

## ACTIVITY



# 15 SUMMER BREAK TIPS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS TO MAXIMIZE THEIR TIME

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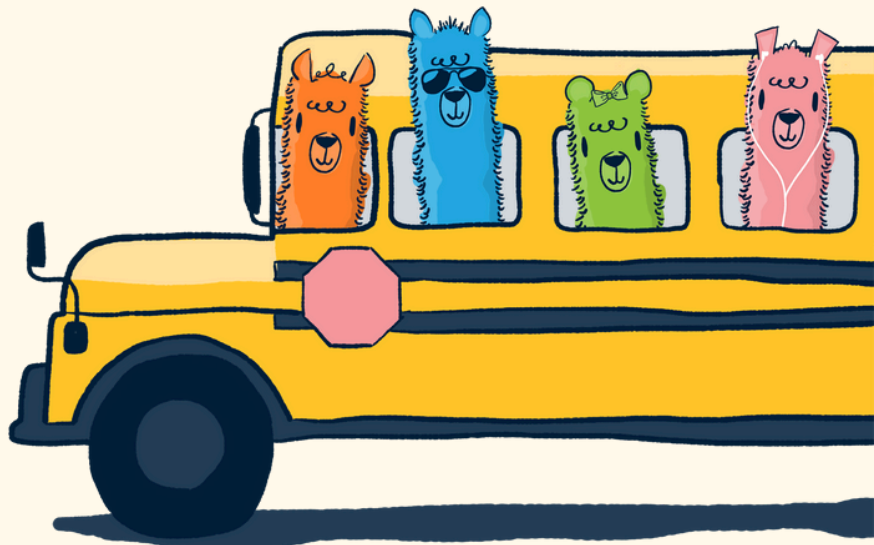
Organize, recharge, and prepare for a strong fall ahead!

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# SUMMER PLAYBOOK

We've gathered ideas to help you make the most of your summer—whether that means wrapping up last year's tasks, setting up systems and welcome routines, or carving out time to recharge and reflect. These practical pointers can help you head into the fall feeling prepared, energized, and excited for what's ahead. Check out our tips and let us know if you have one to add!






## 1 Reflect and Review

Take time to look back on what worked—and what didn't—during the past school year. Assess key programs, identify successes, and pinpoint areas for improvement so you can start next year with clear priorities. By honestly evaluating strengths and weaknesses now, you'll be better equipped to set realistic goals and avoid repeating past pitfalls.


## 2 Gather Feedback

Send a quick survey to your team asking what went well, what didn't, and any suggestions for next year. Start with positive questions (e.g., "What are you most proud of?") before asking open-ended prompts like "What should we stop, start, or continue?" These candid responses often reveal unexpected insights and help you build trust by showing that you genuinely value stakeholder input.



## 3 Analyze School Data

Block out dedicated time to dive into attendance records, test scores, disciplinary referrals, and other relevant metrics. Look for patterns: Were certain student groups thriving or struggling? Which interventions had the biggest impact? Understanding these trends now will inform instructional plans, staffing decisions, and resource allocation before day one.






## 4 Set Clear Goals

Rather than piling on new initiatives, focus on 2–3 high-leverage goals that align with your mission and improve student achievement. Learn to discern which requests genuinely move the needle—if something doesn't fit, consider politely declining. This laser-sharp focus protects your energy and ensures that both you and your team aren't overwhelmed by "nice-to-have" extras.


## 5 Brainstorm Innovations

Set aside time to brainstorm both small tweaks (like adjusting schedules) and big shifts (like new interdisciplinary projects). Collaborate with colleagues to generate transformational, breakthrough, and incremental ideas—balancing all three keeps progress steady and inspires change.



## 6 Connect with Staff One-on-One

Schedule informal "get-to-know-you" meetings—either in person or via video—to learn what went well last year and what they hope to achieve next. Offering optional summer sign-ups keeps in-service week from getting overwhelmed and shows you genuinely value individual voices. These chats build trust and smooth collaboration all year.





## 7 Welcome New Staff and Families

Prepare personalized welcome postcards or make brief introductory calls to any incoming teachers, support staff, and families. A simple "We're thrilled you're joining us" message goes a long way toward building rapport before the first day. This early touchpoint also allows you to answer questions, share basic school information, and reduce first-day jitters.


## 8 Set Up Staff Recognition Systems

Plan and assemble a few "goodie bags" with snacks or small school-themed gifts to celebrate staff birthdays over the summer. Create a recognition wall (physical or digital) where colleagues can drop shout-outs or compliments—then launch it on day one so celebrating becomes a habit. These small gestures foster a culture of appreciation and remind everyone they're valued.



## 9 Back-to-School Welcoming Event

Sketch out details for a casual, welcoming party or "Staff Kick-Off" during the first week—think simple snacks, icebreaker activities, or a themed lunch. Use this gathering to introduce core values, preview big initiatives, and help everyone reconnect before diving into the academic year. Getting this on your calendar now ensures you have time to secure food, order supplies, and enlist helpers.






## 10 Prep Your First Staff Meeting Agenda

Draft a clear agenda that includes time to share summer wins or learning and outline key goals or initiatives to build excitement. Having this structured plan ready means you can hit the ground running and cultivate a sense of shared ownership from day one. Don't forget to add some fun with a game or challenge—check out a few ideas in [our resource](#)!

## 11 Streamline Systems and Inventory

Walk through your office, supply closets, and storerooms to spot items needing replacement or disposal—order essentials now so they arrive before staff return and identify clunky processes (like outdated paperwork or scheduling routines) to streamline. Tidying these spaces and workflows now will save headaches and boost efficiency.



## 12 Map Out Your Budget Priorities

Review this year's expenditures versus your anticipated needs for next year—supplies, field trips, professional development funds, etc. Identify any shortfalls or "nice-to-have" line items that could be phased in later. Having a preliminary budget snapshot means you can flag anything that needs district approval well before the fall.



## 13 Design a Strategic Calendar


Build a high-level calendar of key events—staff birthdays and recognition ideas—so everyone knows what’s ahead and can give feedback. A big-picture roadmap keeps momentum, fosters collaboration, and avoids last-minute scrambling. Here are a few ideas to include!

## 14 Plan a Back-to-School Event

Host a casual back-to-school event where families meet teachers, tour classrooms, and enjoy light refreshments. Add simple activities—a scavenger hunt or meet-and-greet station—to make everyone feel welcome and show you’re approachable. Check out our resource full of ideas.


## 15 Refresh Schoolwide Policies

Quickly review your handbook, discipline matrix, and attendance guidelines for outdated policies—note any needed tweaks and consult leadership or the parent advisory council over the summer so changes are finalized and communicated before families arrive.



## Bonus Tip: Rest and Recharge

And one more very important tip: prioritize rest—you had a busy year too! Take time to read a fun book, plan a mini-vacation, or binge your favorite show without guilt. Recharge now so you can return feeling energized and excited for the adventures ahead.





# **HAVE AN IDEA TO ADD? TELL US!**

We'd love to hear your ideas too!  
Send us a tip to add to  
[alissa@getalpaca.com](mailto:alissa@getalpaca.com), and we'll  
send you a coffee on us!

**Have an idea you'd like to see? Let us  
know! We're always looking for new  
resource ideas for school leaders!**

## **HEY THANKS!**

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happiest place to work!**

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packed with ideas to support school leaders.**