SAMPLE MATERIAL

New Teacher Orientation Manual

Waterford High School, California

Topic: Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools
Practice: Improving Instruction

This manual is based on frequent questions of new teachers and aims to orient staff to a culture that focuses on continuous conversations and collaboration to improve instruction. The manual provides an overview of the school's mission statement, vision, Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs), five pillars, and instructional norms. In addition, information about instructional goals and administrative procedures such as finding substitute teachers, student discipline policy, and block scheduling are described. The manual describes teacher responsibilities including morning duties and after-school activities. Instructions on computer software that is used for attendance, grade posting, and developing testing material are also included. School staff at Waterford High School work collaboratively; therefore, in addition to this manual, staff can watch other teachers teach and consult with them to collaboratively work on instructional plans.

New Teachers' Orientation Manual

Waterford High School

"Pursuing Excellence"

7/07

Introduction

Welcome to Waterford High School! This is a manual to help answer some of the basic questions you may have regarding how to begin your career here. The overall concept for this manual came as a result of questions posed by new teachers just like you. This manual will help with the basics, such as using the copier, how to produce bulk copies of material, how to use the fax machine, how to call for a substitute, and how to fill out work orders. If you have any questions that are not answered in this manual, feel free to contact your department chair, another teacher or a member of administration.

"First Things First"

Waterford High School is academically, one of the fastest growing high schools in California. Our students have shown tremendous academic growth since 2001, our first year of operation. During the 2004-05 school year Waterford completed its accreditation process with the Western Association of School and Colleges, and received a full-term accreditation of six years. In 2006/2007, Waterford High School was recognized as the highest scoring High School in five contiguous counties and was named a California Distinguished School. Since before our opening, as a staff, we have been guided by our mission statement, vision, expected school wide learning results (ESLRS) and the five pillars of our foundation. We owe our academic success to the instructional strategies that we have adopted "school-wide" which we call our "Instructional Norms".

Mission Statement:
Our mission is to provide an excellent comprehensive educational program for the students of Waterford High School.

Vision:
The mission is achieved by commitment to the following core beliefs:

1. Each student valued, challenged and successful.
2. High quality teacher-directed instruction raises student achievement.
3. Academic content standards and assessments offer clear direction for instruction.
4. An organization culture characterized by professionalism promotes excellence.
5. Outstanding curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular programs advance student development.

Expected School Wide Learning Results (ESLRs)
Waterford High School Students are expected to demonstrate competency in four specific areas which are identified by the acronym

C-A-T-S

ESLR 1: Communicate Effectively: Expressing ideas orally and with written language.

ESLR 2: Achieve academically: In the classroom and on state and local assessments.

ESLR 3: Talent contribution: Providing service to the school and community.

ESLR 4: Self Direction: Demonstrated by setting and achieving goals.

Five Pillars:

Pillar 1. Pursuing Excellence
Improve instruction, programs and operations so that students achieve countywide and statewide excellence in academics (API, AYP and college admission), athletes and the Arts.

Pillar 2. Personalization
Ensure that the students become well-known by the faculty and staff, commit to professional peer relationships among teachers, administrators and classified employees.

Pillar 3. Purpose Driven
The mission is advanced through data-driven decisions, explicit direct instruction, and a commitment to teaching as a personal calling. Each student graduates with choices.

Pillar 4. Standards Based Curriculum and Instruction
The California Content Standards are embraced when seeking and developing curriculum and when preparing well-crafted lessons.

Pillar 5. Modified Block Schedule
Time is used as a resource, maximizing productivity.

If you are new to the teaching profession or you are starting your first year at Waterford, welcome to what will be a great year. You are in a place were you will get a lot of support. The Wildcat "family" is committed to your success!

Instructional Norms

Research reveals that student achievement is directly related to specific types of instruction. In consideration of this research, the Waterford High School staff has adopted a set of instructional norms (instructional elements) that **will occur** in all classroom instruction, across all content areas. These Instructional Norms include:

Instructional Norm #1

Learning Objective:
(Deconstructed from the Content Standard)
Students know and can articulate the purpose of the lesson: this includes the skill and concept that is being taught.

Instructional Norm #2

Teach First, then Check for Understanding
The practice of teaching *before* questioning is the norm. Teachers routinely enhance student engagement by checking for understanding often by calling upon non-volunteers. Before releasing students to begin independent work, teachers will have checked for understanding and are confident that students have grasped the skill and the concept that have been presented.

Instructional Norm #3

Student Production
Students are expected to produce standards based, grade-level work every day in class. This is often accomplished through guided practice and/or independent or meaningful student collaboration.

Instructional Norm #4

Alignment of Independent Practice
All teachers ensure that the independent work that students are expected to complete is directly aligned with the learning objective and the instruction that the student has received.

Instructional Norm #5

Concept Development
Strategic instruction has been designed to promote the acquisition of the underlying principle or "main idea" of the learning objective.

Instructional Norm #6

Meaningful Interaction
Student collaboration on a well-defined task designed for a specific purpose. (Collaboration, to be successful, insures that everyone participates, that there is a clear objective, that a specific product which verifies learning will be created and that a time limit will have been established and adhered to).

Instructional Times

Waterford High School operates with a 'modified block' schedule. As a general rule, Mondays are "red" days and teachers meet with all of their classes and the day is arranged with a six period schedule. Tuesdays and Thursdays are "blue" days and teachers meet with periods 1, 3 and 5. Wednesdays and Fridays are "gold" days and teachers meet with periods 2, 4 and 6. Final exams, Back to School Night and Open House are based on minimum day schedules. Deviations from the usual schedule will be announced ahead of time and changes to the normally scheduled times will be announced in advance. (Examples of these changes include assemblies and standardized testing days.)

Department Chairs

Although still a small school, Waterford High School has undergone significant growth in the past several years. To assist staff members as well as to increase communication, each of the departments is headed by a Department Chair. Your department chairperson can be of significant assistance to you in the accomplishment of your goals. Department Chairs will be invaluable to you as a resource for obtaining supplies, answering questions about technology (posting grades, posting assignments and using data). They are the "experts" when it comes to questions about departmental pacing of curriculum, benchmarks exams, essential standards and the application of instructional norms within your specific department. They can serve as "sounding boards" for problems and questions you encounter. Please utilize this person as a resource.

Administrative "Open Door" policy

All members of the staff are encouraged to utilize the administrative "open door" policy at Waterford High School. If questions or concerns cannot be resolved at the Department Chair level, the doors to the administrative offices are always open.

Student/Parent Handbook and Student Discipline

The tool of effective disciplinary policy at Waterford High School is the Student/Parent Handbook. All teachers are encouraged to read and be totally familiar with the contents of this manual. Consistency of enforcement of the policies set forth in this handbook allows students to feel that discipline is administered firmly yet fairly throughout the high school.

Although student referrals are the way that students are sent for administrative disciplinary action, almost without exception, teachers will find more effective behavior modification using several other strategies by contacting parents by phone or e-mail. Often a student, parent, teacher conference will immediately resolve behavior issues.

Teachers are not expected to deal with disruptive students, but they are expected to contact parents regularly to relay both positive and negative behavior of students. As a rule, ***teachers should routinely contact between four and eight parents each week and maintain a record of these contacts.***

Teacher Forms and Information

"Forms on Demand"

On your computer hard drive desktop, you will find a folder called "Forms on Demand". This very important folder contains several files that will be of use to you, and will also save paperwork. In this folder, you will find files that will allow you to report a personal absence obtain pre-approved reimbursement and request maintenance work. Review these files and become familiar with them early in the school year. These files are to be filled out and sent via email, as an attachment, to the appropriate personnel. If you are unsure of how to send these forms when the needed arises, feel free to ask your department chair.

Sub Finder

Sub finder is our system for obtaining substitute teachers. At the beginning of the school year, you will receive a packet and a brochure that will list the available substitutes in Stanislaus County. The brochure will explain how to set up your personal voice mail and password, as well as giving you all of the options to choose regarding posting your absence.

When you first begin to use Sub Finder the system will ask for a password (which at first is your social security number.) This will serve as your default password should you ever forget your chosen password. Follow the directions in the brochure and you can do everything from setting up a personal greeting to give specific information to your substitute.

Specific note: If you are in the first year of the beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program, you and your Support Provider (to be assigned to you) will decide together the dates on which you will attend BTSA training. These classes will meet four times over the school year These absences are full-day, excused absences.

All Absences: All absences **must** be reported to personnel **immediately** after the absence has occurred. "Forms on Demand" can be used to access a blank Absence Report.

There are two ways to report an absence. You can call sub finder at 209 525 5001 or access them through their website at www.stancoe.org. You will be provided with additional sub information from the school secretary.

For the past several years, there has been a shortage of subs available within the county. As soon as you know that you will be absent, for whatever reason, please call sub-finder to arrange for a sub. It is preferable to arrange for a sub several days before an anticipated absence.

"Green Sheets"

The special green sheets found in the main office are your way of getting paid for extra duties, which can include substituting for another teacher (see below), or going to paid in-service training approved by the pre-approved by administration. Make sure to fill out the form with the hours you work, as well as the date(s) you worked. Traditionally, these hours will be paid the same month you turn in the green sheet **if it is before** the 10th of that month. Otherwise, you will be paid the following month.

Reimbursement Forms

Reimbursement forms are to be used when spending money for education-related materials, district-approved conference expenses, or other expenses approved by the district for this purpose. Again, the rule of thumb is to ask if you are not sure. Reimbursement must be pre-approved by the principal. After-the-fact requests for reimbursement will not be approved.

Ordering Supplies

Use the appropriate Purchasing Ordering forms for this purpose. These are found in the main office and must be filled out correctly. Always make sure to get a purchase order number before ordering materials. Most of the time your request will be approved; however, there will be deadlines for making purchases. Also, as there are different sources from which monies may come, make sure to find out which form to use for your particular order. There are two types of purchase requests, district, and associated student body (ASB). Toward the end of each school year, orders will not be processed after a certain announced date. This allows the district accounting office to perform the necessary procedures for obtaining "end of the year" financial records.

Short Term Independent Study and Home/Hospital Stay Forms

Many times during the school year you will be asked to fill out short-term Independent Study requests. These are to be brought to you by the student and returned with assigned work for the given period of absence. The form must be completed and returned to the student by the due date <u>before</u> the absence occurs. When the student returns from the absence, he/she will turn in the assigned work. Grade the work and assign it a grade. Turn the form into the staff member in charge of Independent Study. Track independent study assignments to be certain that they are returned to you.

Note: A student is responsible for getting the independent study form to you at least <u>one</u> week before the absence. You may accept the form after this period if you wish.

Home and Hospital Stay is a service provided by the school district. This service is very important as it allows students with specific Educational needs to continue receiving support during a long-term medical absence. Usually a liaison is assigned to these students. Fill out the HHS form just as you would for an Independent Study student. Give assigned work to the liaison. After a predetermined amount of time, this work will be returned to you for grading. Submit the HHS form to the office for record keeping purposes.

Teacher Responsibilities

Morning Duties

Each teacher is responsible to serve a morning duty for a week at a time on a rotating basis. At the beginning of the year you will receive a copy of the master duty schedule, which gives the type of duty and the specific week you will serve. The morning supervision duty lasts from 7:30-7:55 each day for your assigned week.

If for some reason you are unable to serve your particular duty week, it is up to you to find a substitute, or try to switch with another teacher. **Always notify administrators before any duty switch**. If you have a substitute covering your class on your duty day, make sure to inform the substitute of this duty as part of your special request in your voicemail when placing a request for a substitute.

After School Activities, Dances, and Games

Part of your duties may include chaperoning dances, serving as a ticket seller or a ticket-taker at games, and/or providing staff supervision at other after-school events. All sports require supervision of some type, but football, volleyball, soccer, (selected matches), basketball, and wrestling are among the sports that will charge admission to events. Extra duty will be required of all teachers. If you are coaching, you may or may not be serving during your specific sports season. Dress appropriately for the event you have been assigned and above all, interact with the student and parents. The students and parents like to see teachers outside of the classroom.

In January you may be asked to help with the Academic Decathlon county-wide competition. Because academic decathlon is so successful at Waterford High School, your service as a judge/and or chaperon is a great opportunity to get to know the students and their parents.

You may be asked on occasion to cover another class during your prep period. If you are asked, it is because either an emergency has developed or a sub was not available from sub-finder. Although sacrificing a prep period may be difficult, it is one the times that you will have the opportunity to help the school achieve its "global" responsibility. You will be paid for this time. Fill out a "green sheet" for this time.

Staff Meetings

Staff meetings usually take place during the first week of the month, after school, and are repeated as a make-up time for coaches the next morning at 7:30 AM. As this takes place only one time during the month, it is mandatory and punctuality is expected. If for any reason you are unable to attend a staff meeting, or if you know you will be late, please notify an administrator as soon as possible.

Minimum Days

Minimum days are scheduled to allow for staff development opportunities. These are announced well in advance of the date. Attendance is mandatory.

Fundraisers

Fundraisers are necessary, especially for extra-curricular activities such as band, cheer, yearbook, Academic Decathlon, Future Farmers of America, Future Teachers of America, Generation Faith, and interscholastic sports. Support these activities as you are able; the students will thank you, and you will probably receive support in turn should you need to raise funds for something of your own at a later date. Fundraisers must be pre-approved and ***very specific*** accounting practices must be followed.

ASB Purchase Order Procedures

1. Before requesting a purchase order, the Club **must** have a meeting for approval for the purchase. This approval must be annotated in the club's meeting notes. Completed minutes must be submitted at the time of purchase order request.

2. Submit a purchase order prior to ordering. The purchase order must be approved first. (no exceptions)

3. Purchase order approvals will be based on availability of fund for each individual club. Funds will not be made available without purchase orders. Do not order without pre-approval.

ASB Payment Authorization

When submitting a payment authorization you must include the following:

1. Numbered invoice from vendor; invoice must have your purchase order number printed on it. (If no P.O. number is on the invoice, no payment by ASB will be made. If this procedure is not followed, the club advisor may be held financially liable.)

2. Payment can be made by advisor and be reimbursed (as long as adequate funds

exist in the club's account) to the advisor without a purchase order.

3. Completed payment authorization form must be turned in to the ASB office as soon as an invoice is received.

4. The club advisor must sign the payment authorization and submit the appropriate form.

5. The check for reimbursement will be mailed to the advisor's home address unless there is a request that it be given directly to the advisor.

Deposit Procedures

1. All deposits must be completed and delivered **to the office by the club Advisor only.**

2. The deposit slip must be completed prior to the time the funds are brought to the office.

3. Cash should be pre-bundled, coins should be in rolls and receipts should be attached.

4. Double check to be certain that you deposit slip totals equals your cash.

5. An Approved Revenue Potential Form **must** be included.

6. Cash cannot be deposited into your club account until all forms are filled in. If this has not been accomplished, expenditures will be declined.

7. When you deposit funds, be sure that you have at least 20 minutes available to audit money with the school secretary.

Fundraising Procedures

1. Be certain that you have placed your fundraising dates on the ASB Calendar.

2. Complete and submit a fundraiser activity form to ASB advisor and/or President.

3. Pick up receipt books and a revenue potential form and submit the form for approval.

4. Receipts will be distributed as follows:

    a. White Copy – Purchaser
    b. Yellow Copy – With Deposit
    c. Pink Copy – Remains in receipt book

5. Your must receive an approved Fundraiser Activity Form (This form must be completed and turned in at the time of the deposit) in order to begin preparing for the fund raiser.

6. Fill out any facility use agreements as needed.

Computer Information

Aeries Browser Interface (ABI)

Your computer hard drive contains many powerful tools that will help you to be a success at Waterford High School. We use the Aeries Browser Interface program, more commonly known as "Aeries". The program covers everything from attendance taking to grade posting. "Aeries" contains vital student information that will help you with your communication to parents. Take some time at the beginning of the year to get acquainted with Aeries, before things start to get too busy.

By posting your grades, homework and daily objective on Aeries, you allow a vital link between yourself and your parents to be activated. Each student's parent is given a password to allow them to check their child's current grade in your class as well as any homework you have assigned.

Monitoring Students for Success with Edusoft

Edusoft is a software program that helps teachers develop testing materials, especially for quarterly benchmark exams. Edusoft draws from several very good testing banks around the United States, including California, and can be aligned to the state academic standards. Using California State Standards as a guide, a teacher can draw from these banks and build a test. You can print out these tests, or put in an order to have them printed up if you need them in bulk, especially for quarter bench mark exams. With the use of scantron cards, you can find out student scores quickly and efficiently. The information gained from Edusoft testing can be organized and point out areas for re-teaching, retesting and remediation.

Note: You may have already received documentation about how to use Edusoft. If you do not have this information, ask for it. Edusoft is an important resource for you to gauge the success of your students.

The Bottom Line: The more you can use Edusoft in your classroom, the better sense you will have about how well your student are meeting essential standards throughout the year. If you use Edusoft regularly throughout the year, you will be able to offer "re-teaching" of standards that students may have failed to master. By the time your students take the STAR exam, you should have a good idea about how well they might do in your content area of the test.

Grading periods come at each mid-term, quarter, and semester of the year. Generally you will have a "window" of time to post your grades on Aeries. Teachers will post grades in their classrooms on a regular basis. Remember, that utilizing Aeries allows parents to be constantly aware of their child's grade in your class. This communication will prove to be invaluable. Should you find that you have a student who is failing, notify the parents by the phone and / or email maintaining a record of the contact date and time.

Library and Labs

The library is available for students various times of the day and during lunch periods. Waterford has a great research source on its web site. Teachers must sign up for the library in order to use it with their classes. When in the library, teachers are responsible for behavior of their students. If you know when you might use the library during the year, it would be best if you signed up early. Please keep in mind that other teachers have need for the library. Generally speaking, teachers should not schedule library time more than ***once per quarter.*** There will be times during the year when the library will not be available especially during standardized testing.

Note: Plagiarism is an offense that needs to be taken seriously. Take the time to educate your students regarding plagiarism. Plagiarism is forbidden by the disciplinary policy of Waterford High School.

Waterford High School owns two portable 15- laptop computer labs. These can be used in your classrooms, on a sign up basis. Use these labs throughout the year. Please extend the same courtesy as you do when reserving the library, by avoiding the monopolization of these computers as other teachers will want to avail themselves and their students of this resource.

Using the Copier

The copy machine in the main office is easy to operate. To get started. Press "enter" and you are on your way. Plan ahead, as the copier is used a lot, especially at the beginning of the school day. Under no circumstances is the copier to be used for routine duplication of classroom materials. These are to be forwarded to I-Magik well in advance of the day they will be needed. (See "Making Bulk Copies, below)

Making Bulk Copies

As unlikely as it seems, the Waterford Unified School District is able to obtain copied material from an outside source cheaper than to make the copies on our own equipment. To make class more than 10 copies of your material, use the bulk copying service provided through I-Magik.. You will receive several ordering templates sometime near the beginning of the year. Fill out these forms when ordering bulk copies. To assist us in fulfilling our copying needs, I-Magik has provided us with a fax to use in forwarding materials that need to be copied. Students are prohibited from submitting "bulk copy" orders to the printing company.

Using the Fax Machine

The fax machine is located in the office area. Simple instructions are posted to help you. Some of the most commonly used numbers are listed for your convenience.

Using the School Web Site for Posting Assignments

You should use the school web site to post your assignments and announcements. This will require a password. Posting your assignments is just one way to communicate with both students and their parents.

Filling Out Referral Forms

Although student referrals are the way that students are sent for administrative disciplinary action, almost without exception, teachers will find more effective behavior modification using several other strategies by contacting parents by phone or e-mail. Often a student, parent, teacher conference will immediately resolve behavior issues. Teachers are not expected to deal with disruptive students, but they are expected to contact parents regularly to relay both positive and negative behavior of students.
Referral forms are available in the main office, in the boxes provided for that purpose. When issuing referrals, be certain to fill out the form completely and specifically address 'what happened'. Also, on the referral form, please note prior attempts that you have made to alter the negative behavior, including phone calls that you have made to parents.

Staff Dress and Grooming Guidelines

As a California Distinguished School and as a model school that educates professionals from throughout Region 6, we feel a responsibility to 'look' like we are professionals. Regardless of how effective we may be as educators, it is still true that people do "judge a book by its cover". The Waterford Unified School District Board Policy regarding Dress and Grooming is quoted below in its entirety.

"The Governing Board believes that since teachers serve as role models, they should maintain professional standards of dress and grooming. Just as overall attitude and instructional competency contribute to a productive learning environment, so do appropriate dress and grooming.

Board encourages staff during school hours to wear clothing that demonstrates their high regard for education and presents an image consistent with their job responsibilities. Clothes that may be appropriate for shop instructors or gym teachers may not be appropriate for classroom teachers."

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of the above information and ask that you dress in a manner that reflects this thinking.

And Finally

Again, welcome to WHS and the Wildcat family. We look forward to a successful year for you and the entire team. You will discover that you have been employed in an environment that truly foster collaboration and will go out of its way to support your success.