Professional Files
Essential

       Of all the files you will ever compile, your professional file may be the most important. The professional file has several functions: you can use it as a portfolio, a storage space for important documents and a place to stash fond memories.

       If you use a plain folder for your professional file, you may want to laminate it for added durability. Your best bet, though, is to pick up a collapsible file. There are a variety of quality files that cost less that $10. The way you assemble your professional file is up to you, but here are items that you should include:

1. ***Contract and other important documents***
   You should put a copy of every contract you sign into your professional file. It's also a good idea to include your district's salary schedule, your certification papers and your college transcript.

2. ***Your school board's policy***
   Keeping your school board's policy on hand will keep your memory fresh about your school's dress code, evaluations, transfers, grievance procedures and more. The complete Board Policy is available from your principal and in every media center. A faculty handbook for your building is also important.

3. ***Evaluations***
   Keep copies of any evaluation you receive.

4. ***Positive Communications***
   Keep any positive communications from administrators, parents, students, fellow teachers. They are nice to reread when you are having a bad day.

5. ***Records of conversations, meetings and conferences***
   It is always good to write down the details while they are fresh in your mind. You may need them at a later date.

6. ***Professional Development Records***
   Keep track of all professional development you attend. It is necessary for certificate upgrades. Specific professional development is required by the district.