

# WORKING WITH COLLEAGUES

*To succeed in your career, you need respect, assistance, and cooperation from fellow teachers and other school staff. You will be called on to work with other teachers on school and professional committees, teaching teams, and student organization events. You will also informally interact with colleagues to guide specific students, juggle schedules, and share equipment and facilities. Establishing effective professional relationships will smooth your path to career success.*

## STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. Learn about other educators and school staff.
2. Implement pointers for effective relationships with colleagues.
3. Learn about students with disabilities and partner with special needs teachers to meet their needs.
4. Treat substitutes well and ensure student learning continues when you are out of the classroom.
5. Prepare a basic substitute teacher packet each time you start a new set of courses.
6. Provide detailed substitute teacher plans whenever you will be out.

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# BUILDING AND ADVOCATING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

*Establishing effective professional relationships will smooth your path to career success.*

- Never make negative comments about another teacher or staff member to students, parents, or community members.
- Learn about other teachers' expertise and interests. Invite them to share these with your students. Turn to them for advice in your teaching and advising.
- Initiate efforts to tie together what students learn in your classes and what they learn in other teachers' classes. Help students recognize that the "academic" concepts others teach them do have real-world application.
- Share your expertise and facilities as possible. Point out to other teachers the lessons their students might learn in the agriculture laboratories. Suggest ways to add real-world examples in their own classrooms.
- Contribute to teaching teams. Many times other team teachers meet while you have students, but do all you can to stay up-to-date on and involved with team plans.
- Invite other staff members to attend FFA chapter activities and accompany students on field trips.
- Respect other teachers' schedules and teaching goals. If you have to take students out of classes, make sure they discuss missed material with affected teachers and complete all required learning activities. Many instructors create a form to track students through this process.
- Try to avoid getting too involved in defending your "turf" against other teachers. Keep your focus on what's best for students.
- Participate in faculty meetings and formal and informal staff get-togethers.
- Use PIC meetings for dividing work efforts to best utilize skill sets.

# PARTNERING WITH SPECIAL NEEDS TEACHERS

*When students with disabilities take your courses, you will work in partnership with other educators to fulfill their special needs. Here is some background information to lay the groundwork for that partnership.*

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), passed in 1990, legislates the provision of a free and appropriate education to children with disabilities. It also details the development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each student with a disability. This plan is a collaborative effort among parents, children with a disability, school administrators and employers. The instruction and educational experiences you offer special needs students can become part of their IEPs.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), also passed in 1990, prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, public services, public accommodations, communications, transportation and state and local governments. Since Agriculture programs receive some in-kind or direct financial support from state and local governmental agencies, all facilities, services and communications associated with your program must, to the fullest extent possible, be made accessible.

It may be valuable to review with school administrators how legislation concerning students with disabilities directly affects your program and activities. Being proactive and informed can be effective means to minimize problems and ensure full participation by everyone.

Working with special needs students offers rewards beyond meeting legal requirements. Through the skills you teach and the care you demonstrate, you can cultivate independence and confidence

in students with disabilities to enable them to go places they never thought possible. Furthermore, all FFA members can benefit from the opportunities to interact regularly with youth they perceive to be different and to learn they really are not so different. Members grow socially by developing positive attitudes and removing prejudices. They also enjoy the benefits of new friendships and shared experiences.

## RESOURCE PEOPLE

Consult and collaborate with the following resource people as you develop ways to include and serve the needs of students with disabilities.

- parents;
- health care specialists;
- government agencies;
- school personnel (principal, administrators, special education teacher, para-professionals, school physician, school nurse, guidance counselor, school psychiatrist/psychologist, resource room teacher, homeroom teacher);
- other FFA advisors;
- local independent living center staff;
- organizations specific to a particular disability;
- regional assistive technology center.

# SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PACKET

*Whether your absence is planned or unexpected, it is important that students continue to have valuable learning experiences when a substitute teacher fills in. Prepare a folder with standard information for substitutes each time you begin a new set of courses. Add detailed lesson plans for each class as soon as you know you will be out. Check that the packet includes the following.*

- Attendance procedures.
- Lunch room procedures (if applicable). List times for all activities and lunch.
- Study hall procedures (if applicable). Number to be excused at one time.
- Issuance of passes—
- Library (how many at a time, for how long, etc.);
- Bathroom (if allowed);
- Special activities (band, speech, remedial reading, etc.; include names).
- Emergency procedures for fire, intruder, and weather emergencies. (Color code should be posted in each classroom.)
- Class schedule with exact time of activities.
- Up-to-date seating chart.
- List of three students from each class who are dependable. Mark on seating chart.
- “Emergency” lesson plan(s) that can be used at any time of the year in your class or subject area. (This is not a substitute for the required daily lesson plans.)
- Name(s) of teachers in the area, with room number, who could assist the substitute with any questions.
- Instructions if there is a student teacher involved.
- Any other general classroom procedures.
- Special locks and keys (where they are, etc.); combinations to lockers.
- Location of all instructional materials/technology and procedure for using.
- Textbooks for each class and location of same.
- Student handbook.
- Work with other teachers and your administrators to determine if there is a standard substitute teacher packet that should be used. If not, collaborate with another teacher to see how they provide this information to substitute teachers.

Remember: You will need to update the packet periodically!