Supports for Transitions

Students and their families are regularly confronted with a variety of transitions – changing schools, changing grades, encountering a range of other daily hassles and major life demands. Many of these can interfere with productive school involvement.

A comprehensive approach to providing transition supports requires interventions within classrooms and school-wide and among schools sending and receiving students. The immediate goals are to enhance success during transitions and prevent transition problems. In addition, transition periods provide opportunities to promote healthy development, reduce alienation and increase positive attitudes toward school and learning, address systemic and personal barriers to learning and teaching, and re-engage disconnected students and families.

The focus is on concerns related to

Starting school and newly arriving – students and their families, new staff, volunteers, visitors (e.g., comprehensive orientations, welcoming signs, materials, and initial receptions; social and emotional supports including peer buddy programs; accommodating special concerns of those from other countries and those arriving after periods of hospitalization)

Daily transitions -- before school, changing classes, breaks, lunch, afterschool (e.g., preventing problems by ensuring positive supervision and safety; providing attractive recreational, enrichment, and academic support activities; using problems that arise as teachable moments related to enhancing social-emotional development)

Summer or intersession (e.g., catch-up, recreation, enrichment programs, service and workplace opportunities)

Matriculation – grade-to-grade – new classrooms, new teachers; elementary to middle school; middle to high school; in and out of special education programs; school-to-career/higher education transition (e.g., information; academic, vocational, and social-emotional counseling and related supports; pathway and articulation strategies; mentor programs; programs to support moving to post school living and work)

The activity overlaps the other five intervention arenas of a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports in contributing to the degree to which youngsters benefit from schooling.

Intended outcomes include reducing alienation, enhancing readiness, motivation, and involvement in school and learning activities, and enhancing safety. Early outcomes that have been reported include reductions in tardies, vandalism, and violence at school and in the neighborhood. Over time, articulation programs reduce school avoidance and dropouts, as well as enhancing school adjustment and increasing the number who make successful transitions to higher education and post school living and work. And, initial studies of programs for transition in and out of special education suggest the interventions can enhance students' attitudes about school and self and can improve their academic performance. It also is likely that transition supports add to perceptions of a caring school climate; this can play a significant role in a family's decision about staying or changing schools.

Supports for Transitions

Use the following ratings in responding to items 1-5.
  DK = don't know; 1 = not yet; 2 = planned; 3 = just recently initiated; 4 = has been functional for a while; 5 = well institutionalized (well established with a commitment to maintenance

1. Is there a stated policy for enhancing Supports
   for Transitions?   DK 1 2 3 4 5

2. Is there a designated leader or leaders for enhancing
   Supports for Transitions?   DK 1 2 3 4 5

3. Do personnel involved in enhancing Supports for
   Transitions meet regularly as a workgroup to evaluate   DK 1 2 3 4 5
   current status and plan next steps?

4. Is there a written plan for capacity building related to
   enhancing Supports for Transitions?   DK 1 2 3 4 5

5. Are there written descriptions available to give all
   stakeholders regarding current Supports for Transitions?   DK 1 2 3 4 5
_____
Use the following ratings in responding to the next items.
        DK = don't know
        1   = hardly ever effective
        2   = effective about 25 % of the time
        3   = effective about half the time
        4   = effective about 75% of the time
        5   = almost always effective

With respect to enhancing Supports for Transitions, how
effective are each of the following:

        >current policy   DK 1 2 3 4 5

        >designated leadership   DK 1 2 3 4 5

        >workgroup monitoring and planning of next steps   DK 1 2 3 4 5

        >capacity building efforts   DK 1 2 3 4 5

Supports for Transitions (cont.)

Indicate all items that apply.

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?

I. Starting School & Newly Arriving

A. Supportive Welcoming
1. Are there welcoming materials? —— —— —— ——
2. Are there welcome signs? —— —— —— ——
3. Are welcoming information materials used? —— —— —— ——
4. Is a special welcoming booklet used? —— —— —— ——
5. Are materials translated into appropriate languages? —— —— —— ——
6. Is advanced technology used as an aid (e.g., a video or computerized introduction to the school and staff)? —— —— —— ——

B. Orientation and Follow-up "Induction"

1. Are there orientations? —— —— —— ——
2. Are there introductory tours? —— —— —— ——
3. Are introductory presentations made? —— —— —— ——
4. Are new arrivals introduced to special people such as the principal and teachers? —— —— —— ——
5. Are special events used to welcome recent arrivals? —— —— —— ——
6. Are different languages accommodated? —— —— —— ——

C. Is there special assistance for those who need help registering? —— —— —— ——

D. Social Supports
1. Are social support strategies used? —— —— —— ——
2. Are peer buddies assigned? —— —— —— ——
3. Are peer parents assigned? —— —— —— ——
4. Are special invitations used to encourage family involvement? —— —— —— ——
5. Are special invitations used to encourage students to join in activities? —— —— —— ——
6. Are advocates available when new arrivals need them? —— —— —— ——

E. Other? (specify) _____ —— —— —— ——

II. Daily Transitions

Which of the following are available
1. safe routes to school assistance —— —— —— ——
2. before school supervised recreation opportunities —— —— —— ——
3. subsidized breakfast/lunch —— —— —— ——
4. lunchtime
>supervised recreation opportunities —— —— —— ——
>interest groups (e.g., music, drama, career) —— —— —— ——
>service clubs —— —— —— ——
5. afterschool
>supervised recreation opportunities —— —— —— ——
>interest groups (e.g., music, drama, career) —— —— —— ——
>service clubs —— —— —— ——
>sports —— —— —— ——
>drill team —— —— —— ——
>organized youth programs ("Y," scouts) —— —— —— ——

Supports for Transitions (cont.)

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
6. academic support in the form of				
>tutors	___	___	___	___
>homework club	___	___	___	___
>study hall	___	___	___	___
>homework phone line	___	___	___	___
>email and web assistance	___	___	___	___
>homework center	___	___	___	___
7. supervision and support for moving from one campus location to another	___	___	___	___
8. other (specify) _____	___	___	___	___

III. Summer and Intersessions

Which of the following programs are offered during vacations and/or intersessions?

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
1. academic support	___	___	___	___
2. recreation	___	___	___	___
3. formal enrichment opportunities	___	___	___	___
4. youth groups	___	___	___	___
5. sports	___	___	___	___
6. student and family special assistance	___	___	___	___
7. service opportunities	___	___	___	___
8. workplace opportunities	___	___	___	___
9. other (specify) _____	___	___	___	___

IV. Matriculations

A. Grade-to-grade and Program-to-program Articulation

Which of the following transition programs are in use?

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
1. Are orientations to the new situation provided?	___	___	___	___
2. Is transition counseling provided?	___	___	___	___
3. Are students taken on "warm-up" visits?	___	___	___	___
4. Are "survival" skills taught?	___	___	___	___
5. Is the new setting primed to accommodate the individual's needs?	___	___	___	___
6. Is their an early warning and support system for students having problems adjusting?	___	___	___	___

B. Transitions to Higher Education/Career

Which of the following are used to facilitate transition to higher education and post school living?

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
1. vocational counseling	___	___	___	___
2. college counseling	___	___	___	___
3. a mentoring program	___	___	___	___
4. college prep courses and related activity	___	___	___	___
5. job training	___	___	___	___
6. job opportunities on campus	___	___	___	___
7. a work-study program	___	___	___	___
8. life skills counseling	___	___	___	___
C. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___

Supports for Transitions (cont.)

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
V. Capacity Building to Enhance Support for Transitions				
A. Are resources budgeted to enhance supports for transitions?	___	___	___	___
B. Are steps taken to enhance broad stakeholder involvement in transition activity?	___	___	___	___
C. Is there ongoing personnel preparation related to supports for transitions for				
1. teachers?	___	___	___	___
2. student and learning supports staff?	___	___	___	___
3. administrators?	___	___	___	___
4. office staff?	___	___	___	___
D. Is there an ongoing focus on preparing peer buddies?	___	___	___	___
E. Which of the following topics are covered in educating staff and other key stakeholders?				
1. ensuring successful transitions				
>before school	___	___	___	___
>after school	___	___	___	___
>during school	___	___	___	___
>for those having problems adjusting	___	___	___	___
2. developing systematic social supports for students, families, and staff	___	___	___	___
3. creating a psychological sense of community	___	___	___	___
F. Other (specify) _____	___	___	___	___

Indicate below other things you want the school to do in providing support for transitions.

Indicate below other ways the school provides supports for transitions.

Note: Other matters relevant to *Supports for Transitions* are included in the other self-study surveys.

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