• Join your local association/TSTA/NEA affiliate. Your career is your most valuable investment.

• Register to vote and REMEMBER TO VOTE; every decision that impacts you is a political one.

• Know who to contact at TSTA (your TSTA Support Network):
  • Immediate Questions/Answers/Support:
    • Your TSTA campus leader
    • Your local association president
    • Your AOT staff person
    • Legal issues/questions: TSTA Help Center (1.877.ASK.TSTA)
    • Instruction/certification/professional development: BryanW@tsta.org

• Know and understand your rights.

• Preserve, protect, and defend the planning period. It’s yours so use it and protect it.

• Take your full lunch period; it’s duty-free, is a full 30 minutes, and DOES NOT include hall duty or taking kids to/from the cafeteria.
• Keep copies (print or electronic) of the following close at hand:
  - Employment Grievance Policies DGBA (LEGAL) and DGBA (LOCAL)
  - Teacher Evaluation Policies (DNA (LEGAL) and DNA (LOCAL)
  - Teacher Appraisal Manual (T-TESS, PDAS, or a local instrument)
• Take time to document; you never know when you may need it.
• Keep your principal and appraiser informed; no one likes surprises and if you don’t inform them, someone else will.
• Understand the “ins and outs” of your leave time.
• Be on time every morning. If you’re running late, call your principal.
• Go to local school board meetings; it’s amazing what you learn and it all impacts you.
• Question things you don’t understand but don’t be insubordinate. If something doesn’t make sense or you don’t understand it, ask a question. If you don’t know how to ask the question, contact your TSTA support list.
• Have the moral courage to speak up; your reality may not be the same as another teacher’s.
• Know and understand the process of how things get done and who does them.
• Avoid talking about students in public places, including the lounge.
• Maintain confidentiality of students, colleagues, and parents.
• If someone says “it’s the law . . .” ask for a copy of the law.
• Advocate for yourself, your profession, your school, and your students.
• Share your story; no one can tell it better than you can.
• Keep your personal life private and separate for your professional life.