



Changing of the Guard

In [this article](#) from SchoolCEO Magazine you will explore the many facets of a leadership change. From curriculum changes to new technology to crisis management, schools are in constant flux. But there's no shift as potentially impactful as saying goodbye to one leader and welcoming a new one.


Discussion Guide

 *"According to data from education consulting firm EAB, more than one-third of experienced superintendents (those with six or more years of tenure) are planning to retire in the next two to three years."*


- How has your district prepared for a superintendent transition?

 *"The key word here is "transition." In *Managing Transitions: Making The Most Of Change*, author and consultant William Bridges points out the difference between change and transition. "Change is the external event or situation that takes place," he writes. Conversely, he defines "transition" as the inner psychological process people go through as they internalize change. "Change is the WHAT. Transition is the HOW," he adds. "Change will only be successful if leaders and organizations address the transition that people experience during change."*


- How does this framework impact your thinking on a superintendent transition?

 *"It's important to go into leadership transition with both an open mind and a sense of grace. From families to teachers to bus drivers, everyone has felt the emotional brunt of COVID-19, so easing your community through a potentially emotional transition is vital."*

- What are some practical steps that would help your district's transition team be open minded and have a sense of grace when communicating a superintendent change?

 *"Part of dealing with this loss of relevance is knowing the appropriate distance to keep from your district and its new leader."*

- How will you assist in the transition of relationships when onboarding the new superintendent?

 *"Maybe the most significant way to support your successor is to help establish a district transition team to ease their entrance into the role. 'It's important for departing superintendents to create a team of stakeholders representing the whole district,' Davidson says."*

- What is the makeup of your district's transition team?
- Does your district's transition team represent the entire district? If not, who do you need to include to ease your new superintendent's entrance to the role?



“Change happens to us; transition happens with us. You need all the trust and support you can get from your new families, students, staff, and teachers, so think twice before throwing out all the systems they’re comfortable with too quickly.”

- How will your district’s transition team foster transition while mitigating the shock of change?



“Before you can effectively lead any school district, you must get to know your community of stakeholders. ‘You have to understand what is going on in the district before you move forward,’ Carlson tells us.”

- How can your district’s transition team help prepare your new superintendent to meet and build relationships with community stakeholders?



“The more you tell your new stakeholders about yourself, the better. After all, you’re asking them to trust you with their children and their careers, so being as personal as possible right out of the gate helps your community build confidence in you as a leader”

- How will you help the new superintendent build trust with community stakeholders?
- How will the district’s transition team prepare and advise your new superintendent?



“Leaving the right way can set your district and its new superintendent up for success—and solidify your legacy as an effective leader.”

“New leadership is an excellent opportunity to bring a community together and reinforce a school system’s strengths and vision.”

- How will the district’s transition team ensure successful goodbyes and hellos for the district’s incoming and departing superintendents?
- Does your district’s transition team have clearly defined strengths and a vision for the district that you can communicate to your new superintendent?



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