



Indiana  
State  
Teachers  
Association



# INDIANA'S NEW EDUCATOR GUIDE

OUR KIDS. OUR SCHOOLS. OUR FUTURE.

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# Congratulations on your new teaching position!

It's a daunting and exciting time as you begin your professional career. The Indiana State Teachers Association (ISTA) has compiled resources to help you in the first weeks and months of your career.

This book offers guidance on what you need to know as you step into your classroom. From valuable classroom management best practices to how to be successful on your first evaluation.

ISTA and your local are responsible for negotiating your teacher contract, representing you at discussion with administration, advocating for the profession at the Statehouse, providing mentorship and professional development and so much more.

Reach out to your local association representative to learn more about ISTA and your local.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Gambill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Keith Gambill  
ISTA President



## Who is ISTA?

The **Indiana State Teachers Association (ISTA)** is the voice of public education and educators in Indiana. Our nearly 40,000 members — from college students to retired educators — comprise the Association. ISTA membership offers a collective voice for the education profession and public schools in our communities.

Our members teach in kindergarten classrooms, high school labs and music rooms. They coach athletes and transport students to and from the schools and extra-curricular events. Members provide professional services to benefit our kids and our schools.

Our members include hundreds of local associations of teachers, education support

professionals, aspiring educators and retired educators across the state.

ISTA is an affiliate of the National Education Association (NEA). The resources from NEA and ISTA enable local associations across the state to advocate for their members on issues such as compensation, working conditions, professional development and the well-being of their students.

## Mission

The Indiana State Teachers Association is a professional association organized to sustain quality public education, improve students' educational opportunities and advance the professional status of educators.

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## Purpose

To develop and organize members as leaders, professionals and active citizens to improve the professional status of educators and educational opportunities for Hoosier kids.

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## Goals

**Unified voice** — we are stronger together.

**Economic security and professional working conditions** for educators.

Premier public education system that **serves all kids regardless of ZIP code, culture or ability.**

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## Strategic Priorities

1. Build strong locals.
2. Increase membership and engagement.
3. Advocate for educational issues.





### Rising Educators

***Future educators are supported as they begin to explore the teaching profession and consider teaching as a career.***

ISTA is the Indiana partner of the Educators Rising program, which offers high school students an opportunity to explore the education profession through mentorship, professional development and education planning.



### Aspiring Educators

***College students preparing to be educators are supported through membership in ISTA.***

ISTA provides aspiring educators with resources and support to prepare for their future career.



### Early Career Educators

***Educators within the first seven years of their teaching careers have access to support, career planning and leadership opportunities.***

ISTA is building a network of early career educators to engage and empower educators to become successful, active and visible in their profession and community through collective action.



### Career Educator

***ISTA supports nearly 40,000 members by advocating for our kids, our schools and our future.***

ISTA strives to embody the values of integrity, fairness, leadership and collective action. Experienced professionals from classroom teachers to education support professionals enjoy benefits related to professional development, career protection and advocacy advancement.



### Retired Educators

***ISTA-Retired supports post-career educators by working for the future of education.***

ISTA-Retired members advocate for public education professionals to unite our members and communities to ensure every student has a great public education.



### **Make your voice heard.**

As trusted professionals, educators are best equipped to make school and classroom decisions to ensure student success. It's our mission to ensure educators have a seat at the table when advocating for Red For Ed priorities and education policies. As members of the Association, educators have a powerful voice in creating the policies that affect our students, our schools and our classrooms.

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### **Enjoy what matters most.**

Membership means less worrying for you and more action from us. With representation at the bargaining table, liability insurance and so much more, ISTA provides advice and professional advocacy on the range of issues you face as an educator: salary, evaluation support, contract compliance and enforcement and retirement.

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### **Grow your network.**

We're a community of experienced professionals. Through a variety of online and offline tools, you enjoy access to valuable resources on classroom management, lesson planning and a host of other topics. Plus, you'll make connections with the educators at your school, in your state and among our nearly 40,000 members.

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### **Reach, teach and inspire.**

You're never on your own. Your membership gives you access to some of education's most sought-after authorities who provide new and innovative programs you can use in your classroom. With resources that cover classroom management and support, to make in-depth professional development provided by your local, state and national affiliates – you have a team supporting you.

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**Nearly 40,000 educators strong. Together, we can.** ISTA is fighting for our kids, our schools and our future. For more information on membership benefits, visit [ista-in.org/JoinNow](https://ista-in.org/JoinNow).

# 13 Ways to Beat Your First-Day Jitters

**Your classroom is part of a larger community** of hundreds or even thousands of individuals engaged in teaching and learning in buildings scattered across a city, town or region. To be efficient and effective in a classroom, you must be able to navigate the system.

**1**

## FIND OUT WHERE

The place to start is your work site. Familiarize yourself with the building and learn as much as possible about the layout, location of your classroom, storage areas, work areas, fire exits, lounge, cafeteria, gymnasium, auditorium, restrooms, offices, phones, media center, computer facilities, guidance office and nurse's office.

**2**

## KNOW THE RULES

Get acquainted beforehand with school policies and procedures, such as opening and closing hours, attendance procedures, fire drill regulations, lunchroom regulations, etc. Set up a binder to hold official notices, policies and schedules.

**3**

## INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Meet the teachers around you. They can be especially helpful in the first few weeks of school. Take time to say hello to your other colleagues as well — the librarians, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, office workers and custodians.

**4**

## DECORATE YOUR ROOM

Make sure your classroom is friendly and inviting for opening day.

**5**

## USE TRADITIONAL SEATING

Start with the traditional arrangement of desks until you've established procedures and know your students' names. Keep traffic patterns in mind when arranging desks, work areas, etc.

**6****HAVE ALL MATERIALS**

You'll need supplies for getting your classroom ready – paper, pencils, books, etc. Obtain blank forms, such as hall passes. Test your equipment to make sure it works. If you are a floating teacher, prepare a means of moving materials from room to room. Shop ISTA ReSupply for new and used classroom supplies at an upcoming ISTA professional development conference.

**7****STORE SUPPLIES**

Go through the storage and filing cabinets and decide where to store things to which students will have access and things to which only you will have access.

**8****SCHEDULE YOUR TIME**

Make a detailed schedule for the first few days, including times for each subject, restroom and lunch breaks, etc.

**9****PLAN, PLAN, PLAN**

Create lesson plans for the first few days. Plan at least twice as much as you think you can cover. Write down everything. Detailed plans will provide you with a feeling of security when facing the class for the first time.

**10****GET THERE EARLY**

On the first morning, arrive early so you will have time to ask any last-minute questions, go over final plans and relax before the students come in.

**11****GREET YOUR STUDENTS**

Be in your room when the students arrive. Have your name written on the board. Greet them with a smile and a pleasant greeting. Encourage them to be seated and arrange their space.

**12****GO OVER THE RULES**

Introduce your students to classroom rules and procedures on the first day, such as getting books and materials, sharpening pencils, entering and leaving the room and so forth.

**13****START THE LEARNING**

Make the first day of school a real one. Accomplish some constructive learning with your students. A good start yields big dividends later on.

# What to Ask in the First Weeks of School

**Learn how your school works to feel prepared.** To make the first few months easier, find the answers to these questions by the end of the first weeks of school. Put the information in a place where you can easily retrieve it.





## Supplies

- Where and how do I secure supplies?
  - Where can I get free or inexpensive materials?
  - What machines are available for me to use (copier, computer, DVD player, LCD projector, SMART Board, etc.)?
  - With whom should I consult as I make decisions on the use of supplemental materials?
  - How do I check out regular and supplemental texts?
- 



## Procedures

- How do I sign my class up for the library, computer lab or other common areas?
  - What is my school district's policy for the acceptable use of technology for staff and students?
  - What are the procedures for taking a class to an assembly?
  - How do I arrange a field trip?
    - What do I do with any money I collect?
  - When am I responsible for locking my room?
  - What should I do if I must leave my room during class?
  - How do I use electronic data systems for reporting?
  - What are the grading guidelines for the school system? What documentation must I provide?
  - What student records must I maintain in cumulative folders?
  - What should I do in case of a medical emergency in my classroom?
  - What are the procedures for emergency situations such as fire drills, lockdowns, tornadoes or inclement weather?
- 



## Classroom Management

- What procedures do other teachers in my school follow for contacting parents by letter, phone or email?
  - What should I expect from a parent conference?
  - How do I report a disciplinary problem?
  - How do I handle a fight between students?
- 



## Personnel

- What is my personnel file, and where is it?
  - What is my salary, and what deductions are taken?
  - How do I apply for personal, professional, vacation or sick leave?
  - How do I arrange for a substitute?
-

# PLANNING YOUR FUTURE

## CHOOSING YOUR RETIREMENT PLAN



TRADITIONAL DEFINED BENEFIT HYBRID (DB/DC)

What is it?  
Hybrid plan using:

- DB is a pension.
- DC is an annuity.

Eligibility includes regularly employed teachers in public school corporations.

All eligible teachers may select this hybrid plan. If no selection is made, teacher will default into this program.

DEFINED CONTRIBUTION (DC) OR MY CHOICE PLAN

What is it?  
Operates similarly to a 401(k).

Beginning in 2019 - 20 school year, new hires may select this plan.

All newly-hired, eligible teachers have 60 days from the date of hire (which has been deemed by INPRS to be the contracted start date) to select DC-only plan.

*Review your options carefully, as your choice is irrevocable.*

PLAN COMPARISON	DB/DC	DC-ONLY/MY CHOICE PLAN
<b>BENEFITS</b>	<p>Plan combines a monthly pension (DB), using a formula of salary and years of service, plus an annuity (DC).</p> <p>Through collective bargaining, most local school districts pay the employee contribution.</p> <p>Provides a guaranteed monthly pension benefit for the duration of an INPRS member's life.</p>	<p>A participant in the DC-only plan may receive the qualifying vested amount upon retirement or employment termination.</p> <p>Through collective bargaining, most local school districts pay the employee contribution.</p> <p>Based solely on contributions made to the individual INPRS member's DC account and provides less financial security in retirement.</p>
<b>VESTING</b>	<p>Ten years of creditable service for DB.</p> <p>Immediate for DC.</p>	<p>Immediate vesting, but eligibility for full benefits is incremental over the first five years of creditable service before becoming fully receivable.</p>
<b>INVESTMENT OPTIONS</b>	<p>For DB plan, INPRS determines investment options. For DC, participants may choose from a variety of investment options.</p>	<p>Participants may choose from same investment options available to DC plan in DB/DC plan.</p>

PLAN COMPARISON	DB/DC	DC-ONLY/MY CHOICE PLAN
<p><b>PORTABILITY</b></p>	<p>Portable inside the state and outside of the state, once vested (10 years).</p> <p>If employee terminates employment before vesting, they may take the DC balance with them.</p> <p>If member terminates employment but returns to a participating employer, previous service is credited.</p>	<p>Portable and eligible to receive balance based on creditable service.</p>
<p><b>CONTRIBUTION RATES</b></p> <p><i>Through collective bargaining, most local school districts will pay the employee contribution in both plans.</i></p>	<p>Employer contributes 100 percent of DB benefit (currently 5.5 percent of gross wages). Employee must contribute 3 percent of gross wages into DC account.</p> <p>Employee may voluntarily contribute up to 10 percent of gross wages post-tax to DC account.</p>	<p>Employer contributes a percentage (currently 5.5 percent) of gross wages. Employee must contribute 3 percent of gross wages.</p> <p>Employee may voluntarily contribute up to 10 percent of gross wages post-tax.</p>

**CONSIDER THE FACTS**

- ISTA opposed the creation of the DC-only plan, not because teachers shouldn't have options, but because this option will likely not yield in retirement comparable financial results after a full career of teaching in Indiana.
- The DB/DC hybrid plan shares the risk between employers and employees, where the DC-only plan shifts risk to employees and is vulnerable to market volatility.
  - Pensions help recruit and retain committed educators. The DC-only plan does not incentivize teachers to remain in the profession, which means fewer, less experienced teachers in classrooms.
  - DB plans outperform DC plans over a 20-year period (Center for American Progress) offering more stability and higher returns (National Institute of Retirement).

**For full information on retirement plans offered, visit [in.gov/inprs/teachers](http://in.gov/inprs/teachers).**

You know what's best for your career and retirement goals. ISTA strongly recommends that you consult a financial expert before making your retirement plan selection, as once made, it is irrevocable.

# Licensure Information and Tips

The **Indiana Department of Education (IDOE)** shared information on securing and maintaining your license as a certificated educator.

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## Maintaining a valid license is your responsibility.

### Communications and Navigating the LVIS System

**Communication regarding your certification is done mainly through email.**

- Use a personal email account for your primary email.
- To verify or change the email in your LVIS account, log into your LVIS account and click Edit Profile on the right-hand side.
- Do not use your university or college account. Sometimes the universities end your ability to use their email system after graduation.
- Do not use a school employer account. You may not always be employed by that district or corporation.

**When you are setting up your LVIS account, pay attention to where the verification email lands in your email.**

- What if the email ends up in your junk/spam folder?
  - You should add the email address to your contacts or safe senders.
- If you've set up your account and haven't received emails, contact the IDOE at **licensinghelp@doe.in.gov** or **317-232-9010**.

- If you've missed an email that was sent, log into your LVIS account and click on Email Log on the right-hand side.

Check the status of your application by logging into your LVIS account and click on Application Status on the right-hand side.

### Extending or Converting Your License

**Options for continuing or converting a two-year initial practitioner license.**

1. If you do not have two years of full-time teaching experience, you can renew for another two years. This may be done twice. After the second renewal (total of six years), you must complete a 90-point Professional Growth Plan.
2. If you have verification of two years of full-time teaching experience in the content area of your license (on school letterhead and signed), you may convert to a five-year practitioner license. You have two options for converting your license — Indiana Mentor and Assessment Program completed over two years with your principal or Professional Growth Plan with approval by your school principal.



**Once you have a five-year license, you may:**

- Renew for another five years by completing and submitting an approved 90-point PGP, completing six semester hours of coursework from a regionally accredited institution or securing National Board Certification.
- If you obtain your master's degree or National Board Certification, you can professionalize and renew with the same application. You will also have to meet one of the renewal options.

If you wish to add to your license, most content areas can be added to a valid instructional license by passing the corresponding Indiana CORE Assessment content exam. To determine which areas can be added with your testing, visit [bit.ly/2W9HCZU](https://bit.ly/2W9HCZU). Some areas may have additional requirements so please review the notes column.

**The following content areas can only be added to a valid instructional license by completing testing and coursework through an approved program:**

- Early childhood education
- Elementary education
- English as a new language
- Exceptional needs (mild intervention, intense intervention, blind and low vision, deaf and hard of hearing)
- Fine arts content areas (visual arts, vocal and general music, instrumental and general music and theater arts)
- High ability

**How to Complete Your PGP**

**Tips for Professional Growth Plan (PGP):**

- PGPs are separate from applications, but they must be completed, submitted and approved prior to completing an application.
- PGP points can be entered at any time. The points will stay in LVIS unless you remove them.
- Your principal will approve your PGP. Clarify with your principal what they may or may not approve.

Get additional information regarding PGPs at <https://www.doe.in.gov/licensing/professional-growth-plan-ppg>.

# Classroom Management Tips

**All teachers share the same goal** – help students monitor and govern their own behavior in ways that help them learn. There are things you can do to promote positive interactions and expectations in the classroom. Start by following your district’s adopted discipline policies and procedures. Be the kind of person students respect and trust — firm, fair, friendly, courteous, enthusiastic and confident. Above all, keep your sense of humor.

## **Before problems arise:**

- Get to know your students. This will help you anticipate problems.
- Show courtesy to every student and display trust and confidence in all of them.
- Be consistent in the application of discipline and be fair in your requirements and assignments.
- Teaching strategies and an attractive classroom reinforces a mutually respectful relationship with your students.
- Give clear verbal and written directions.
- Keep your classroom cheerful and orderly.
- Make learning fun, interesting and relevant to students’ lives.
- Establish no more than five classroom rules with student ownership — and enforce them.
- Be fully prepared every day.
- Provide a list of expectations and consequences to parents and students. Make sure they are consistent with district and building policies.
- Begin class on time and in a precise manner.
- Let the students know you care. Show interest in what they say, whether it pertains directly to the lesson or not.
- Keep your voice at a respectful level.
- Grade assignments and return them as soon as possible.
- Make sure all students can easily see you when you are presenting information. Ensure that all students can see you as you deliver instruction.
- Keep potential distractions — such as windows, doors or animals — in mind.
- Leave plenty of room around desks so you can get to each student easily while you are monitoring individual work.
- Diversion and restructuring are great tools. When one activity has gone too long, students



get bored and restless. Stay alert, anticipate trouble and change your strategy even if it requires some flexibility in scheduling.

- Some students may encourage each other to get into trouble. Regrouping the students immediately without comment is key.
- Provide hurdle help. Sometimes when a student cannot proceed with a task in which they are experiencing difficulty, you may provide an explanation or hint that enables the student to go on.
- It is sometimes helpful to remind students to control their impulses when they may be tempted to misbehave. Show encouragement. Tell the student, "This has been such a good day; you read so well this morning...Come on, let's keep that up." Students work better if they anticipate some positive activity or experiences as a reward. However, the promise should be extra, rather than the only incentive for good behavior. Class goals and rewards can provide encouragement (i.e. extra free time).

**After problems arise:**

- Allow a student to tell you their side of the situation. Be willing to consider mitigating circumstances.
- If you've made a mistake, admit it and apologize.
- Make sure consequences are appropriate for the misbehavior.
- Signal a student through gesture or look that their actions are unacceptable.
- Provide a transition period of drawing, singing, etc. that releases tension after an exciting or tense experience.

- Sometimes a student may do something impulsively and is not quite sure what the teacher will do as a consequence. React with humor and understanding — the student will be greatly relieved and assured of being accepted.
- When a student is about to explode in anger, tears or uncontrolled laughter, they may need to be removed from the situation so that they can gain control. You may use some pretext such as asking the student to run an errand, help with some task or get a drink of water.
- Don't talk about the problems encountered except to those who have a right to know.
- Don't argue with students.
- Don't accuse, threaten or humiliate a student.
- Don't use school work as punishment.
- When attractive nuisances, such as yo-yos or balls, are confiscated, it is wise to tell the student that the situation is temporary and that the student can reclaim their possession later when it is not distracting the class.
- Constructive criticism should focus on what is required for improvement.
- When teasing becomes more painful than playful or a free-for-all develops, a clear cut, "No," may provide a welcome stoplight to a student who is getting further into trouble than they intend. The teacher substitutes their authority for the student's self-control, which is temporarily out of commission. The effectiveness of this strategy increases if it is used only rarely.

**If you feel classroom management has been a disaster the first couples of weeks, don't worry — you still have time to try other practices which may work for your classroom environment.**



# Making Families Your Partner

**Families can be your best allies.** Educators know what an important difference family involvement can make in a child's education. But what can you do to show family members the role they play and make them a strong and lasting school ally?

**The NEA Foundation asked educators involved in successful dropout prevention programs nationwide how they enlist and energize families as partners.**

- Take the initiative to involve families. They want to be active in their child's education.
  - Schedule one-on-one conversations and ask parents/guardians what they want to know. Then share your knowledge, guidance and support.
  - Encourage families to spend time at school.
  - Give families a chance to share their talents and experiences in the classroom or on field trips.
  - Remember to say thank you with a call or note to families for their efforts.
  - When parents are not available, reach out to grandparents, foster parents or community volunteers who are serving as mentors to your students.
  - Publish a newsletter to keep families informed.
  - Share positive as well as negative feedback.
  - Give families a hands-on role by requiring a signature on homework and permission slips for activities.
- Turn back-to-school night into family night and invite students and families to come together to discuss what will be expected of students, families and teachers.
  - Encourage families to provide their children with a quiet study area, a good breakfast, a time to read together and supervision over television viewing.
  - Send a letter to families to begin the year. Often building principals will expect to see a copy of any letter before sending it home with students.

## Responding to Parent Concerns

Parents care deeply about their kids and how they are doing in school. Most often, parents are reasonable, respectful and cooperative when communicating with teachers. However, when problems arise, here are some basic guidelines to follow.

**Ask questions.** Check to see if the district has a policy on parent complaints.

**Try not to be defensive.** You share a common goal with parents — to help their children succeed in school. Try to approach every conversation with that in mind.



**Respond to unreasonable requests.** If a parent makes an unreasonable request, respond in a friendly, firm manner and try to work it out. For example, a parent wanting you to call every night to report on a child's performance can be informed, "I'm sure you understand I have 90 students and am not able to provide nightly updates. However, I have a suggestion..." Or, if a parent shows up at the door of your classroom, politely explain that you can't talk right now and suggest they call back after classes and make an appointment.

**Protect yourself.** Keep a log of all parent contacts (phone calls, visits, letters, etc.), noting date, time, place and what was discussed. Keep copies of all documents. If a parent complains to you, consider going to the association representative at your work site or your principal.

**Maintain confidentiality.** Don't talk about other students to any parent and discourage parents from doing so. Never mention other students' names, even if in their child's social group. Talk about their child's behavior only.

## Tips for Family Conferences

**Contact families early in the year.** Outline your curriculum and expectations, and let families know how they can reach you.

**Invite both parents.** But, be sure to find out first if a student comes from a single-parent home and if both parents should be invited or if the appropriate guardian is someone other than a parent. You will also want to be aware of any joint custody arrangements, which require dual notification.

**Allow enough time in the conference.** If you are scheduling back-to-back conferences, give yourself a cushion of time in between.

**Prepare in advance to answer specific questions.** Parents may have questions about their child's ability, skill level and achievements. Sending a simple questionnaire home prior to the conference asking parents if there's a specific concern can help you to be prepared and not be caught off guard.

**Get organized before the conference.** Assemble your grade book, test scores, student work samples and attendance records.

**Plan ahead.** Have in mind a general, but flexible, outline of what you're going to say, including a snapshot of student progress, review of student's strengths and needs and proposed plan of action.

**Greet parents at the door.** Also, you'll help parents feel welcome and relieve their anxiety if you greet them by name. Check records in advance to make sure you have names correct.

**Avoid physical barriers.** Don't sit behind your desk or ask parents to perch on uncomfortable chairs.

**Open on a positive note.** Begin conferences on a warm, positive note to relax everyone. Start with a positive statement about the child's abilities, schoolwork or interests. Show some of the child's work.

**Structure the session.** As soon as the parents arrive, review the structure of the conference — the why, what, how and when — so you'll both have an agenda. Remember, parents often come with their own agendas or questions they want answered, so you'll need to be flexible.

**Be specific.** Your comments and suggested course of action should reflect the needs of their child.

**Offer a suggested course of action.** Parents appreciate being given some specific direction. If a student is demonstrating immature behaviors, it might be helpful to suggest that the parents give their child a list of weekly chores, allow them to take care of a pet or give them a notebook to write down assignments to build responsibility. When you offer advice, ask parents if they've noticed the same behavior at home and for any suggestions they may have.

**Forget the jargon.** Try not to use edu-babble and acronyms, because it sounds like doubletalk to most parents.

**Hear parents out.** In routine parent conferences, it's unusual to run into parents who are abusive and hostile. But it can happen. Try not to be rude, whatever the provocation. Hear out the parents in as pleasant a manner as possible, without getting defensive.

**Ask for parents' opinions, even if the comments are hostile or negative.** Thank them for offering input and feedback.

**Focus on strengths.** It's very easy for parents to feel defensive, since many of them see themselves in their kids. It is helpful if you review the child's strengths and areas of need, rather than dwelling on criticism or stressing weaknesses.

**Use body language.** Non-verbal cues set the mood of the conference. Smile, nod, make eye contact and lean forward slightly. You'll be using your body language to let parents know you're interested and approachable.

**Stress collaboration.** Let the parent know you want to work together in the best interest of the child. A statement like, "you need to see me as soon as possible to discuss Johnny's poor study habits," only arouses hostility, while, "I'd like to discuss with you how we might work together to improve Johnny's study habits," gets the relationship off on the right foot.



**Listen to what the parents say.** Even though we spend nearly a third of our lives listening, most adults are poor listeners. We concentrate on what we're going to say next, we let our minds drift off to other concerns or we hear only part of what a speaker is saying. You'll get more out of a parent conference if you really listen to what parents are saying.

**Ask about the child.** You don't want to pry, of course, but remember to ask parents if there's anything they think you should know about the child (such as study habits, relationships with siblings, any important events in their life), which may affect their schoolwork. Ask about hobbies or interests that can be connected to throughout the school year (writing topics, etc.).

**Focus on solutions.** Ideally, all parent conferences would focus only on positive events. Realistically, many conferences are held because there's an issue or concern somewhere. Things will go smoother if you focus on solutions, rather than on challenges. Discuss what you and the parents can do to help improve the situation. Plan a course of action together.

**Don't judge.** It may not always be possible to react neutrally to what parents say — their values may be different from your own — but communicating any judgement of parents' attitudes or behaviors can be a roadblock to a productive relationship with them.

**Summarize.** Before the conference ends, summarize the discussion and what action you and the parents have decided to take to support the student.

**Finish on a positive note.** When you can, save at least one encouraging comment or positive statement about the student for the end of the conference.

**Meet again, if needed.** If you feel you need more time, arrange another meeting later, rather than trying to rush everything before the conference time concludes.

**Keep a record of the conference.** You may find it helpful later to have a brief record of what was said at the conference, what suggestions for improvement were made and so forth. Make notes as soon as possible after the conference, while details are fresh.

# Trauma-informed Support for Students

ISTA has been a leader in advancing a trauma-informed model of education in Indiana. Schools should have the resources to support all our students. **Safe and supportive schools are healthy learning and working environments**, and educators must be empowered to create and implement dynamic trauma-informed schools, where all students, including those who have been affected by trauma, can learn and thrive.

## What are ACES?

**Adverse childhood experiences (ACES) are traumatic experiences that can inhibit a students' learning. Examples of ACES include:**

- Frequent socioeconomic hardship
- Parental divorce or separation
- Parental death
- Parental incarceration
- Family violence
- Neighborhood violence
- Living with someone who is mentally ill or suicidal
- Living with someone who has a substance abuse problem
- Racial bias

According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, when children do not have consistent safety, comfort and protection in their homes



and communities they often develop coping mechanisms that help them survive in stressful and traumatic environments. Should the stress and trauma continue for extended periods of time, these coping mechanisms can inhibit a child's ability to develop cognitively, socially or physically.

## Symptoms of Trauma

### Cognitive Delays

A delay in normal brain development process.

### Inability to Process Relationships and Emotions

Difficulty forming or maintaining relationships.

### Inability to Predict and Make Inferences

Difficulty understanding cause and effect.

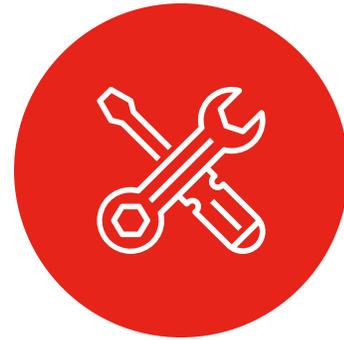
### Wariness of the Future

The future feels unpredictable and out of control.

---

## How to Support Students Who Have or Are Experiencing Trauma

- Create a safe space and nurture healthy relationships for students.
- Help kids identify their emotions as a first step toward getting calm and centered.
- Use exercises that build mind-body connections to help kids manage their emotions.
- Help students learn self-regulation strategies to calm down during a trigger experience.
- Notice changes in student behavior and work with a guidance counselor or school social worker to bring in additional support.
- Champion healthy, trusting relationships by connecting each student to at least two other caring adults.
- Help students understand how their brains work so they can be aware of how they learn.
- Help students build a vocabulary for the emotions they feel themselves and observe in others.



## Resources

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### Adverse Childhood Experiences

[bit.ly/3c0U43q](https://bit.ly/3c0U43q)

*Centers for Disease Control*

[bit.ly/2Ypz02W](https://bit.ly/2Ypz02W)

*Indiana State Department of Health*

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### Adversity in Childhood & Childhood Trauma

[bit.ly/2Ykfc0e](https://bit.ly/2Ykfc0e)

*Substance Abuse and Mental*

*Health Services Administration*

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### Trauma-sensitive Classrooms in General Education Settings

[bit.ly/2y2vsJf](https://bit.ly/2y2vsJf)

*Indiana Department of Education*

# Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

Recognizing the fears and sensitivities of our kids is very important for today's education employees. Kids who have been or are currently being subjected to abuse outside of school will be more likely to misinterpret actions that other students would not. A child who shows no outward signs of abuse may still be living in terror of being touched or may have an emotionally devastating reaction to a simple verbal reprimand.

Being aware of the signs of abuse may save you and the child from unnecessary turmoil resulting from an innocent action or statement.

There are several behavioral clues that may lead you to suspect that a student is being abused. Of course, one sign or symptom does not necessarily indicate child abuse, but there are some clues that may lead you to suspect it.

## Reporting Requirements

A school employee who has reason to believe that a student is a victim of child abuse or neglect must immediately make an oral or written report to the Department of Child Services (DCS) or to the local law enforcement agency (IC 31-33-5-1, -2). After making the report, the school employee

is then required to notify the individual in charge of the school to let them know a report was made (IC 31-33-5-2).

Indiana law requires that the school employee contact DCS or police first, and then inform the principal. Additionally, the law prohibits a school corporation from making any policy that restricts or delays the duty of a school employee to report to DCS or police (IC 31-33-5-5). A school employee who fails to make a report commits a Class B misdemeanor carrying a fine of up to \$1,000 or 180 days in jail (IC 31-33-22-1). Failure to report suspected abuse to DCS may also leave you open to a large civil liability suit.

The requirement to report includes such things as physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.



### Watch for Signs of Abuse

- Child appears nervous, disruptive or hyperactive.
- Child has a pattern of unexplained injuries or an inordinate number of explained ones.
- Child comes to school inappropriately dressed for the season.
- Child is habitually late or often absent from school.
- Child arrives early or leaves late because they are reluctant to go home.
- Child is unusually fearful of adults and other children.
- Child is unusually shy, withdrawn or passive.
- Child goes to the bathroom with difficulty.
- Child is constantly tired, thin or shows evidence of malnutrition.

### Protect Yourself from Potential Allegations of Child Abuse

- Never leave your classroom unattended.
- Never be alone with a student.
- Don't meet with students behind closed doors.
- Make sure all students understand your classroom rules, especially those related to safety.
- Make sure students are adequately supervised when out of the classroom or on field trips.
- Never transport students in your personal vehicle.
- Never allow students to place themselves in personal danger.
- Never act in anger and always follow the school board's policy when dealing with student discipline.
- Never kick students or their desks.
- If you must physically restrain a student in a disciplinary situation, use only reasonable force.
- A hug or pat-on-the-back may be fine for primary-aged children, but always refrain from touches that may be misinterpreted by older students.
- Know your district's policy on corporal punishment. Many physical abuse charges stem from corporal punishment.



# What Is Red For Ed?

Red For Ed is a grassroots movement led by public school educators, advocates, parents and community members. The movement seeks to ensure respect for educators, increased public education funding and professional salaries for educators.

More than 20,000 supporters joined ISTA for the Red For Ed Action Day at the Statehouse in 2019. As a result, in the 2020 General Assembly, ISTA secured hold harmless on I-LEARN, decoupled test scores from teacher evaluations and repealed the teacher externship requirement.

## How Can You Participate?

Many of the Red For Ed priorities impact new and early career educators directly from career earnings to retirement savings capacity to student loan repayment. Your voice is valuable and meaningful to reflect the experiences of all educators.

Connect with your local association leaders, Red For Ed coordinator or work site leader to get connected with what your local is doing in your community.



Visit [InvestInEducationIN.org](https://InvestInEducationIN.org) to learn more and join the movement.



Indiana  
State  
Teachers  
Association

# RESOURCES

## FOR NEW & EARLY CAREER EDUCATORS



It's our mission to ensure educators have a seat at the table. Whether it's Red For Ed goals, representation at the bargaining table or legal support, we're here for you. Join at [ista-in.org/JoinNow](http://ista-in.org/JoinNow).



We're raising our voices for Red For Ed to protect public schools. To support every student, we're wearing Red For Ed. Let's stand together. Join the movement at [InvestInEducationIN.org](http://InvestInEducationIN.org).



ISTA and your local association are in your work site and your schools to protect your rights and represent you during bargaining, evaluations and discussion. More at [ista-in.org/legal-benefits](http://ista-in.org/legal-benefits).



Access high-quality professional development. Attend ISTA conferences, including the Good Teaching Conference with tracks tailored for new and early career educators. More at [ista-in.org/events](http://ista-in.org/events).



NEA's School Me series features tips, advice and life hacks to help you feel confident in your first years on the job. Check out podcasts, videos and blogs at [nea.org/schoolme](http://nea.org/schoolme).



NEA micro-credentials are competency-based credentials focused on classroom practices. They count toward your Professional Growth Plan. Explore at [ista-in.org/micro-credentials](http://ista-in.org/micro-credentials).



Student loan debt can feel overwhelming, but we've put together resources to help you make the best decisions about your financial future. Find info at [nea.org/degreesnotdebt](http://nea.org/degreesnotdebt).



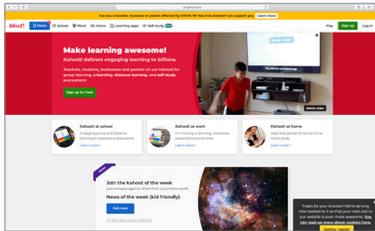
EdJustice engages and mobilizes activists in the fight for racial, social and economic justice in public education. Learn more at [neaedjustice.org](http://neaedjustice.org).



Whether you're planning a well-deserved vacation, purchasing a vehicle or shopping, NEA Member Benefits is there to help maximize your hard-earned dollars. Save at [NEAMB.org](http://NEAMB.org) and [ista-in.org/ISTAMB](http://ista-in.org/ISTAMB).

Our kids. Our schools. Our future.  
Join us at [ista-in.org/JoinNow](http://ista-in.org/JoinNow).

# Additional Tools and Resources



## Kahoot

A free, game-based learning platform that makes learning fun for any subject, in any language, on any device for all ages.

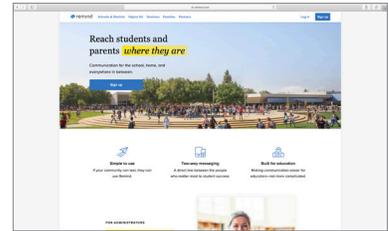
[kahoot.com](http://kahoot.com)



## Crowd Signal

Quickly and easily set up a survey or poll for your students. You can see the answers instantly — no tallying required.

[crowdsignal.com](http://crowdsignal.com)



## Remind

Free text messaging app that helps teachers, students and parents communicate quickly and efficiently.

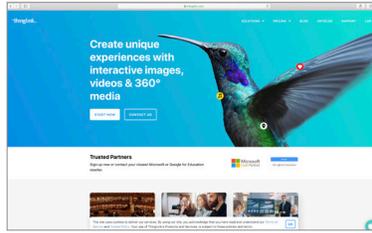
[remind.com](http://remind.com)



## Wordle

Type in verbiage and see a visual interpretation of all the words used.

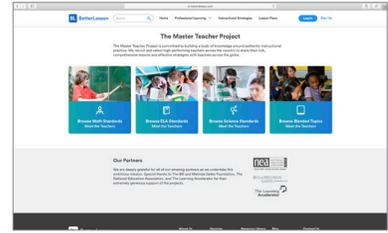
[wordle.net](http://wordle.net)



## Thinglink

Turn a picture into a visually appealing cluster of links. Tag people in a photo and link to articles about them or cover an infographic in links for further information. Then post the image to your class's web page!

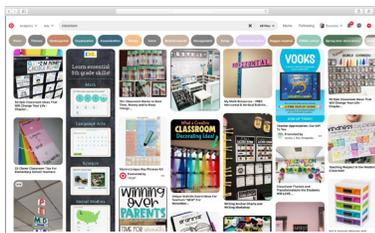
[thinglink.com](http://thinglink.com)



## Master Teacher Project

The Master Teacher Project is committed to building a body of knowledge around authentic instructional practice. High-performing teachers across the country are selected to share their rich, comprehensive lessons and effective strategies with teachers across the globe.

[bit.ly/3f3azhm](http://bit.ly/3f3azhm)



## Pinterest

Teachers post free print outs, pictures of beautiful classrooms and links to resources.

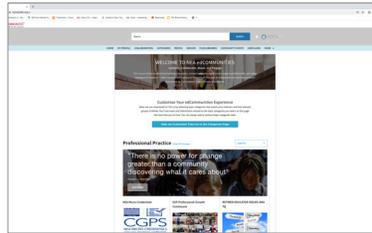
[pinterest.com](http://pinterest.com)



## Works4Me

The weekly e-newsletter brings practical classroom tips written by teachers like you.

[nea.org/tools/Works4Me.html](http://nea.org/tools/Works4Me.html)



## EdCommunities

Connect, collaborate, share and engage in an online community of educators.

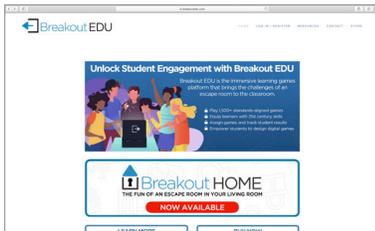
[mynea360.org](http://mynea360.org)



## Class Dojo

A safe and simple communication app for teachers, parents and students.

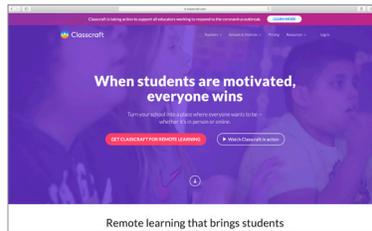
[classdojo.com](http://classdojo.com)



## Breakout Edu

Bring all the excitement of an escape room to your classroom in a small wooden box with this immersive learning games platform.

[breakoutedu.com](http://breakoutedu.com)



## Classcraft

Helps teachers manage, motivate and engage their students by transforming their classroom into a role-playing game.

[classcraft.com](http://classcraft.com)



## Wordpress

Make your own page using Wordpress. If your students subscribe, they'll receive an email every time you post something new.

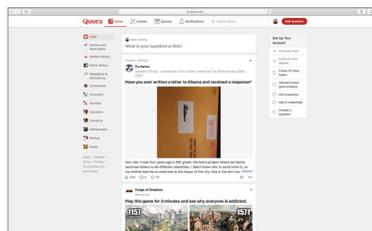
[wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com)



## Lesson Plans

NEA has prepared lessons plans for you to use in your classroom.

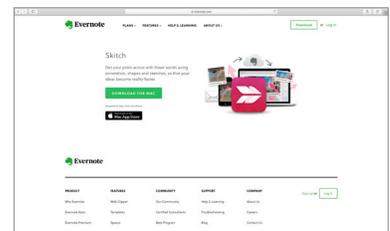
[nea.org/tools/LessonPlans.html](http://nea.org/tools/LessonPlans.html)



## Quora

If you have a question, Quora has an answer.

[quora.com](http://quora.com)



## Skitch

Skitch is a quick and easy photo-editing application.

[evernote.com/products/skitch](http://evernote.com/products/skitch)

# ISTA Supports New and Early Career Educators

ISTA offers professional development conferences, leadership development, professional credentialing and networking aimed at building the confidence and skillset of our newest educators. **It's our goal to get you started right** and support you throughout your career.



## Professional Development Conferences

Learn more and find upcoming events at [ista-in.org/events](https://ista-in.org/events). Our conferences provide you an opportunity to earn PGP points for licensure.



## Micro-credentials

Micro-credentials are designed to support you in both the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge. NEA micro-credentials are created and assessed by teachers and are focused on classroom practices that support student success.

NEA micro-credentials are free, regardless of membership status with NEA. Each micro-credential submission is equivalent to 15 PGP points. Explore the micro-credential options at [nea.certificationbank.com/Indiana](https://nea.certificationbank.com/Indiana).



## Leadership Development

ISTA has two programs for new and early career educators to develop leadership skills and learn more about the Association. Find more information at [ista-in.org/emerging-leaders](https://ista-in.org/emerging-leaders) and [ista-in.org/ELI](https://ista-in.org/ELI).

# Preparing for Your Evaluation

As professionals, we have an ongoing responsibility to stay up to date in our field and to sharpen and improve our skills. To help meet this responsibility, we need expert feedback on our performance.

**Evaluations can result in a positive experience**, which opens lines of communication and improves the quality of your instruction and/or job performance.

Through the evaluation process, specific strengths as well as areas for improvement can be identified in positive ways, encouraging growth and professional development. Everyone is more successful when an effective evaluation system is in place and used effectively.

## Before the Evaluation

### Assemble and review the following materials:

- Negotiated collective bargaining agreement/board policy and procedures for evaluations
- Your job description
- Previous observations and evaluation reports
- Notes on lessons observed
- Letters of recommendation — save all recognition and praise
- Positive examples of what you are doing
- Other data on which you want to focus

Consult your work site's association representative to find out how supervisors conduct conferences, what types of improvement plans are proposed and how supervisors generally write up conferences.

## During the Evaluation

### Conduct yourself in the following ways:

- Come to the conference clearly having in mind what you want to accomplish.
- Keep accurate notes, especially important positives and negatives.
- Situate yourself physically so you are comfortable.
- Guide the discussion with your supervisor when appropriate.
- Establish the initial premise early in the conference. If not indicated by the supervisor, establish this yourself by stating, for example, "It appears that my overall performance continues to be highly satisfactory, and it appears that this is your conclusion, too."
- Listen attentively.
- Clarify by questioning when desired and when necessary.
- Expect and request positive reinforcement and constructive suggestions.

*"Never put in electronic form anything that you wouldn't want viewed by a million people, including your colleagues, students and supervisors — and your mother."*

**Michael D. Simpson, NEA Office of General Counsel**

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# Tips to Protect Yourself and Your Career Online

With the rise of technology, educators have many new opportunities to use the internet to communicate in ways we never thought possible. However, with new technology comes pitfalls. As a school employee, you must exercise extreme caution when you engage in social media or other forms of internet communication.

Keep in mind that your First Amendment rights can be limited by virtue of your position as a school employee. The general rule is that school employees can be disciplined for off-duty conduct if the school district can show that the conduct had an adverse impact on the school or the teacher's ability to teach. And it wouldn't be too difficult to make that case if the teacher's social media includes sexually explicit or other inappropriate content and is widely viewed by students. Consequences can be severe, from a written reprimand to a suspension or termination of employment to suspension or revocation of one's teaching license.

## Tips for Online Communication

1. What you post on the internet is, for all intents and purposes, there forever. If you have questionable content on the internet, remove it NOW. Be wary, though, that once you have removed content from the internet, it might still be there preserved by an image-capturing historical documentation site which takes daily screen captures of random sites on any given date and time. Also, removing something from the internet doesn't mean someone else hasn't printed it or taken a screenshot and saved it prior to your removing it.
2. Minimize the risk associated with online communication by limiting access to your blog, social network or website using a "friends only" or similar restrictive setting. If you are using Facebook, review the privacy options and choose the most restrictive ones. This will make sure only trusted individuals can see the information you are posting. Use extreme caution when "friending" relatives or other individuals who may have connections

to students. You may need to revise their access privileges to your site or social network while you have students connected to them in your school.

3. Don't "friend" students and NEVER GIVE A STUDENT ACCESS TO YOUR SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE. Most districts have policies or directives that prohibit staff from inviting or accepting invitations from students to be "friends" on a social network. Check your district's policies and make sure your internet habits comply. Review the policies with your UniServ Director. As social networks become more integrated into daily life and learning, some schools are starting to allow this, make certain to maintain separate networks for your personal life and your classes — and never allow the two to commingle.
4. If visitors can post to your blog or website, monitor postings constantly and remove any that are inappropriate. Most blogging sites give blog authors and administrators the ability to review and approve blog comments before they are posted. We recommend you use this option if it is available to you.
5. Do not blog or post about your job duties, colleagues, supervisors or students, even in passing. This will reduce the danger that you might disclose confidential information, share information about a private workplace complaint or otherwise carelessly or unintentionally engage in speech which could affect your future employment.
6. If you choose to blog or post as a citizen about a non-job-related matter of public concern (i.e., the elections, terrorism or environmental issue), take care that what you say will not impede your employer's effectiveness or efficiency or otherwise disrupt the workplace.
7. If you are blogging or posting about innocuous information (i.e., your favorite football team or family genealogy), you still must be careful not to engage in comments that could adversely affect your employer (i.e., damage the employer's reputation) or interfere with your ability to carry out your job duties.
8. Do not blog or post about personal subjects (i.e., dating, romance or drug or alcohol use). Your blog or website should not contain any references to sexual subjects or contain vulgar, graphic or profane language. If your blog or webpage were a movie, it should be rated "G."
9. Blogging and posting anonymously does not protect you. Names of bloggers, website authors and other users can be discovered through litigation.
10. Be very careful about posting pictures of yourself or family online. Scrutinize every photo before deciding to post it. Avoid party photos. If others have tagged you in questionable photos on their social networks or websites, ask them to remove them immediately. On Facebook, you also have the option of blocking tags identifying you, even on someone else's page. If you are allowed to maintain a site or social media profile for classroom purposes, before posting any student photos, make sure you follow district procedures and/or seek written permission from those in photos before posting them.

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**Disclaimer:** This document is not meant to be comprehensive or a substitute for common sense when using social networking sites, and it is not intended to provide legal advice. For additional information, contact your UniServ Director.

# Following the Model Code of Educator Ethics

This is an abbreviated presentation of the Model Code of Educator Ethics. To explore more deeply, visit [nasdtec.net/page/MCEE\\_Doc](https://nasdtec.net/page/MCEE_Doc).

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## **Principle I: Responsibility to the Profession**

The professional educator is aware that trust in the profession depends upon a level of professional conduct and responsibility that may be higher than required by law. This entails holding one and other educators to the same ethical standards.

- The professional educator demonstrates responsibility to oneself as an ethical professional.
  - The professional educator fulfills the obligation to address and attempt to resolve ethical issues.
  - The professional educator promotes and advances the profession within and beyond the school community.
- 

## **Principle II: Responsibility for Professional Competence**

The professional educator is committed to the highest levels of professional and ethical practice, including demonstration of the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for professional competence.

- The professional educator demonstrates commitment to high standards of practice.
  - The professional educator demonstrates responsible use of data, materials, research and assessment.
  - The professional educator acts in the best interest of all students.
-

### **Principle III: Responsibility to Students**

The professional educator has a primary obligation to treat students with dignity and respect. The professional educator promotes the health, safety and wellbeing of students by establishing and maintaining appropriate verbal, physical, emotional and social boundaries.

- The professional educator respects the rights and dignity of students.
  - The professional educator demonstrates an ethic of care.
  - The professional educator maintains student trust and confidentiality when interacting with students in a developmentally appropriate manner and within appropriate limits.
- 

### **Principle IV: Responsibility to the School Community**

The professional educator promotes positive relationships and effective interactions with members of the school community, while maintaining professional boundaries.

The professional educator promotes effective and appropriate relationships with parents/guardians by:

- The professional educator promotes effective and appropriate relationships with colleagues.
  - The professional educator promotes effective and appropriate relationships with the community and other stakeholders.
  - The professional educator promotes effective and appropriate relationships with employers.
  - The professional educator understands the problematic nature of multiple relationships.
- 

### **Principle V: Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology**

The professional educator considers the impact of consuming, creating, distributing and communicating information through all technologies. The ethical educator is vigilant to ensure appropriate boundaries of time, place and role are maintained when using electronic communication.

- The professional educator uses technology in a responsible manner.
  - The professional educator ensures students' safety and well-being when using technology.
  - The professional educator maintains confidentiality in the use of technology.
  - The professional educator promotes the appropriate use of technology in educational settings.
-

# Developing a Healthy Work/Life Balance

The first few weeks and months of school will have many new demands on your time. It can become stressful if you don't establish and follow habits that will allow you to deal with stress positively. Use these suggestions to start off right.



## Leave Your Stress at School

We know you will have homework, but leave the stress of the day behind.

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## Recognize and Accept Your Limits

Many of us can set unreasonable and perfectionist goals for ourselves. But we can never be perfect (or even come close), so we often have a sense of failure or inadequacy no matter how well we perform. Are your goals achievable?

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## Find a Friend

This could be someone in your work site who can be a trusted listener.

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## Exercise

Regular exercise, like walking, helps keep the body and mind clear.

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## Get Plenty of Sleep

Go to bed early if you are tired.

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## Be Good to Yourself

What could do more for your self-esteem than to take yourself out to dinner or buy yourself a treat? Always have something to look forward to — this will lift your spirits.

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## Don't Schedule All of Your Leisure Hours

You live by a schedule all day long. Leave yourself some open space on your calendar.

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## Don't Feel You Have to Do Everything

You can't and you won't.

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## Observe Good Eating Habits

Eat a healthy diet of vegetables, fruit and protein.

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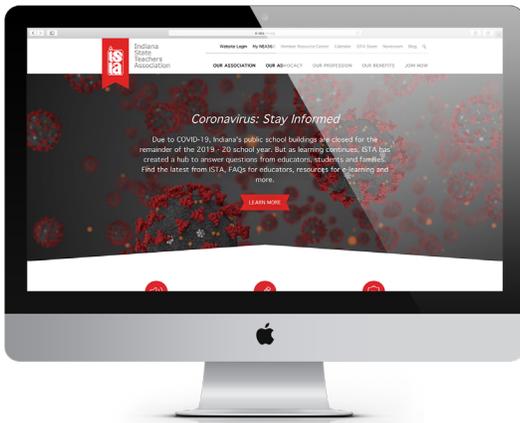
## Don't Procrastinate

Do the things you have to do.

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# More About ISTA

ISTA has a variety of resources for you to learn more about your Association. **Check out these resources.**



**ISTA Website**  
*ista-in.org*

## ISTA on Social Media



Instagram  
*instagram.com/istamembers*



Facebook  
*facebook.com/indianastateteachers*



Twitter  
*twitter.com/ISTAmembers*



Pinterest  
*pinterest.com/istaindiana*



LinkedIn  
*linkedin.com/company/Indiana-state-teachers-association*

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**NEA edCommunities**  
*mynea360.org*

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**NEAToday School Me**  
*neatoday.org/school-me*

# Contact the ISTA Member Resource Center.

## Have membership questions?



**CALL**



**EMAIL**



**CHAT**

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Our dedicated ISTA Member Resource Center (MRC) team is available to answer your membership questions. **The MRC is available:**

**MONDAY TO THURSDAY: 7 A.M. - 6 P.M. ET**

**FRIDAY: 7 A.M. - 4:45 P.M. ET**

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**CALL: 844-ASK-ISTA • EMAIL: [ASKISTA@ISTA-IN.ORG](mailto:ASKISTA@ISTA-IN.ORG)**

**FAX: 844-FAX-ISTA • CHAT: [ISTA-IN.ORG/ASKISTA](https://www.ista-in.org/askista)**

