

# Signs it's time to go



Superintendents across the United States were invited to brainstorm when a superintendent should begin looking for a new position. Following is a summary of highlights from the many responses:

## **THE SUPERINTENDENT SHOULD BEGIN LOOKING FOR A NEW POSITION:**

- when the board is disrespectful or abusive
- when the board criticizes you in public
- when board members are supervising staff or permitting others to make your decisions
- when the board does not support your decision to discipline, reassign, or terminate an employee
- when the board often votes against the superintendent's recommendations
- when the board begins to question every decision
- when the board begins to question things that are really minor.
- when board members begin hiding information from the superintendent
- when staff members learn things from the board president before the superintendent does
- when board members begin increasing how much they micro-manage
- when the board freezes the superintendent's salary
- when the board gives the superintendent a poor performance evaluation
- when the board resists the superintendent's recommendations
- when the board fails to support the superintendents proposals for new reforms or initiatives
- when the board (or individual members) become more of a road block to progress than support for moving forward
- when individual or collective requests/demands become unreasonable and there is no willingness to change

- 🍁 when the superintendent realizes that his or her vision and goals for the district differ from that of the school board
- 🍁 when the superintendent has a personal need for a position in a larger school system
- 🍁 when the superintendent has a personal need for a salary increase
- 🍁 when the superintendent realizes that it is time for new leadership to take the district to the next level
- 🍁 when the excitement of going to the job is gone
- 🍁 when the “fit” is no longer there or workable
- 🍁 when it is not FUN anymore!

## **PERSONAL COMMENTS**

- A mentor once told me he thought it was time to move when the board no longer had any members who hired him. He believed it was/is important for boards to have ownership of the superintendent.
- When I asked a special mentor how I would know it is time to move on, she said:

When you are hired you are given a stack of chips, during your tenor you spend your chips carefully on what you believe is in the best interest of students. When your stack has dwindles to about a third of what you were originally given, it is time to update your resume, when you have about ¼ of the chips left, it is time to look for another job. Of course the chips represent tough decisions that you feel so strongly will help students that you spend some of your influence even in the time of heavy criticism. When your influence to help students has diminished to the point you are no longer able to make a difference for students, it is time to move on.

- For some it may be time because of the board’s make-up or city/town politics. I think it is simply about opportunity and fit. If there is an opportunity that is family and financially better you take a look at it. Then you do your homework about fit with board, district needs and community.

## **AND FROM A CLEVER COLLEAGUE**

### **The top 10 signs a superintendent should move on**

10. When your name placard is missing at the board table.
9. When your secretary sends an invitation to your spouse for your retirement party.
8. When the principals ignore you and greet your Assistant Superintendent, "Hi boss!"
7. When you are not given a pile of papers to sign for three consecutive days.
6. When your parking spot is taken by an 11th grader.
5. When the bus drivers give you a model replica school bus and say it’s been nice working with you.
4. When your spouse plans a family vacation on the same day as high school commencement.
3. When you overhear your cabinet members talking about how the next superintendent will be re-arranging your office furniture.
2. When you get a perfect evaluation from the board.
1. When you calculate your anticipated retirement salary every day for a week and say to yourself, "Not bad. I can do just fine with that!"