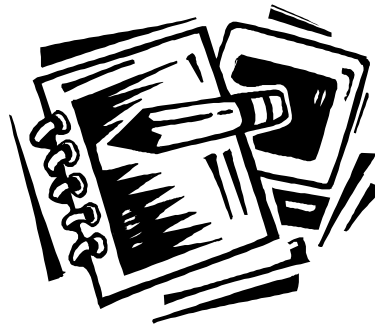


*From the Center's Clearinghouse . . . **

A Resource Aid Packet on

Addressing Barriers to Learning: A Set of Surveys to Map What a School Has and What it Needs



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Surveying and Planning to Enhance Efforts to Address Barriers to Learning at a School Site

The following resource aides were designed as a set of self-study surveys to aid school staff as they try to map and analyze their current programs, services, and systems with a view to developing a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to addressing barriers to learning.

In addition to an overview Survey of Learning Supports System Status, there are self-study surveys to help think about ways to address barriers to student learning by enhancing

- Classroom-based Approaches to Enable and Re-engage Students in Classroom Learning
- Crisis Assistance and Prevention
- Support for Transitions
- Home Involvement in Schooling
- Community Outreach for Involvement and Support
- Student and Family Assistance Programs and Services
- School-Community Collaboration

About the Self-Study Process to Enhance the Component for Addressing Barriers to Student Learning

This type of self-study is best done by teams.

However, it is *NOT* about having another meeting and/or getting through a task!

It is about moving on to better outcomes for students through

- working together to understand what is and what might be
- clarifying gaps, priorities, and next steps

Done right it can

- counter fragmentation and redundancy
- mobilize support and direction
- enhance linkages with other resources
- facilitate effective systemic change
- integrate all facets of systemic change and counter marginalization of the component to address barriers to student learning

A group of school staff (teachers, support staff, administrators) could use the items to discuss how the school currently addresses any or all of the areas of the component to address barriers (the enabling component). Members of a team initially might work separately in responding to survey items, but the real payoff comes from group discussions.

The items on a survey help to clarify

- what is currently being done and whether it is being done well and
- what else is desired.

This provides a basis for a discussion that

- analyzes whether certain activities should no longer be pursued (because they are not effective or not as high a priority as some others that are needed).
- decides about what resources can be redeployed to enhance current efforts that need embellishment
- identifies gaps with respect to important areas of need.
- establishes priorities, strategies, and timelines for filling gaps.

The discussion and subsequent analyses also provide a form of quality review.

Support for Transitions: A Self-study Survey

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 focus on transitions requires school-wide and classroom-based systems and programs designed to (a) enhance successful transitions, (b) prevent transition problems, and (c) use transition periods to reduce alienation and increase positive attitudes toward school and learning. Examples of programs include school-wide and classroom specific activities for welcoming new arrivals (students, their families, staff) and rendering ongoing social support; counseling and articulation strategies to support grade-to-grade and school-to-school transitions and moves to and from special education, college, and post school living and work; and before and after-school and inter-session activities to enrich learning and provide recreation in a safe environment.

Anticipated overall outcomes are reduced alienation and enhanced motivation and increased involvement in school and learning activities. Examples of early outcomes include reduced tardies resulting from participation in before-school programs and reduced vandalism, violence, and crime at school and in the neighborhood resulting from involvement in after-school activities. Over time, articulation programs can reduce school avoidance and dropouts, as well as enhancing the number who make successful transitions to higher education and post school living and work. It is also likely that a caring school climate can play a significant role in reducing student transiency.

Support for Transitions

Indicate all items that apply.

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

I. Programs Establishing a Welcoming and Socially Supportive School Community?

A. Supportive welcoming

- 1. Are there welcoming materials and a welcoming decor?
- 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 orientation programs?
- 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 special assistance available to those who need help registering?

D. Social Supports

- 1. Are social support strategies and mechanisms 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 Transition Programs for Before and After School and Lunch and Breaks

A. Which of the following are available

- 1. subsidized food program
- 2. recreation program
- 3. sports program
- 4. drill team
- 5. student and family assistance program
- 6. youth groups such as
 - > interest groups (e.g., music, drama, career)
 - > service clubs
 - > organized youth programs (“Y,” scouts)
 - > Cadet Corps
 - > other (specify) _____

Support for Transitions (cont.)

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

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 7. academic support in the form of | | | | |
| >tutors | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| >homework club | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| >study hall | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| >homework phone line | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| >email and web assistance | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| >homework center | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| >other (specify) _____ | --- | --- | --- | --- |

III. Articulation Programs

Which of the following transition programs are in use for grade- to-grade and program-to-program articulation?

| | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| A. Are orientations to the new situation provided? | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| B. Is transition counseling provided? | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| C. Are students taken on "warm-up" visits | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| D. Is there a "survival" skill training program? | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| E. Is information available from previous teachers? | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| F. Is the new setting primed to accommodate the individual's needs? | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| G. Other (specify) _____ | --- | --- | --- | --- |

IV. Vacation and Intersession Programs

Which of the following programs are offered during vacation and/or intersession?

| | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| A. recreation | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| B. sports | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| C. student and family assistance | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| D. youth groups | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| E. academic support | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| F. enrichment opportunities (including classes) | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| G. other (specify) _____ | --- | --- | --- | --- |

V. Transitions to Higher Education/Career

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

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| A. vocational counseling | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| B. college counseling | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| C. a mentoring program | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| D. college prep courses and related activity | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| E. job training | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| F. job opportunities on campus | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| G. a work-study program | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| H. life skills counseling | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I. Other? (specify) _____ | --- | --- | --- | --- |

| | Yes | Yes but more of this is needed | No | If no, is this something you want? |
|---|-----|--------------------------------|----|------------------------------------|
| VI. Capacity Building to Enhance Support for Transitions | | | | |
| A. Are there programs to enhance broad stakeholder involvement in transition activity? | — | — | — | — |
| B. With respect to programs used to meet the educational needs of personnel related to support for transitions | | | | |
| 1. Is there ongoing training for learning supports staff with respect to providing supports for transitions? | — | — | — | — |
| 2. Is there ongoing training for others involved in providing supports for transitions? (e.g., teachers, peer buddies, office staff, administrators)? | — | — | — | — |
| 3. Other (specify) _____ | — | — | — | — |
| C. Which of the following topics are covered in educating stakeholders? | | | | |
| 1. understanding how to create a psychological sense of community | — | — | — | — |
| 2. developing systematic social supports for students, families, and staff | — | — | — | — |
| 3. how to ensure successful transitions | — | — | — | — |
| 4. the value of and strategies for creating before and after school programs | — | — | — | — |
| 5. Other (specify) _____ | — | — | — | — |
| D. Indicate below other things you want the school to do in providing support for transitions. | | | | |
| C. Indicate below other ways the school provides supports for transitions. | | | | |
| C. Other matters relevant to support for transitions are found in the surveys on | | | | |
| >Classroom-based Approaches ... | | | | |
| >Home Involvement in Schooling | | | | |
| >Community Involvement and Support | | | | |