**Pitfalls for New Superintendents: Avoid the Top 10 Errors**

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1. Disputes over “roles”
   * It’s improvisational jazz, not a symphony. Feel the rhythm.
2. Honor the “no surprises” rule
   * Always provide the “heads up”- even if others don’t
   * Disclose early that which must be disclosed eventually---if your not sure, disclose
3. Budget issues
   * Woe betide you if you don’t regularly update on status
4. Accurately read the political environment
   * Focus on the impact the decision will have on kids
   * Dissenters who disagree are not always treacherous or traitorous

* + - Use the concept of a loyal opposition
    - Focus on areas of agreement

1. Don’t be arrogant
   * We all know you’re the boss and you were selected after an intergalactic search
2. Be media smart
   * Introduce yourself to editors and reporters
   * Know their deadlines and stick to them if at all possible
   * Don’t be afraid to ask for a correction based on facts
   * “No comment” doesn’t fly– get the talking points set in advance
3. Parents need to be heard
   * Psych 101: you matter, I heard you, and I will consider your views…then get back to them
4. Teachers need to be valued
   * They are the most important people in the system, after the kids, and you need to say that
   * Psych 101: See above
   * Be fair and consistent with discipline
5. Be discrete
   * Personal habits and behaviors matter
   * Professionally
     + At the beginning apply the Jim Rice Rule: Co-workers are not automatically friends, they’re business associates.
       - You knew who your friends were before you took the job.
       - If you want a new friend, get a dog
     + So, be careful what you say and do in the office as you may not get a mulligan
     + BUT, this can change over time with the accumulation of personal and professional capital
6. Ask for help when you don’t know
   * + You don’t know everything
     + You’ll learn who is capable and willing
     + You’ll learn who possesses institutional memory
     + You’ll earn credibility

**A Bonus**:

1. Accept responsibility for personal and systemic errors/mistakes
   * + The cover up is always worse than the mistake
     + Explain what happened, why and what you’ve learned going forward
     + Understand not everyone will be satisfied