



Just for the ASKing!

by Bruce Oliver

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Just for the ASKing! is a monthly e-newsletter that addresses the interests of all those who strive to be instructional leaders. This month the focus is on the closing of school. In addition to Bruce's guiding principles for the closing of school, we present a new tool, **The 2012 Closing of School Checklist**.

The 2012 Closing of School Checklist



Bruce facilitating the Leading the Learning workshop.

For six years, the most popular issue of *Just for the ASKing!* has been the **Opening of School Checklist**; it was first published in July 2005 and is updated and published each July. During the past year, e-newsletter subscribers have expressed an interest in a **Closing of School Checklist**. As a result of those requests, we are providing you a list of suggested tasks that can help you to end the school year on a positive note. The ideas presented are based on personal experiences as well as input from building administrators and other school personnel. We know that not all suggestions will apply to all schools, but those that do not apply may cause you to think of others we neglected to include. In addition to specific tasks to be accomplished as the school year ends, we are including some guiding principles to consider as the school year ends.

Guiding Principles for the Closing of School

Keep the focus on instruction.

As the school year draws to a close, some practitioners start closing down too soon. Teachers need to set the tone in the classroom that there is still more to be learned even though the school year is ending. Because the students may be mentally shutting down, this is the time for teachers to make learning more enticing and interesting to maintain student involvement.

Be creative.

Unfortunately, some students feel that once standardized testing is completed, so is their investment in classroom activities. There is often a build-up to the school's testing program, and after the tests are completed both teachers and students breathe a sigh of relief. The time period after school wide testing is a great time for teachers to inspire students with creative learning experiences which may include student presentations and/or demonstrations, the use of multiple intelligence strategies, as well as the inclusion of student choice as students demonstrate their learning. Keeping the students interested and involved is a real challenge but when teachers add creative dimensions to learning, the students may respond by buying into lessons they find interesting and applicable to their real world.

Grades should not be a surprise.

Many teachers keep their students apprised of their academic standing on a routine basis. It is always

surprising to me when students are unaware of their grade or where they stand in meeting the course standards. Many teachers require their students to keep a log of their grades and they allow the students to periodically assess their standing in the course. In any case, students should never be surprised when they receive their final grade, especially students who are in danger of failing. Equally important is that parents should not be caught off guard when final report cards arrive at home.

Reach closure with individual students.

One of my fondest memories as a principal was watching successful teachers hold individual conferences with each student as the school year drew to a close. The teachers emphasized what each student had accomplished as well as goals the student set for future learning. Instead of whiling away the time with loosely structured classroom events or individual busy work, teachers can help each student feel a sense of accomplishment by collaboratively exploring with students their academic growth.

Provide ideas for students during the summer break.

While some students face their summer break from school with a sense of euphoria, there are many students who will face their summer months with sadness or even dread. These students see their school as a place of stability and predictability in their lives. When the safe haven that school provides is not available, some children are lost as they deal with environments that are unpredictable, and, in some cases, unstable. Schools can help these students by remembering to publicize community programs and events that students can access during their break from school. Additionally, it is important to send information to parents who may not be aware of these resources or who may not know how to help their children to become involved in these programs.

Think about the future.

There is a great deal of activity near the end of the school year. With this whirlwind of non-stop events, many educators find it difficult to think beyond the last day of school. Take some time before the school year ends, mentally review the school year just completed, and jot down thoughts about how to begin the next school year and ideas you definitely want to add to your teaching repertoire. Whereas some educators have a tendency to dwell on what didn't work, it is much more satisfying and prudent to make a list of what went well, especially stopping to reflect on the students whose lives they have impacted in a positive way.

Have a great instructionally-focused closing of school! All of us at Just ASK hope you find the attached **Closing of School Checklist** useful. Let us know if you have other tasks which you think should be included. To extend your thinking on these issues, see the [June 2005 issue](#) of *Just for the ASKing!* titled "[Summertime... and the Livin' Is Easy... Or Is It?](#)"

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The 2012 Closing of School Checklist

Administrative Responsibilities

Person Responsible

Deadline

Solicit ideas from faculty members on the development of next year's master schedule

Continue or complete work on next year's master schedule

Create and distribute a teacher checkout form

Provide a day-by-day, end-of-the-year calendar for the last two weeks of school

Ensure that all staff members are notified of any bell schedule changes during the final weeks of school

Publicize the final exam schedule to staff, students, and parents

Make arrangements and establish procedures for make-up exams

Develop and communicate a schedule for locker clean out with directions for the staff

Identify final school wide activities including general assemblies, special awards assemblies, graduation, plays or talent shows, concerts, yearbook distribution, field trips, parent orientations, student orientations, curriculum nights, athletic events, field days, etc.

Work with those responsible for these school wide events to ensure the plans follow established procedures and all necessary logistical arrangements are made

For awards assemblies, identify the school personnel who will present an award and invite the parents of children receiving awards to the ceremony

The 2012 Closing of School Checklist

Administrative Responsibilities

Person Responsible

Deadline

Collaboratively plan final faculty events including end-of-the-year luncheons, retirement ceremonies, or parent-supported celebrations

Remind teachers about copyright laws and district policies that apply to the use of multi-media materials (DVDs)

Provide directions for the collection of textbooks and the collection of fines from students for lost or damaged textbooks

Complete all final evaluations and conduct final teacher evaluation conferences

Arrange for extra supervision on the last day of school as buses arrive in the morning and leave at the end of school to monitor student behavior and ensure student safety

Provide extra cafeteria supervision during the last week of school

If elementary students do not go to specials and remain with their base teachers during the last days of schools, provide coverage for grade level teachers to give them breaks

Complete an inspection of classrooms before teachers leave for the summer

Identify and publicize the dates for student orientations that will occur before the beginning of the next school year

Determine the dates for the new teacher orientation and notify staff members who will participate in the orientation

Make arrangements for any volunteers (parents, students, etc.) who will provide support for the opening of the next school year

The 2012 Closing of School Checklist

Administrative Responsibilities

Person Responsible

Deadline

Set a time to meet with the PTA officers for the upcoming school year to discuss priorities and ways parents can help at the beginning of and throughout the school year

Provide guidelines for teachers regarding end-of-the-year classroom parties/celebrations ensuring that teachers monitor the quality and quantity of food involved in these celebrations

Solicit budget information requests from departments or grade levels so that plans can be made to include the requests in the school's plans

Review school finances in preparation for summer audit

Order supplies for next year's school opening

Work with the custodial staff to develop a schedule for summer cleaning of the building

Ensure that the building or district technology specialist works with teachers to manage technology resource summer use, maintenance, and storage

Have the technology specialist provide an updated spreadsheet of the school's technology inventory with discrepancies and needs noted

Make sure that all technology upgrades (software and hardware) are performed over the summer months and create a schedule for teacher training for the next school year

Coordinate with the athletic department to make sure that all appropriate equipment is collected, inventoried, and stored

Gather collaborative team reports/notebooks for review over the summer

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Administrative Responsibilities

Person Responsible

Deadline

Notify staff of professional development opportunities (both school-based and district-wide) to be offered during the summer

Share suggested (or required) professional summer reading with school staff

Complete and publicize a schedule for building use during the summer months

Update the school's website

Publicize supply lists for the upcoming school year on the school's website, to the community, and local merchants

Meet with appropriate staff members to determine student placement in classes for the next school year

Create, distribute, and collect a "Year in Review" feedback form for all staff, including teachers, specialists, teacher aides, secretaries, custodians, etc.

Provide department chairs or grade level leaders a separate checkout form addressing their end-of-the-year responsibilities

Make arrangements for panel interviews for future hires that will take place during the summer

Continue or complete new hires for the next school year

Select mentors for each of the new teachers and communicate expectations for the mentoring process

Notify parents of when reports cards will be mailed/emailed

The 2012 Closing of School Checklist

Administrative Responsibilities

Person Responsible

Deadline

Ensure that appropriate personnel provide parents with advanced notice of any student who may be in danger of failing for the year

Provide summer school information to parents so that students are enrolled before a deadline date

Notify community of any changes in the hours the school will be open during the summer months

Provide parents with a deadline for student schedule requests to be submitted

Publicize information about community resources available during the summer along with information about how parents can access the resources

The 2012 Closing of School Checklist

Student Services Responsibilities

Person Responsible

Deadline

Ensure that all final grades are turned in by designated date

Collect student attendance thorough the date designated by the district

Follow up on missing student course selection sheets and ensure that all are on file

Double check files/records for current/updated IEPs and make arrangements for completion of any missing IEPs

Provide official notification to appropriate school personnel, parents, and students of students who will not be promoted or who have not fulfilled graduation requirements

Communicate with feeder schools about any students who require special attention or have special needs prior to the beginning of the next school year

Coordinate the updating of students' cumulative files with all required information

Ensure all student folders to be sent to the students' next school have all required/requested information

Coordinate the transmittal of pertinent student information and records to/from feeder/receiving schools

The 2012 Closing of School Checklist

Teacher Responsibilities

Required Date

Date Task Completed

Follow guidelines provided by the media specialist about what materials may remain in classrooms and what materials should be returned to the media center

Remind students of locker clean out process and supervise locker clean out as assigned

Turn in completed grade book to designated person

Follow guidelines for the collection of textbooks and information on assessing fines for lost or damaged textbooks

Inspect books to determine if books need to be discarded or rebound

Make a list of books requiring rebinding and pack them in the provided boxes

Pack books and book list in labeled boxes and place boxes in designated location

Provide all appropriate personnel summer contact information including phone numbers and email address

Check with department chair or team leader for guidance specific to teaching assignment

Collect student portfolios created during the year to pass on to next year's teacher

Complete and submit all data for local school testing such as DRA results and end-of-the-year testing results

Avoid taking leave during the final week of school

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Teacher Responsibilities

Required Date

Date Task Completed

Submit all sign-out forms to the appropriate staff member (administrator, media specialist, department chair, grade level leader, etc.)

Prepare classroom for summer cleaning following established guidelines

Mark items left in your classroom with tape and your name clearly indicated

Place copies of final exams in designated location for review and/or completion during the summer

Prepare and distribute recommended summer reading lists along with questions to guide student reading to students, parents, and the local library

Remind students that school wide rules apply until the school year is completed

During the last week of school, limit hall passes to absolutely necessary movement

Watch for potentially disruptive items students might bring to school; request the items from students and turn them in to the main office

Be at classroom door during each passing period to help move students through the hallways and into their classrooms

Check restrooms near classroom during planning periods and at all opportunities

Take appropriate action with students who are excessively or repeatedly tardy

The 2012 Closing of School Checklist

Teacher Responsibilities

Required Date

Date Task Completed

Follow the guidelines established by the building or district technology specialist for proper storing/maintenance of all technology including:

- computers
- printers
- keyboards
- computer peripherals such as cameras, microphones, headphones, etc.
- Smartboard peripherals such as pens, erasers, USB connections, etc.

Turn in room keys