



## Principals, If Your Teachers Want to Leave, Let Them Go

By Educator Barnes – April 14, 2019

Spring break is the last long break before the school year ends. For teachers, it is a time to recharge, but it is also a time to think and reflect upon the school year to determine if their current school is a place they want to return to next school year. Principals slip forms in teachers' mailboxes asking if they plan to return next year or transfer to another school in the district. Some teachers update their resumes and venture out to school job fairs or begin completing applications online. Although educators know this process comes around each year,

for some reason, it becomes an awkward and unnecessarily stressful time. Administrators are partly to blame.

Most people know I'm known for writing the viral article with one million plus views, "[Teachers Quit Principals, Not Schools](#)." The article is so popular that when I had to interview for a new job last year after my former school district eliminated my position, many of the principals who interviewed me had read my article. If you are a principal that teachers want to quit, let them go. Nothing good will come of you attempting to block their future opportunities. Don't bother telling teachers how you will change or how it will be better next school year when you are only concerned with hanging onto those teachers rather than fixing the areas that are pushing teachers out the door.

Before I quit the principal I wrote about, that administrator knew I wanted to leave. Regardless how any principal feels about me now, all of my principals will tell you I work hard, have good relationships with students, and will tell you what is on my mind. This is why no principal I have ever worked for was blindsided when I left. Even with my current job, my principal is aware of my future plans. We are all grown, but some of us act immature or inappropriate when it comes to talking about why teachers want to leave. People accepting jobs and switching jobs is part of the education profession. It doesn't need to be a hostage situation.

I even had a principal refuse to write me a reference letter to stop me from leaving. My evaluation for that school year was highly effective and the notes were all praise. Guess what? That principal being petty did not stop me from leaving nor did it prevent me from being offered other jobs, three to be exact. When principals try to hold onto people who no longer want to be at their school, they are damaging the school culture and refusing to do some introspection to determine what could be changed to improve their staff retention rates.

At the end of the day, the people impacted most are the students. There is nothing worse than for a child to have a teacher that does not want to work at the school. I'm not suggesting principals lie and give glowing reviews to pass the trash to get rid of educators who want to leave because they realized their inadequate teaching has been exposed. In those situations, principals should be putting in supports and following the procedures to get those teachers on a plan of improvement or a plan of non-renewal of their teacher contract. But for teachers who are good or even great, who want to leave your school, let them go. Don't get in their way. The best you can do is make changes so no one else will want to leave your school.