

Things I learned in my time at Moss as a 2nd grade teacher:

1. Read over a whole unit plan from the teaching tools they provide before preparing the days lesson. It will help you prioritize what is necessary from what is fluff and allow you to simplify when needed making your life a lot easier.
2. Make sure the students know exactly what is expected of them when assigning them a task. Including how long they have to complete the task, the hand signal they need to use to show me that they have completed the task, what it should look like, sound like etc.
3. Make sure all of my co-workers know that I respect the profession and value their input.
4. Make sure to praise students out in the open and correct in private "chats".
5. Learn all of the school wide behavior management and incentive systems before adding your own. Make sure whatever you add is respected by your peers before spending time implementing.
6. If possible, find out the routines and teaching methods used by the prior years teachers so you don't start the year out having to teach all new procedures or have them attempt things for the first time every lesson. Adapt the lessons to their current skill set, not the skill set you wish they had.
7. Make restroom breaks something they have to do but would prefer not too.
8. Have everything you need for your lesson within reach. If you have to go look for it, maybe skip whatever it is you were looking for.
9. It is NOT sustainable to write out the lesson plans from the provided tools in your own words or try and adapt them every day. Learn to teach the lessons directly from the manual using the tools and materials provided.
10. Print out signs for the lesson objectives for the whole unit and make sure to point to those objectives while teaching. This will help bring focus to your lessons both for you and your students. Where possible, refer regularly to the end of unit assessment questions so that the type of questions asked of them are not new to them when they take the assessment.
11. Suggestions from your coaches are not "suggestions", they are instructions to be followed and where appropriate, reported back on their success or failure with gratitude and humility.
12. Students love to "be the teacher". When you are wanting participation, announce that you are looking for a volunteer to help lead the next part of the lesson. They will ALL perk up at the chance. Give them that chance so they know you mean it.
13. Only hand out a few reward stickers/tokens at a time to the students who are following directions. Keep it sparse and random.
14. When talking about the profession to others, don't EVER dismiss the job as being not as hard as they are making it out to be or that it is not as hard as other jobs outside of teaching. Most teachers have never had other jobs but for some reason love to discuss how hard they have it. Just go with it. It's part of the teacher culture.
15. Come up with an air tight reason for wanting to be a teacher. Something about getting a thrill out of those ah-ha moments in students understanding of a principle or concept etc.

NEVER EVER mention that this is a job and not a calling. Even though it **IS** a job. . . never talk about the pay or benefits being why you are a teacher. A lot of these teachers pride themselves as being community servants or that this is their divine role. Don't step into that minefield.

16. Never use a class prompt in a quiet hallway.
17. Never ever discuss unions in a way that is anything other than them being the best thing to have ever happened to mankind.
18. When your peers ask how things are going, lie.
19. Figure out the decorating style that is popular at your school and mimic that. Don't stand out, don't try and change things. Conform to the ideas that you can see being used until you are very well established. Then introduce your own ideas gradually.
20. Nothing will be kept in confidence. Assume everything said to anyone will be heard by everyone. Your job depends on being positive, loyal and competent. Even if you don't feel you are any of those things, act like it. Pretend to be. Every interaction is a job interview.
21. Classroom management above all else. If your students are not under your total control then you are not doing what you have been hired to do. (Teaching is incidental to what you have been hired to do). Classroom Management is more important than community building, quality instruction, etc. It's the first thing you tackle and the one thing you never let up on.
22. Keep your pace trucking along. You should be ready with the next thing as the final sentence of the last thing leaves your mouth. You can lose momentum in an instant if they sense that you aren't on top of things.
23. No fillers. Students should be engaged from the morning bell till the home bell. It should NOT be direct instruction the whole time but there should be learning happening in the room with clear objectives, time expectations etc.
24. Model expected behaviors for them. Never assume that they already know how to behave. Assume they all have short term memory loss. (because they do!)
25. Document everything.
26. If you have assigned them to do something, look at it. If they think it is something I will never look at or comment on, they won't work on the task. Just walk around with a green pencil and put lots of stars on kids worksheets or notebooks who are on task. The others want stars so bad! But don't just give those stars out like candy. . .