First CLASS

A resource for new teachers in New York City

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NYC Department of Education

EQUITY & EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

Dear New Teacher,

Welcome to *First Class*, a digital publication designed for teachers new to the New York City Department of Education (DOE). This monthly newsletter spotlights tools, resources, videos, and guides regarding classroom culture, lesson design, and family engagement. In each issue, we hope you find something relevant and, most importantly, immediately useful. We are committed to helping you thrive during your first year.

The green box to the left contains hyperlinks to each section of *First Class*. Every month, we address common questions and provide you with tools in each of these areas. You can count on *First Class* for a rich variety of useful resources that will support you across all content areas and grade levels.

As the school year progresses, you will be able to see previous issues of *First Class* by looking for us on the I Teach NYC website which features daily updates about the latest career development and professional learning opportunities for NYC public school teachers. Bookmark the page or sign up for email notifications to stay in the know.

After you have explored this edition of *First Class*, let us know what you think by taking a brief (just four questions!) reader survey. We would love to have your voices and opinions shape the content of future editions.

Sincerely,
The *First Class* Team
NewTeacherSupport@schools.nyc.gov

Content and Curriculum

Reader tip: this section spotlights useful resources for different grade levels and content areas.

Featured resource of the month

WeTeachNYC: The resource library for DOE educators

WeTeachNYC is the DOE's online space where educators can search a library for instructional resources across content areas, explore learning opportunities, and connect with other NYC educators in virtual communities. You can find grade- and subject-specific lesson resources, instructional guides, videos of best practices, unit-planning templates, and more. Log in using your DOE email address and password. Click here for more information on using WeTeachNYC.

Start to explore all that WeTeachNYC has to offer by checking out these great collections for the beginning of the school year:

- Back to School Tips for New Teachers: Discover strategies for creating a safe and productive learning environment, getting to know your students, using effective classroom management techniques, and more.
- Sample Rated Classroom Videos: These teaching videos are accompanied by lesson plans and/or student work aligned to Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. They were compiled from sources including "Achieve the Core" and "EngageNY."
- New Teacher Week 2017: Explore resources developed by content experts for new educators like you.

Sign up to receive the WeTeachNYC newsletter for more resources delivered right to your inbox every six weeks.

Classroom Culture

Reader tip: this section highlights resources that will help you create a supportive classroom environment.

Seamless starts, effortless ends

How do I establish routines that help my class start and end smoothly?

Starting and ending class can be challenging for new teachers. Rick Smith, author of *Conscious Classroom Management* (2004), has a few easy-to-implement ideas for how to make these transitions as efficient and smooth as possible.

For more examples of how to build a positive classroom culture throughout the year, visit Teaching Channel's page of suggestions for new teachers.

Time Management and Organization

Reader tip: this section highlights resources to help you effectively manage and organize your time.

Reimagining your "to do" list

How can I restructure my "to do" list to better manage my time?

Here is a strategy to help you visualize all your tasks and help you focus on the most urgent items right away.

1. Write out each task you need to accomplish on a separate sticky note. Tasks can include work and non-work related responsibilities.

2. Using a large piece of paper, draw four quadrants and label them according to the model below:

Important and Time-Sensitive (Directly impacts student achievement and professional success)	**Important and Not Time-Sensitive** (Ongoing personal and professional commitments)
Not Important and Time-Sensitive (Non-student related professional obligations, personal deadlines)	**Not Important and Not Time-Sensitive** (Professional and personal "wish list")

3. Distribute your sticky notes in the appropriate quadrants.

4. Complete tasks in the green quadrant first. Then, analyze the tasks in the yellow quadrants to determine what you should prioritize next given limited time and energy. Finally, address the tasks in the red quadrant once you have the bandwidth to do so.

Tips:

- While time-sensitive tasks are often deadline-driven, the importance of tasks will vary based on your own priorities, which can shift throughout the year.
- Looking for an example? Here is a picture of a teacher's re-imagined "to do" list.

Words of Wisdom from an Experienced Teacher

Reader tip: this section spotlights experienced DOE teachers who are excited to share their teaching tips with you.

It's only a matter of time

How do I keep my students on task during independent or group work?

Emily Koch is an experienced middle school teacher and current director of curriculum and instruction at School in the Square in Manhattan. Watch how she uses a timer to keep her students accountable to finishing tasks in this one-minute video.

You can easily implement timers in 3-K through high school classrooms. Use them to set parameters around work time, transitions, presentations, and other common classroom events. Want to try using a timer in your classroom? You can use a hand-held timer like Emily's or try projecting one of these free timer websites on your wall or Smartboard so students can manage their time more effectively:

- Online-Stopwatch offers a variety of timer options.
- Classtools lets you select a custom timer or use a soundtrack.

- [My.Online-eggtimer](#) runs three timers at once.

Mentoring and Virtual Support

Reader tip: this section offers tools to help you foster a strong working relationship with your school-based mentor.

Forming a productive relationship with your mentor

What does a successful mentor-new teacher relationship look like?

A school-based mentor is one of the best supports available to new teachers. In 2016-2017, over 90% of surveyed new teachers reported that their mentor gave them helpful feedback on their teaching. If you have not received an assigned mentor yet, reach out to your school leadership team to request a mentor assignment as soon as possible.

To ensure your relationship with your mentor reaches its full productive potential and that you receive support tailored to your specific needs, try these three strategies:

1. Review this [helpful description](#) of mentor-new teacher roles (created by the DOE's Office of Leadership).
2. Take a few minutes to complete a quick [new teacher self-evaluation](#) and share the results with your mentor at your next meeting. It will give your mentor valuable insight into your goals for this year.
3. During a prep period, visit your mentor's classroom to watch them teaching. In 2016-2017, 80% of surveyed new teachers reported that their mentor spent time in their classroom to provide feedback on their teaching, but only 63% of surveyed new teachers reported visiting their mentor's classroom as well. It is an important part of your development to watch strong teachers in action because it will help you generate new ideas for routines, management, and content delivery.

New Employee Nuts and Bolts

Reader tip: this section addresses frequently asked new employee questions.

New employee questions

Where can I get my human resources (HR) questions answered?

Here are three sources of information for your HR questions:

1. Use your DOE email and password to log into the [HR Connect Web Portal](#) to find answers to Human Resources-related questions, including about benefits, leaves of absence, certification, payroll, personal and tax data changes, and more.
2. The [Checklist for New Hires](#) can help you track all actions you need to take as a new DOE employee.
3. The [HR Walk-In Center](#), located at 65 Court Street in Brooklyn, offers an array of services for DOE employees such as: fingerprinting, employee IDs, New York State

Education certification inquiries, and salary step and differential inquiries. Still have unanswered questions? Give them a call at (718) 935-4000.

Extra, Extra!

Reader tip: this section highlights bonus resources and information for readers.

What other supports exist for a strong start to the school year?

- Browse a [blog post](#) about what experienced teachers know now that they wish they had known when they started teaching.
- Bookmark this excellent database of [teacher resources from The New York Times.](#)
- Just for fun: Are you in our [New Teacher Week 2017 photo album](#)? Browse the album and tag yourself if you appear.

Now that you've read *First Class*, we'd love to hear your thoughts! Please take a minute to share your feedback with us by completing a brief four-question survey.

[**Take survey**](#)