



First 10 Days Back-to-School Checklist for Deans

Day 1–3: Observe & Listen

- Walk all major campus spaces during peak times — hallways, cafeteria, outdoor areas, dorms (if boarding).
- Note energy levels and group dynamics: Who's included? Who's on the edges?
- Observe class transitions — punctuality, flow, student interactions.
- Attend at least one class in each division you oversee.

Day 4–6: Ask & Connect

- Schedule short, informal conversations with key stakeholders: Division heads, counselor/nurse, student leaders, office & facilities staff.
- Ask open-ended questions: 'What's working well?', 'Where do you see challenges emerging?', 'What's one thing you'd change if you could?'
- Make a visible effort to connect with students by name.

Day 7–8: Review & Align

- Audit key systems: attendance, tardy tracking, discipline process, advisory program.
- Check communication channels — are updates getting where they need to go?
- Compare current practice with your school's mission and values.

Day 9–10: Act on Quick Wins

- Address small, high-impact fixes (e.g., traffic flow, sign-in procedure).
- Share one early observation in a staff meeting, framed as curiosity.
- Send a 'First Week Observations' email with 2 positives and 1 question.

Pro Tips

- Keep a single running document of observations, sorted into 'Now,' 'Next,' and 'Later.'
- Resist making big policy changes until you have enough context.
- Your tone in the first 10 days sets the trust level for the year.

■ Ready for a stronger start?

Join the Deans' Roundtable Community of Practice or explore Mentorship Coaching for personalized strategies.