



## Transitioning to a New School as a Veteran Teacher

By Educator Barnes – July 20, 2019

When I hear my parents and their siblings reminisce about their time in school during K-12, one common theme I hear was how many of them had the same teachers. Teachers did not change jobs much. They may even have retired from the school where they were first hired. Those days are long gone. Even if an educator has been at a school for a while, he or she may end up displaced or desire to leave because the climate of the school has changed during the teacher's tenure there. Switching schools after being at one school for a long time can be daunting, but it doesn't have to be.

After my eighth year in the classroom, I left a school where I had been for five years. It was hard to walk away. Looking at my classroom with the lights off for the last time knowing I wouldn't step foot in there again was a heavy feeling. The anticipation and unknown that was awaiting me at my new school was mounting inside. Would I fit in? What is the principal really like? Any administrator can come off as nice and supportive in an interview. What will I have to learn? Those were some of the questions rolling around in my brain.

I had to remember that I left for a reason. As hard as it is to transition to another school there is a reason it is happening. It is okay to be angry about it. I have been displaced twice in my career. There's nothing worse than being forced to switch jobs when you didn't want to switch jobs. You have a choice, dwell on your anger or fears or embrace the new opportunity.

My first goal was to find a go-to person. At every school where I have been hired, the principal has said reach out if I needed anything. In reality, the principal does not have time to help you find the laminator or how to fill out the field trip request form. Try to find a positive person to help you. Avoid grumpy relics who complain about all aspects of the school. Unfortunately, these people seem to crop up at many schools and can make you feel that the school year is not going to go well.

Next, make sure you understand how you are going to be evaluated. Real talk...once a principal knows you can teach and manage students, many don't evaluate you the way they do newbies to the profession or to their schools. Please know that your evaluation might feel like the evaluation you had earlier in your career. This shouldn't worry you. If you are a good teacher just know they will actually be paying attention the whole time. I had a principal stay on the phone during most of my evaluation. No, the principal should not have been doing this but I can guarantee you that if you are new, the principal won't let the day to day responsibilities distract him or her from you while you are teaching.

Be prepared to learn new ways of implementing skills or content. We all know each school district has different priorities. For example, I worked in a school that had the International Baccalaureate Programme. I had to get training and certification. I also had to organize my lesson differently.

Most importantly, have fun. I have learned so much as an educator at the different schools I have been employed. I add that stuff to my tool kit and continue growing as an educator. Switching schools can be stressful once you've been in the education profession for a while, but you don't have to let it be if you are prepared.