

Tips to Transition

Weighty & Less Than Weighty Tips from Peers

If you are new to MCPS administration, you may find these tips useful. Some will make you smile; all will make you think. As you proceed through the year, jot down your own tips and send them to MCAAP. We will share these with next year's new administrators.

- You are no longer a teacher/support professional, but a supervisor. With the change in roles comes a difference in the perception of others and a change in your social status.
- You do not always have the answers.
- It is okay to say, "I don't know, but I'll find out" - and then do just that.
- There are always others who will tell you how to do your job - just listen, response is optional.
- Return all calls and do so in a reasonable period of time.
- Be part of a team - This is not a game of "follow the leader."
- Sit back and observe - you are still learning.
- Other administrators are your colleagues - you are supposed to "associate" with them. Asking questions is good. Every one of them has walked in your shoes.
- Lunch is permitted and rest room breaks are reasonable.
- Learn to appreciate warm soda and cold coffee.
- You really do not need to reinvent the wheel.
- There really are no stupid questions - just be careful who you ask.
- Networking is a great tool to relieve stress and learn different ways of doing things. Start within your cluster/office.
- You must be flexible and adjustable. Things happen quickly and often without warning or predictability.
- Politics is part of the job - become a savvy politician.
- You are not expected to be an expert in all areas; you are expected to recognize good teaching or good office practices, active learning, and reasonable classroom management.
- Work with your secretary (and other support professionals) - she/he is the best advocate and protector.
- Check your e-mail at least once a day; do not check it all day.
- Know whose calls should be taken immediately. Always take the Superintendent's call! Recognize the names of executive staff and members of the Board of Education.
- Learn the names of staff as quickly as possible.
- Work in pencil - it's erasable.

- School emergencies always come first. Make sure you know what a school emergency is.
- If you are overwhelmed with "priorities," it is okay to check with someone else as to prioritizing the priorities.
- Always be visible in the building/office and speak to people everyday.
- In MCPS, kids and student achievement come first.
- Balance your personal and professional life - you really can have both.
- Everyone likes to be recognized - develop ways to do this with staff as well as students.
- Just as it is expected that you accept responsibility for things, you can also take credit for things. Just remember that credit is best shared.
- Create a checklist of must dos - and then make sure you do them.
- Work on problem solving, but remember you probably didn't create the problem.
- Don't make decisions in the hallway.
- All of your good ideas do not need to be implemented immediately. Let people get to know you first.
- Take your job seriously - don't take yourself too seriously.
- Use time to your advantage - few things call for immediate action.
- You'll be judged by the staff you pick.
- There is a MCPS culture - take the time to become acculturated.
- Once in the job, begin jogging. Even running in place has purpose. You will also be asked to sprint, run long distances, and slow to a walk. Pacing is a learned skill.
- **It is very important to try to enjoy the challenges as much as the rewards.**

About being a leader from a great leader:

*"In matters of style, swim with the currents...
in matters of principle, stand like a rock."*

- Thomas Jefferson -