spend time with your loved ones and indulge in your favorite dessert!