# Instructional Excellence Action List:

# Lead the Classroom

***Lead with purpose and compassion, setting and reinforcing norms for routines and behavior,
in face-to-face learning and online.***

This action list is concerned with logistical and behavioral routines that **lead students to be engaged and focused on school work**. Items with checkboxes are suggested actions; add your own. Items marked with \* are essentials to master immediately and practice consistently.

| **BEFORE THE SCHOOL YEAR, with MCL’s guidance:** |
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| * **LEAD WITH A FIRM, YET WARM PRESENCE, IN PERSON and ONLINE**
* Influence students with strong posture, strong voice, and strong online communication\*

[ ]  Practice posture of authority—use online examples and tutorials [ ]  Practice voice clarity and volume—“speaking to the back of the class”[ ]  Think ahead about classroom situations that may upset you; plan with your MCL how you will remain warm, firm, present, and focused on helping students learn* Model eagerness for learning

[ ]  Plan 2–3 example actions or stories: model/tell students about your learning joy for a topic [ ]  Plan a compelling story: when you overcame a learning challenge or did more than expected * Circulate throughout the classroom (and/or conduct check-ins online)

[ ]  Plan daily steps you will take to check students’ work a) by circulating during class and b) online—*specifically to assert your presence, care, and leadership* in their learning process* **SET NORMS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**
* Establish a culture of learning and growth in your classroom

[ ]  Plan a lesson about malleable intelligence (how brains grow with learning to make us smarter)[ ]  Plan specific, task-based praise and feedback you will give students[ ]  Identify student subgroups who may hold fixed beliefs about their ability (such as girls in math)[ ]  Consider your beliefs/biases about students’ ability/intelligence in content you teach[ ]  Plan words and actions to counter students’ own beliefs and your own biases* Conduct consistent procedures and routines\*—*the consistent steps students take daily*

[ ]  Make seating chart to maximize student engagement in routine, whole-class activities; consider where students sit relative to one another and teacher; ask former teachers for input[ ]  Plan student grouping norms and seating for other activities (groupwork, partner work, etc.)[ ]  Plan student noninstructional procedures and routines for repeat activities and teach explicitly 1) what students should do, with detail (such as steps to move between activities) 2) volume when: entering class, teacher asking for students’ attention, transitioning between activities, taking bathroom/water breaks, ending class, other. Align with schoolwide rules. [ ]  Plan learning materials locations in classroom for students to access. Write down routines and expectations for retrieving, caring for, and returning classroom materials to proper locations.[ ]  Post procedures and routines in classroom, and refer to these common practices often* Script, model, and reteach clear directions (for procedures and routines)

[ ]  Make a script to clearly communicate those procedures and routines during class [ ]  Write down steps *you* must take to model, following your own procedures and routines *See page 2 for more Before the School Year actions** Respond to unique strengths and needs of each student (in following procedures and routines)

[ ]  Plan positive opportunities for students who follow procedures and routines consistently, to reward them, highlight them as models, and further develop their self-control[ ]  Plan special procedures for students with physical disabilities[ ]  Plan special procedures and routines to engage students with attention or emotional challenges * Maximize all instructional time. In addition to limiting behavior interruptions:

[ ]  Plan activities carefully to use all available time in class for teaching and learning[ ]  Plan to use class time after instruction for students to complete projects, skill practice and other work[ ]  Set rules to limit interruptions, such as class visitors and other distractions, ideally schoolwide* **FOLLOW A CONTINUOUS, POSITIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT CYCLE**
* Set and reinforce high expectations\* (for behavior)

[ ]  Write behavior expectations (when students may talk; volume; raise hands, participate, listen)[ ]  Post behavior expectations in class; or prepare for students to make rules and post on first day.* Convey the consequence hierarchy\*

[ ]  Write down order of steps that will occur for repeatedly breaking community rules[ ]  Post steps that teachers and students will take when students break community rules* Apply and assign consequences appropriately(not applicable before school—do during school year)
* Use least invasive intervention to de-escalate behavior (not applicable before school—do during school year)
* **INTRODUCE A POSITIVE INCENTIVE SYSTEM TO HIGHLIGHT EXEMPLARY LEARNING BEHAVIORS**
* Anticipate proactive steps to prevent misbehaviors

[ ]  Write daily script to thank class, in advance, for exhibiting the positive behaviors expected[ ]  Include reminder to yourself to smile and make eye contact with each student daily* Describe positive behavior as it happens\*

[ ]  Practice words for warm, neutral describing of positive behavior in advance (“I notice that …”) |

*See page 3 for actions to take within the first week.*

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| **WITHIN THE FIRST WEEK (In addition to DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR steps)** |
| * **LEAD WITH A FIRM, YET WARM PRESENCE, IN PERSON and ONLINE**
* Influence students with strong posture, strong voice, and strong online communication\*(see During the School Year, page 4)
* Model eagerness for learning

[ ]  Share a story with students about your learning joy for a topic [ ]  Tell a story about how you overcame a learning challenge or did more than expected * Circulate throughout the classroom (and/or conduct check-ins online)

[ ]  Share with student the daily steps you will take to check students’ work a) by circulating during class and b) online* **SET NORMS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**
* Establish a culture of learning and growth in your classroom

[ ]  Deliver your lesson about malleable intelligence (how brains grow with learning)* Conduct consistent procedures and routines\*—*the consistent steps students take daily*

[ ]  Share seating chart with students and explain that purpose is to maximize their engagement [ ]  Share student grouping norms and seating for other activities (groupwork, partner work, etc.)[ ]  Share student noninstructional procedures and routines for repeat activities and teach explicitly 1) what students should do, with detail (such as steps to move between activities) 2) volume when: entering class, teacher asking for students’ attention, transitioning between activities, taking bathroom/water breaks, ending class, other. Remind of schoolwide rules. [ ]  Explain learning materials locations in classroom for students to access. Explain routines and expectations for retrieving, caring for, and returning classroom materials to proper locations.[ ]  Refer to posted procedures and routines on classroom walls* Script, model, and reteach clear directions (see During the School Year, page 4)
* Respond to unique strengths and needs of each student (in following procedures and routines)

[ ]  Immediately begin to recognize students who follow procedures and routines consistently, and highlight them as models for specific behaviors (not overemphasizing any one student)[ ]  Begin special procedures for students with physical disabilities[ ]  Begin special procedures and routines for students with attention or emotional challenges * Maximize all instructional time (see During the School Year, page 4)
* **FOLLOW A CONTINUOUS, POSITIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT CYCLE**
* Set and reinforce high expectations\* (for behavior)

[ ]  Share behavior expectations (when students may talk; volume; raise hands, participate, listen)[ ]  Facilitate student discussion to set classroom community rules; post on classroom wall* Convey the consequence hierarchy\*

[ ]  Highlight posted steps teachers and students will take when students break community rules* Apply and assign consequences appropriately(see During the School Year, page 5)
* Use least invasive intervention to de-escalate behavior (see During the School Year, page 5)
* **INTRODUCE A POSITIVE INCENTIVE SYSTEM TO HIGHLIGHT EXEMPLARY LEARNING BEHAVIORS**
* Anticipate proactive steps to prevent misbehaviors (see During the School Year, page 5)
* Describe positive behavior as it happens\* (see During the School Year, page 5)
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*See page 4 for actions to take during the school year.*

| **DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR** |
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| * **LEAD WITH A FIRM, YET WARM PRESENCE, IN PERSON and ONLINE**
* Influence students with strong posture, strong voice, and strong online communication\*

[ ]  Use posture of authority; continue to practice as needed using online examples and tutorials[ ]  Continue to use and hone your voice clarity and volume—“speaking to the back of the class”[ ]  Notice classroom situations that upset you; discuss with your MCL ways to remain warm, firm, present, and focused on helping students learn (deep breathing, sticking to behavior routines)* Model eagerness for learning

[ ]  Periodically remind students of your joy for a topic; share more topics of interest authentically [ ]  Remind students of your story: how you overcame a challenge or did more than expected * Circulate throughout the classroom (and/or conduct check-ins online)

[ ]  Follow the daily steps you told students you would take to check their work a) by circulating during class and b) online* **SET NORMS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**
* Establish a culture of learning and growth in your classroom

[ ]  Remind students about malleable intelligence (how brains grow with learning)[ ]  Use planned specific, task-based praise and feedback with students[ ]  Use planned words and actions to counter students’ negative self-beliefs and your own biases* Conduct consistent procedures and routines\*—*the consistent steps students take daily*

[ ]  Maintain or change seating chart as needed to maximize student engagement [ ]  Follow student grouping norms and seating for other activities (groupwork, partner work, etc.)[ ]  Follow noninstructional procedures and routines for repeat activities and remind explicitly 1) what students should do, with detail (such as steps to move between activities) 2) volume when: entering class, teacher asking for students’ attention, transitioning between activities, taking bathroom/water breaks, ending class, other. Remind of schoolwide rules. [ ]  Remind about and explain any changes in learning materials locations in classroom. Remind of routines and expectations for retrieving, caring for, and returning classroom materials, as needed.[ ]  Refer to posted procedures and routines on classroom walls* Script, model, and reteach clear directions (for procedures and routines)

[ ]  Use your script to clearly communicate all procedures and routines during class [ ]  As you model routines for students, remind them that you are modeling what to do in class * Respond to unique strengths and needs of each student (in following procedures and routines)

[ ]  Recognize students who follow procedures and routines consistently; highlight as models[ ]  Use and improve special procedures for students with physical disabilities[ ]  Use and improve procedures and routines for students with attention or emotional challenges * Maximize all instructional time. In addition to limiting behavior interruptions:

[ ]  Use activities carefully to use all available time in class for learning[ ]  Use class time after instruction for students to complete projects, skill practice and other work [ ]  Enforce rules to limit interruptions, such as class visitors and other distractions, ideally schoolwide* **FOLLOW A CONTINUOUS, POSITIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT CYCLE**
* Set and reinforce high expectations\* (for behavior)

[ ]  Remind of your behavior expectations (talk time and volume; raise hands, participate, listen)[ ]  Remind that students set classroom community rules; refer to posted rules on classroom wall* Convey the consequence hierarchy\*

[ ]  Highlight posted steps teachers and students will take when students break community rules*See page 5 for more During the School Year actions** Apply and assign consequences appropriately

[ ]  Be consistent [ ]  Check yourself often for consistency across genders, race, course levels (secondary), etc.\*[ ]  Engage class to edit community rules and steps if students are not adhering* Use least invasive intervention to de-escalate behavior

[ ]  Follow pre-established steps/responses when students violate community rules[ ]  Start with a calming intervention (such as a quiet discussion to ask “Are you OK?”)[ ]  Address root causes (for example, offer a snack, remove distracting technology)[ ]  Allow student to leave class, with help (to talk with a counselor, for example)[ ]  Reassert both high expectations *and* positive belief in each student and class after setbacks* **INTRODUCE A POSITIVE INCENTIVE SYSTEM TO HIGHLIGHT EXEMPLARY LEARNING BEHAVIORS**
* Anticipate proactive steps to prevent misbehaviors

[ ]  Follow daily script to thank class, in advance, for exhibiting the positive behaviors expected[ ]  Follow reminder to yourself to smile and make eye contact with each student daily* Describe positive behavior as it happens\*

[ ]  Every day, warmly, neutrally describe positive behavior you see (“I notice Jane is doing X…”) |