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**Question:** I moved to a new school this year within the same county. What does it mean to change schools? How do I handle such an overwhelming change?

Mr. Mirinda

**Answer:**

Moving to a new school is like changing jobs. The exception here is that you already know the rules and regulations of the county you are in. Other than that, you are in a new environment with its own rules, regulations, culture, and set of circumstances for physical education such as the amount of equipment and the type of space you have, and what the physical education program before you was like. In addition, you are with a whole new staff and set of students, which in itself can be overwhelming. Therefore, it is like being in a new job. Below I have outlined what this means and the best way to go about handling the transition.

**Seize the Day** – See this change as an opportunity to start fresh and spread your wings. Use this as an opportunity to go back to the basics and improve your teaching and program. See it as a way to try things you may have wanted to try but were not able to before. So, take this chance to do things to the best of your ability. “Changes is good” is the motto I would apply to this new school. Its how we grow and develop as people and professionals.

**Assess** – Just like you assess students before instruction, take some time to assess the new situation. Once you have settled into your workspace, schedule, and instruction, you will start to learn the lay of the land. You will learn allot just by doing your job and listening to other sspeak.

You will find out how the administration functions, the chain of command, the expectations of the administration, school wide policies and procedures, what the student body is like, how the teachers function in different situations, who has what information, and other intangibles that will help you succeed in your new school.

**Get to Know** – Building relationships is an essential part of being successful in a new environment. You want people to know you are genuine and willing to work with them for what is in the best interest of the students. Take some time to get to know the students and teachers. This can mean icebreakers with students, thumbs up when you see them outside of class doing something good, or acknowledging their presence while on a duty post. This allows you to keep your distance for sake of being seen as a Teacher and not their friend while showing you care. When it comes to teachers, this can be a simple conversation about a topical conversation when you see their class, participating in staff social events, joining a school committee, or offering assistance when you see it is needed.

**Act and Ask** – Once you have assessed the situation, and you know the people you will be with 40 hours a week a little better, you will know different areas of your job responsibilities that need addressing. At this point, set up meetings with the administration or appropriate people to ask for what you need to do your job. This could be getting certain equipment, coming to an understanding on how certain aspects of the schedule work, or some other inconsistency where you know if it does not get addressed, it will make it very difficult for you to do your job to the best of your ability.

**Prove Yourself** – By now you have an idea of what you are working with, and you have addressed areas of need. It is now time to prove you. Just like you do not know the students, staff, or administration well, they do not know you. And since these are people you are going to work with all year and collaborate on certain projects, you want to do your best to make a good first impression. The best way to do this is to play by the rulebook and do your job. This means following all protocols the school and county mandate, setting a strong structure for your classes, providing meaningful instruction, and being reliable and trustworthy.

**Make Adjustments** – Now that you have the lay of the land, asked for what you need, and shown your value, make adjustments. Save large adjustments that will disrupt your established routine until the next school year. If you try to make large changes midstream, it can wind up causing more confusion and chaos than intended. However, small adjustments may be needed. Know that you are more comfortable at your school. For example, changing a start or stop cue, rearranging a couple students place in line, or creating a approved lunch group as a reward.

The first year in a new school can offer many challenges. However, it can also be an opportunity to reinvent yourself and push the limits of your abilities. The process of becoming acclimated to a new environment is a multi faceted and long one. Once you have gone through the process properly, you will have set yourself up for a great experience into the tenure of your time at the school.

Best of Luck,

Charles

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