Transitions are an on-going process. Transitions start long before and can continue long after entering a new environment. To ensure a positive experience for students, families and schools, we encourage schools to take the time to create a school-wide transitions plan. The ideas listed below showcase several transitions activities and initiatives that schools may want to include in a transitions plan.

**⏵= Involves Families in the Transition Process**

**Kindergarten Transitions**

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| ⏵Plan and conduct kindergarten orientation (kindergarten round-up) activities for incoming kindergarteners and their families.***Resources:*** *Getting Ready for Kindergarten Mat; Future Kindergarten Families Ask, Kindergarten Answers; Getting to Know My Kindergartener* | April-August |
| ⏵Plan a “Boo Hoo” Breakfast inviting kindergarten families in to celebrate sending their child off to kindergarten. ***Resources:*** *Boo Hoo Breakfast flyer samples; Getting to Know My Kindergartener* | August |

**Grade-to-Grade Transitions**

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| ⏵Organize a “bump-up” day toward the end of the school year where families and students visit the next grade level to learn about academics, expectations and what families can do to help encourage their child to continue learning over the summer.  | May |

**Middle School and High School Transitions**

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| ⏵Hold “Sixth Grade Getaway” or “Freshmen Getaway” before school starts with small groups of incoming students, families and staff. Adult/staff advocates and current student leaders should be involved in hosting these social/informational activities. ***Resources:*** *5th Graders Ask, Middle School Answers; Families of 5th Graders Ask, Middle School Answers; 8th Graders Ask, High School Answers; Families of 8th Graders Ask, High School Answers; Transition to Middle School 101; Transition to High School 101; Don’t Stop Now! High School Family Engagement flyer* | August |
| Invite fifth/eighth grade teachers to be a part of Middle/High School Orientation so students see a familiar face on their first day in their new environment. | August |
| ⏵Invite families of sixth/ninth grade students to participate in Middle/High School Orientation. ***Resources:*** *Transition to Middle School 101; Transition to High School 101; Don’t Stop Now! High School Family Engagement flyer* | August |
| During Orientation, set aside a minimum of one hour to be spent on relationship building activities to establish rapport between students and staff. Adult/staff advocates and current student leaders should be involved in hosting these activities.  | August |
| Encourage receiving teachers to review incoming student data files. ***Resource:*** *Student Transition Card – Middle School* | August |
| ⏵Develop a system so families can get contact information from each of their teenager’s teachers and other important staff members.***Resources:*** *Middle School Contacts, High School Contacts* | August-September |
| ⏵Begin conversations about transitions with school administrators, counselors, teachers, support staff, and families and begin creating a transitions plan for your school.***Resources:*** *Transitions Professional Development for Staff;**Transitions Activity:**Conversations about Transitions; Transitions Ideas – A Resource for Schools; Transition Event Ideas* | August-September |
| Provide each new incoming student with a personal adult/staff advocate. | August-May |
| Use the “buddy system” by assigning upper classmen to act as mentors to incoming students. | August-May |
| Allow elementary/middle school teachers, including specials teachers, time to visit middle/high schools to enhance vertical planning during professional development (PD) time. | August-May |
| ⏵Include “Transition Tips” in school newsletters. ***Resource:*** *Transition Tips for 5th Grade Teachers and Families* | August-May |
| Provide transition tips for staff, especially fifth, sixth, eighth, and ninth grade teams.  | August-May |
| Coordinate ongoing pen pal relationships between elementary and middle school students or middle and high school students. | August-May |

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| ⏵Plan and conduct workshops (Site Council, PTO, other parent meetings) with families to discuss the transition process. ***Resources:*** *Families of 5th Graders Ask, Middle School Answers; Families of 8th Graders Ask, High School Answers; Transition to Middle School 101; Transition to High School 101; Don’t Stop Now! High School Family Engagement flyer* | August-May |
| Conduct a survey for current 6th/9th grade students to get their feedback on their own transition experience to help assess the effectiveness of current transitions initiatives.***Resources:*** *Transitions Student Survey – 6th Grade Students, Transitions Student Survey – 9th Grade Students* | September |
| Middle/High school counselors invite elementary/middle school counselors within their feeder pattern to an informational sharing session that will address enrollment and transitions issues as it pertains to their roles. | November-December |
| Data Leaders provide relevant assessment information for placement purposes (which is essential to a successful transition) to counseling staff prior to the enrollment process.  | December-January |
| ⏵Offer “Transition Question and Answer Forums” for incoming students and families at a variety of times convenient for families.***Resources:*** *5th Graders Ask, Middle School Answers; Families of 5th Graders Ask, Middle School Answers; 8th Graders Ask, High School Answers;* *Families of 8th Graders Ask, High School Answers; Transition to Middle School 101; Transition to High School 101; Don’t Stop Now! High School Family Engagement flyer* | December-January |
| ⏵All fifth/eighth grade students, accompanied by fifth/eighth grade teachers, visit middle/high schools for one half day. Current sixth/ninth grade students will not attend school that day to make room for the visitors. Families are invited to attend. An effort will be made to allow students to visit the school they will be attending, but it will be impossible to accommodate this for all students. ***Resources:*** *5th Graders Ask, Middle School Answers; Families of 5th Graders Ask, Middle School Answers; 8th Graders Ask, High School Answers;* *Families of 8th Graders Ask, High School Answers; Transition to Middle School 101; Transition to High School 101; Don’t Stop Now! High School Family Engagement flyer* | December-February |
| ⏵Middle/High school administrators, counselors, social workers and other staff visit elementary/middle schools within their feeder pattern to meet with fifth/eights grade students, families and staff to discuss middle/high school curriculum, course offerings, academics, electives, and extra-curricular activities. ***Resources:*** *5th Graders Ask, Middle School Answers; Families of 5th Graders Ask, Middle School Answers; 8th Graders Ask, High School Answers;* *Families of 8th Graders Ask, High School Answers; Transition to Middle School 101; Transition to High School 101; Don’t Stop Now! High School Family Engagement flyer* | January-February |
| Develop a program where students can “shadow” another student for a day. | January-March |
| Allot time for high school department chairs and students to visit the middle schools to discuss the life of high school students. | January-May |
| Designate the April in-service day to facilitating vertical communication by pairing elementary school staff with middle school staff and middle school staff with high school staff. This would be an opportune time to align curriculum, communicate academic, social and study skills necessary to be successful in middle/high school, to develop both criteria for identifying students who are at risk for having a difficult transition, as well as a plan for proactively supporting those students, and to complete logistical planning for visitation/enrollment days. | April |
| ⏵Begin sending the school newsletter to incoming students and families the spring before they enter your school. Invite incoming students and families to performances, athletic events, site council meetings and other school functions. ***Resource:*** *Transition Tips for 5th Grade Teachers and Families* | April-May |
| ⏵Schools plan and conduct “Moving Up to Middle/High School Family Night” to share information related to middle/high school curriculum, course offerings, academics, electives, and extra-curricular activities. Utilize student leaders as ambassadors for the event and department chairs, teachers and coaches as presenters of information. ***Resource:*** *Transition Event Ideas* | April-May |
| Middle/High school counselors visit elementary/middle schools to complete the enrollment process. | April-May |
| ⏵Host a picnic or ice cream social with faculty, student government representatives, athletes, club representatives and student mentors for incoming students and their families. | May |
| Hold celebrations that signify the end of elementary or middle school and the beginning of the middle or high school experience.  | May |
| Encourage sending teachers to complete outgoing student data files. ***Resource:*** *Student Transition Card – Middle School* | May |