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Educators get it together with new organization plan

Author, educator gives teachers tools to deliver results and achieve a work-life balance

BROOKLYN, N.Y. – Get up early. Arrive at school. Go over lesson plans. Motivate students. E-mail parents. Grade papers. Read memos. Organize classroom. Meet with principal. Go home and collapse. While today's teacher receives an education to teach kids science, art or math, many are not given the operational skills to balance all the demands on their time in a typical day. With the advent of technology, teachers are juggling more than their counterparts did 25 years ago. A startling survey reveals close to 50 percent of new teachers leave their positions in their first five years and are less positive about the training they received.

Longtime educator and administrator Maia Heyck-Merlin has seen the strain that managing time, paperwork and students has placed on teachers. Heyck-Merlin addresses these issues in her new book, ***The Together Teacher: Plan Ahead, Get Organized and Save Time*** (Jossey-Bass, May 2012; \$21.95). She designed the Together Teacher system to help teachers work with intentionality and focus on what really matters: delivering better results for students and having a healthier life.

Each chapter builds the Together Teacher system, along with free resources and guides to manage time, to-dos, calendars, e-mails and paperwork. Heyck-Merlin highlights real-life stories from Together Teachers in various stages of their careers. *The Together Teacher* also features practical illustrations and photos so teachers can arrange their classrooms to be stocked, organized and run like clockwork.

"As someone who has been a teacher, recruited teachers, hired teachers, trained and evaluated teachers, and worked like heck to retain great teachers – and is married to a teacher – I believe that being organized is an invaluable skill to possess in the most demanding and important profession there is," Heyck-Merlin says.

Together Teachers may make it look easy but in fact are incredibly organized. They exhibit five essential skills:

- **Prioritization.** They focus on the right things at home and school, such as personal or professional goals and align their schedule to fit those priorities. They don't spend all their time making beautiful bulletin boards when they could be analyzing important student data.
- **Planning.** Together Teachers look ahead consistently to what is coming and carefully plan how to use their limited free time. Their prep periods are carefully mapped out so they have less work to take home.
- **Organization.** They create organized and defined processes and systems for important classroom functions. No more fumbling for those class handouts.
- **Execution.** They do their work with intentionality and awareness of time management and energy levels. Together Teachers don't try to plan a field trip during one prep period.
- **Efficiency.** Together Teachers capitalize on all bits of time in the day and maximize their time by batch processing. No more running to the copier or office three times per day.

Maia Heyck-Merlin, is the CEO of Brass Tacks, a training and consulting company for teachers, and is the chief talent officer at Achievement First, a nonprofit educational organization that manages a network of high-performing college-preparatory K-12 public charter schools in Connecticut and New York. Heyck-Merlin began her teaching career in southern Louisiana teaching fourth grade and moved on to teach fifth grade. She served as executive director for Teach for America (TFA) in southern Louisiana, led TFA's summer teacher preparation program, and then founded and led National Institute Operations team, which oversaw the operations for five summer training institutes. Heyck-Merlin has a Bachelor of Arts in child development from Tufts University. She lives in Brooklyn, N.Y., with her husband and daughter. For more information visit, please visit www.thetogetherteacher.com.

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