# 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) |

*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…”) |