

THERE'S AN ART TO LEAVING AFTER MARCH 15 NOTICE

Unfortunately, a number of school administrators have just received March 15 Notices. EdCal asked ACSA Member Assistance Advocate Bill Tschida to write the following article on maintaining your professionalism when leaving a job.

Each year many school administrators leave the school districts where they work and move on to administrative positions in other districts. Sometimes people leave because it is their choice. Others are sometimes notified they might not be a match, or the district may be moving in a new direction or may have lost confidence in the individual.

Regardless of whether the person leaves voluntarily or is asked to leave, it is extremely important to leave in a way that is professional and positive.

It is normally a difficult situation when an administrator receives a March 15 Notice and is then reassigned, demoted or terminated. When this action occurs, an administrator can often feel unfairly treated, confused, angry and upset. These are normal reactions when confronted with the possibility of losing a job.

Most of the time, all of the legal requirements to demote, terminate or reassign an administrator are met properly by district officials. Even when all legal requirements are met, the individual administrator at times feels he or she is not being treated fairly and wants to challenge the decisions that have been made.

Then, when it comes time to actually leave the district or move to a new position in the district, he or she cannot accept that the decisions are legal and finds it difficult to move forward.

Experience has shown that there really is an "Art of Leaving," even during difficult circumstances. It is best to channel the natural frustration, anger, resentment and other emotions and, despite the challenge, to look forward, not back. Put your energy into preparing yourself to find a new, and hopefully better, job. Here are some specific ways to look forward:

- Practice your interview skills.
- Sharpen and update your resume.
- Use the Internet to locate employment opportunities (www.acsa.org).
- Use the Internet to find out information about other districts.
- Get your reference letters updated.
- Talk with colleagues in other districts about possible open positions.
- Let others know that you are available.

When you leave a district or a position, try to leave without saying negative things about people. Remember that many times the people you are upset with will appear again in your professional life in years to come.

Complete all your professional responsibilities before you leave, including cleaning your office, desk and computer in a respectful manner. Leave on as positive note as possible. Look forward, take off the rear view mirrors, and do not look back.

Yes, it can be difficult to leave a position or a district. If you ever find yourself in the position of having to move on, don't forget, there really is an "Art of Leaving."

If you need assistance with a due process issue or other issues related to your administrative position, contact the ACSA Member Assistance & Legal Support Team, under the direction of Assistant Executive Director Joseph Jones, at (800) 608-ACSA.

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