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 current status and plan next steps? 
   DK 1 2 3 4 5

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:

 currents policy 
   DK 1 2 3 4 5

 designate 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.

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.)

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?

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?

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?

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.)

#### V. Capacity Building to Enhance Support for Transitions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Yes but more of this is needed</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>If no, is this something you want?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Are resources budgeted to enhance supports for transitions?</td>
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<td>B.</td>
<td>Are steps taken to enhance broad stakeholder involvement in transition activity?</td>
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| 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.