



Faculty Practices Guide

2018-2019

“The primary goal of this brief guide is to establish and maintain consistency in practice throughout our schools and provide you with valuable information as you design your courses. It is a work in progress and amendments are inevitable. Thank you for being a part of its creation, implementation, and development!”

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Additional Duties: Being part of our Beacon community often means that you are expected to wear additional hats. While we as a team work really hard to not negatively impact teaching and learning in our schools, sometimes tasks will need to be handled immediately and we thank you in advance for your flexibility and commitment to the students and families of our schools. Additional duties can and will be assigned as needed, and are considered part of a teacher’s professional obligations. These duties may include, but are not limited to:

- Coverage for absent colleagues*
- Lunch Duty
- Dismissal Duty
- Front office coverage
- In School Suspension Coverage (Beacon)
- IEP/504 Meeting Attendance

* This duty may include additional compensation.

Syllabi

Every course must have a syllabus, which must be given to all students and be submitted to the principal not later than the day before the first day of classes. While there are no strict guidelines regarding syllabus format, each one must include the following information:

- Course name and description
- Texts and other required materials
- Email address
- Course essential goal with its corresponding essential skills, enduring understandings (i.e., the goal “unpacked”) and corresponding learning standards
 - Skills directly correlate to standards (CCSS, GSEs, NGSS, and/or content area/industry standards)
 - Skills must be measurable (i.e., can be assessed)
 - These essential skills combine to form the course’s essential semester goal
- Instructor name and contact information
- Late work policy:
 - Grades 6-8 will have a common, school wide policy.
 - Grades 9-12 will have a common, grade-level policy.

- Office hours for additional help
 - Teachers are required to set specific, weekly office hours until 3:15 at least one day per week (not “by appointment only”).
- URL of the course’s Google Classroom page
- Listing of major units to be covered
- Listing of all Portfolio-worthy projects for the course

- **Description of Beacon’s Grading System, as follows:**
 - **45% Major Assessments (papers, projects, lab reports, tests, and formal presentations)**
 - **35% In-Class Requirements (group work, individual work, discussions, quizzes, mini-presentations, etc.)**
 - **20% Homework**

OR

- **Description of the Grading System for Founders, as follows:**
 - **45% Major Assessments (papers, projects, lab reports, tests, and formal presentations)**
 - **45% In-Class Requirements (group work, individual work, discussions, quizzes, mini-presentations, etc.)**
 - **10% Homework**

- **Use of Electronic Information Resources**
Copy the following directly to the last page of your syllabus:

Technology is a vehicle to access the most current and extensive sources of information which will prepare students for today’s careers. As such, school internet access is a privilege for educational purposes only and will be revoked if any of the following conditions occur:

Students will not access or create offensive, profane, or pornographic files, plagiarize works or violate copyrights or trademarks, damage, alter, or modify hardware or software or attempt to bypass computer security, nor will they engage in behaviors that constitute cyber bullying.

I am aware of this electronic use policy and I will exercise sound judgment when using classroom technology and accessing the internet. Furthermore, I understand that intentional misuse of technology/Internet access will result in disciplinary action against me.

Teachers should have an additional page to the syllabus that requires students and parents to sign off that they read the syllabus and understand the requirements of the course. This practice tends to avoid issues regarding course requirements and parent expectations later in the semester. To encourage return of these documents, attach a homework grade to their return.

A few more words about grading...

All courses follow the same grading system in order to ensure consistency and maximum transparency for students and their families. **Therefore, all assignments must be based on 100 points.** Teachers must provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills for each assessment type. In a given quarter, there should be multiple major assessments, in-class requirements, and homework assignments. **A single grade should not make or break a student's quarterly average.**

Web Presence for Teachers

Each teacher must actively maintain a Google Classroom, which includes the following:

- Syllabi for all courses
- Major assignments in detail with deadlines and accompanying rubrics
- Contact information for students and parents
- All rubrics used for courses

Some faculty members have also included:

- Links to student work
- PowerPoint notes from class
- Message boards for students to interact regarding assignments

Links to online resources

Research Projects

When assigning a research project or paper, particularly in grades 6-9, please provide students with the sources need for the assignment. By the second semester of grade 9, provide a list of possible sources rather than the actual source for students. Students must use proper citations at all times, but providing sources for them makes it more difficult to plagiarize and impossible to use inappropriate sources. As students progress into the upper grades, this scaffolding should slowly decrease until students are expected to find their own sources and assignments reflect a higher degree of independent research.

PowerSchool

Please be aware that parents and students have 24/7 access to student grades. It is your responsibility to maintain your gradebook and return graded work to students in a timely fashion.

In addition, please input your assignments as they are assigned to students. This way, parents can support you by keeping deadlines in mind when they talk to their children about school. Changes can occur, updates can be made, but having these assignments in ahead of time allows students to more proactive and parents to be more supportive of your work.

Students and families have the expectation that homework and classwork grades are updated regularly. Papers and longer written work take additional time to grade, but should be completed within a maximum of two weeks.

If a student receives three (3) zeroes in a row (on any assignments), teachers must contact parents to make them aware and to include them as partners in this conversation. In addition, if there is a consistent trend of missing work (e.g., two zeroes, then one grade, then another zero, then another grade, etc.) you must also reach out to parents.

Please see your Principal if you are having issues with PowerSchool.

The address for PowerSchool is <https://beaconart.powerschool.com>.

Curriculum: Understanding by Design

Best practice dictates that we adapt our curriculum to the specific needs of students from year to year. Thus, it is a professional expectation that all teachers write and/or update existing unit plans, following the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework (Grant Wiggins & Jay McTighe). Units currently being taught must have unit plans available and readily accessible.

Posting of Assignments

All students at Beacon must maintain an online portfolio through beaconart.digication.com. It is every teacher's responsibility to ensure that his/her students post the course's portfolio-worthy projects to their Academic Locker upon completion, including the Phase I reflection.

Assignment Reflections

Phase One

Upon receiving the graded project from their teacher, students must complete this reflection on Digation and in the Academic Locker. Students will print off this reflection, along with evidence of a link/work, to submit to the teacher for a homework grade. This reflection will then be graded and returned to students.

In the assignment's caption, students must do the following:

1. Summarize the assignment. Provide details about all components from the teacher's project criteria.
2. Explain in detail the tools used to complete the assignment. For example: research sources (both print and digital), graphic organizers, technology tools, science materials, etc.
3. Explain the most useful skill or concept you learned during the process of completing this project.
4. Explain any challenge(s) you encountered while completing this project.
5. Explain any strength(s) that you have demonstrated throughout the completion of this project.
6. Explain the feedback you received. What did the feedback tell you about your learning process?
7. Based on feedback, identify areas for future self-development/improvement and your goals.

Phase Two

In the spring, students will determine which five pieces to select for their final portfolio. Once selected, students will write a separate reflection, a Phase 2, that will address specific questions about how the project relates to students' learning.

1. Why have you selected this piece as the best evidence of your learning? Explain.
2. How does this piece reveal a challenge that you've overcome? Explain.
3. How does your piece showcase a personal strength? Explain.
4. How does this piece represent a moment in your journey as a Beacon student? Explain.

At the end of the first semester, advisors will use a checklist to review each of their advisee's

academic lockers to ensure that each student is capturing quality work in advance of the spring portfolio presentations.

Shortly before the portfolio deadline, advisors will then review the final portfolio for each of their advisees, including a review of the Phase 2 reflections for the pieces selected for the final portfolio.

Classroom Management-Responding to Challenging Behavior

The best classroom management plan is always an engaging lesson plan. While we believe in a proactive and restorative approach to behavior management, there will be times when a consequence needs to be assigned for challenging student behavior. For more detailed information, including a sample referral form and definitions of major vs. minor behaviors, refer to the MTSS Handbook.

- **Minor Behaviors** should be handled by the teacher or adult who witnessed the behavior. A behavior referral must be completed and submitted to the main office as soon as possible for entry into SWIS. Sometimes, a good conversation with student is enough to correct a behavior. However, if a minor behavior is repeated following a conference, the next response should be a teacher detention.
 - **Teacher detentions:**
 - Should be assigned as a consequence for minor behavior referrals
 - Scheduled from 2:45-3:15 and supervised by the adult who assigned it.
 - If an adult assigns a “lunch detention” to accommodate transportation issues, it is the assigning adults responsibility to supervise the detention, even if this means eating lunch with the student.
 - During the detention, students should not be allowed to do things they consider “fun.”
 - Must be assigned at least one school day after the family has been notified.
 - If a student skips the assigned teacher detention, a major behavior referral should be submitted to the principal.
- **Major Behaviors** should be recorded immediately on a behavior referral form. Forms should be submitted to the Principal as soon as possible. The Principal will respond to the behavior as soon as possible. After the referral has been submitted in SWIS, a copy will be returned to the referring adult.

Exams

All courses are required to have a final exam. A final exam can take many forms, including written, practical, presentation, performance, etc. Unless approved in advance by your Principal(s), this exam must take place during the designated exam period.

Students must remain in class for the duration of the exam. **Seniors, and only seniors**, with a cumulative grade of 90 or above may be exempted from the exam at the teacher's discretion.

Exams and study guides for final exams must be submitted to your Principal two weeks prior to the exam date. Study guides must also be sent to the Special Education Department.

IDEA BLOCK

All teachers will teach an Intervention and/or an Enrichment block, three times per week, for forty-five minutes each block. Teachers are expected to manage this block in the same manner as a traditional classroom period. Students are to be held accountable to all behavior expectations, attendance policies, and class participation. Students are graded on a Pass/Fail for IDEA block. Teachers will utilize one of the pre-existing enrichment or intervention curricula, as assigned.

Absences/Sub Plans

Teachers must leave detailed and specific, block-by-block lesson plans for a substitute teacher in the event they are absent. These plans should be meaningful to the course and be substantial enough to keep students engaged for an entire class period. **It is expected that teachers will provide lesson plans for their colleagues and/or substitutes who will cover the classes in their absence.** If plans include use of technology, any substitute should be able to implement with little difficulty.

Teachers must text or call the Beacon Office Manager, by 8PM the night before or between 6 and 7AM the day he/she will be absent. Coverages will be assigned based on availability and will be compensated at the rate of \$25/class if the covering teacher loses his/her only available period because of the coverage. Conflicts or issues with coverages must be channeled through a principal.

Facility, Materials, and Equipment Oversight

Teachers are most aware of the issues related to the facilities and equipment that they utilize. That being said, please be aware of the equipment and furniture in your room and report issues immediately. Do not allow a broken chair or table to sit in the corner of your room. Be sure to lock up any technology, especially laptops and multimedia projectors. Record all serial numbers for these items and submit them to the Technology instructor. Do not leave personal items unattended and be sure to lock the room when you leave.

Teachers in our school take pride in creating an ideal learning environment for their students. While our janitorial and maintenance crew handle the bulk of the cleaning of the facility, it is incumbent upon you to ensure that your room reflects your dedication to your students. This might take the form of putting your chairs up each night, wiping down student tables weekly, setting recycling bins out, having students paint murals to make your space unique, etc.

If disposing of large items that do not fit in a trash can, please clearly label as “trash” and place outside of the classroom door.

Teacher Evaluation

Beacon and Founders fully participate in the RI Department of Education’s Educator Evaluation program. **Non-tenured teachers are subject to the full evaluation process for their first three years at one of our schools. Once tenured, the following applies:**

A teacher receiving a rating of Highly Effective will undergo the full evaluation process every third year. For example, if a teacher was determined to be Highly Effective in 2016-2017, they would next undergo the full process in 2019-2020.

A teacher receiving a rating of Effective will undergo the full evaluation process every second year. For example, if a teacher was determined to be Effective in 2016-2017, they would next undergo the full process in 2018-2019.

A teacher receiving a rating other than Highly Effective or Effective will be evaluated annually.

If a teacher changes their role at the school (subject area, grade level), the administration will determine whether or not the teacher must be evaluated earlier than previously scheduled.

All teachers, regardless of content area or rating, will complete two (2) Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and one Professional Growth Goal each year in cooperation with their Principal.

Please see the Rhode Island Model Teacher Evaluation & Support System Guidebook for all information pertaining to the Teacher Professional Practice Rubric, the Teacher Professional Foundations Rubric, Student Learning Objectives, and Professional Growth Goals.

Best practice encourages an “open door” approach. As part of the practice of a professional learning community, classroom visits above and beyond those required for formal evaluation. Peers as well as administrators make regular visits to classrooms to share best practices and support each other.