

WHAT IS A PORTFOLIO?

Think of a portfolio as an expanded resume. A few personnel administrators will welcome a variety of formats, such as a box of notes, clippings, photos and objects. However the majority look for a standard 3-ring binder. Inside they will expect to find things that show strengths, goals and achievements. This variety of items could include things like a resume, references, letters of recommendations, transcripts, education philosophy, classroom management theory, examples of lessons and photos of you in action. It's not a scrapbook, but a representation of your abilities.

- **Buy The Book:** An obvious first step is to purchase a three-ring binder now to keep handy. The visual reminder might be enough to encourage you to save information for it.
- **Be A Smart Curator:** Figure out how you are going to save information and move it into your portfolio. Some items might go straight into the portfolio file, such as printed results of special committee work you participated in, while others might need to be summarized for inclusion.
- **Divide And Conquer:** Use tabbed dividers to organize and separate the contents of your portfolio. Identically named folders can be kept in your portfolio box or file cabinet as holding places for information. *Suggestions for sections for a teacher could include:* resume and certification information; classroom planning, instruction and evaluation; personal goals and professional preparation; committee work; outside educational activities.
- **Put It On The Calendar:** Pencil in days on your calendar to review your portfolio and sort through your archive box.

Use this list as a starting point for ideas for information and items to include in your portfolio:

- Table of contents
- Resume, including continuing education, special committee work and awards and special recognition
- References
- Letters of recommendation
- Transcripts
- Personal goals
- Sample worksheets, games, tests, etc.
- Examples of lessons or projects
- Photos of you in action to illustrate your skills – this could include newspaper clippings or articles
- Photos of projects you have completed, if appropriate
- Final results of projects or committees you have been a part of
- Optional: computer disks and print-outs of programs you have written or modified

- **Keep It Simple:** Don't overload your portfolio with page after page of lengthy text or repetitive photos. Imagine viewing a friend's home video...would you rather see two hours of jerky graduation footage or five minutes of highlights?
- **Keep It Manageable:** Three-ring binders are the preferred choice for portfolios.
- **Be Timely:** Review your portfolio *at least* twice a year. During winter and/or summer vacations you can use some of the breathing room to pause and reflect on your portfolio. Also pencil in changes to your resume at this time so that when needed, an updated version can be retype without having to round up the latest information.
- **Say Cheese:** Keep a cheap camera with fast film, flash and batteries to use on a moment's notice.
- **Make Copies:** Where possible, use copies of originals in your portfolio, keeping the originals in a safe place. To add a professional touch to photos, tape them to a sheet next to captions printed from a computer. Run a color copy of the whole finished sheet to use in the portfolio, and take the originals back off the taped-up master.
- **Make It Clear:** Create a custom cover for your portfolio with a three-ring binder with a clear insert on the cover. Use clear plastic page holders inside to keep your pages clean and neat.
- **Keep It Legible:** Use a computer to type and print out easy-to-read information sheets or a table of contents. Use 12 point type where possible for easy readability.