

Transition Planning Exercise

Purpose

Transitions are challenging for both students and families*, whether it is from home or daycare into elementary school, elementary into middle school, middle into high school, graduating, or making a transfer from one school to another. Putting together a thoughtful plan can help ease the anxiety and stress for the new students as well as their families. This document is meant to help schools process through making a plan for new students as well as students who may be leaving the school. In creating a plan it is important that it is developed in conjunction with asking the [Equity Questions](#) included in the FACE Toolkit.

When to Use

Use this document to create an initial plan at the beginning of the school year. Review each spring to reflect and adjust on the plan created.

Planning for families new to the school		
Action	Guiding Questions	Plan
Who will welcome families into the school?	<p>Who will be the point person to greet and start building a relationship with new families? Even when it is busy, how can it be ensured that new families will feel welcome?</p> <p>Can someone welcome new families in their primary language? If not, how to access interpretation? How can the school communicate with families if interpreters are not readily available?</p> <p>If families come without making a prior appointment, who will greet and start building a relationship with them?</p>	

*Throughout this document, the word *parent* is used to refer to parents, guardians, family members, friends, and other caring adults who play the parent role in the lives of young people. Also, the words *parent* and *family* are sometimes used interchangeably.

	<p>If families have to wait, how will they be greeted and how will their waiting experience be made short and comfortable?</p> <p>Could current families be leveraged to welcome new families?</p>	
<p>What logistical information should be provided to new families?</p>	<p>What information do they need to receive when they register?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School start and end times • District/School calendar • Transportation • Breakfast, lunch • Drop off, pick up • Reporting absences, tardies • Code of Conduct • Classroom locations • Protocol for picking up a child early • Nurse • After School programs <p>How will families be supported in going through this information?</p> <p>Is all information translated?</p> <p>Is there someone in the school who can speak their primary language? If not, how is someone accessed? How will that be communicated with the family?</p>	
<p>What information is needed from the new family?</p>	<p>Consider obtaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the child an internal or external transfer 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical/Health concerns • Contact information • The language they prefer to use • Best way to be contacted • Questionnaire (please see <i>Family Welcome Questionnaire</i> and/or <i>Parent Review</i>) 	
<p>How will families be supported with filling out initial paperwork?</p>	<p>Who will be available to families to help them with paperwork? Online tasks?</p> <p>Is there a computer and space that is readily available for the family?</p> <p>Is there someone who can help them in their primary language? If not, how is someone accessed? How will that be communicated with the family?</p>	
<p>How will families be supported in getting to know the school, staff, and community?</p>	<p>What phone numbers and email addresses might they need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • Administrative Assistant • Social Worker • Nurse • Psychologist • Counselor • Classroom teacher • After school program coordinator <p>Is there is a pamphlet with photos of staff members with their name and position?</p> <p>Will families be given a tour of the school? If so, who/when?</p>	

	<p>What key people need to be introduced to new families?</p> <p>Is there a parent welcome group that can partner and help new families?</p> <p>How can connections be fostered between new and veteran families?</p> <p>Will information sessions be offered for new families?</p>	
<p>What do families need to know in relation to curricular content?</p>	<p>What is the academic end of the year benchmark for all curricular areas of that child(ren)'s grade(s)?</p> <p>Is there a way to share with them what they can do to help their child at home?</p> <p>If in middle or high school, what classes should the student take to be on track for graduation?</p>	
<p>How will the school check in with new families throughout the year?</p>	<p>To ensure that new families are feeling welcome and comfortable how will the school garner feedback from them?</p> <p>What can be put in place to check in with new families on a fairly regular basis for at least the first 2 months they are at the school?</p>	

Transitional Grade Levels

New families are not the only group that will need support with transitions. After completing the above plan it is suggested that a plan is developed for the particular transitional grade that your school supports.

Students coming <i>into</i> your school		
Action	Guiding Questions	Plan
What materials will be given to families transitioning <i>into</i> the school?	<p>What are some of the biggest adjustments for students coming into kindergarten, 6th grade, 9th grade?</p> <p>What is it like in the day of a kindergartener, 6th grader, 9th grader?</p> <p>Increase in rigor; what are some of the differences in rigor for the students from their previous schooling experience?</p> <p>How can parents support their child to make the transition as smooth as possible?</p>	
Will information sessions be offered for families?	<p>What information sessions might kindergarten, 6th grade, 9th grade families benefit from? Information sessions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A day in the life of a kindergartener/6th grader/9th grader • How to support your child at home • Graduation Expectations • Kindergarten: Then and Now • Getting to know (your school name) • What to expect with your kindergartener/6th grader/9th grader: Making the transition into K/6th grade/9th grade easy 	

<p>How will the school make parents feel comfortable on the first day of school?</p>	<p>Have families had an opportunity, previous to the first day of school, to get to know the school and staff?</p> <p>Do families know where to park when they visit the school?</p> <p>Do families know where to line up (kindergarten)? Do families/students know where their classrooms are located?</p> <p>Will there be a welcoming session for parents after the school day begins?</p> <p>How will it be communicated with families the supports that will be in place for students that are transitioning into kindergarten/6th grade/9th grade?</p> <p>How can the school help families feel confident that their child is having a safe and successful first day/week of school?</p>	
<p>How will the school make the transition smooth for families (including how the school will partner with its feeder school(s))?</p>	<p>What are some of the communication methods that worked in elementary school that could help in middle school or middle to high school?</p> <p>What are some engagement events/occasions that families enjoyed in elementary or middle school that can be hosted in middle or high school?</p> <p>What connections have been made with feeder schools?</p>	

	<p>What connection opportunities have been made available to the families of the feeder schools prior to the first day of school?</p> <p>Is there a system where 1st grade parents can connect with kindergarten parents, 7th grade families can connect with 6th grade families and 9th grade families can connect with 10th grade families for support?</p>	
How will connections among kindergarten/6 th grade/9 th grade families be fostered?	<p>How can relationship building between kindergarten/6th grade/9th grade families be fostered?</p> <p>How a sense of community be built between all kindergarten/6th grade/9th grade parents?</p>	

Students exiting your school		
Action	Guiding Questions	Plan
What information do families need when exiting the school?	<p>What information can be provided to them about the school they are going to attend?</p> <p>How can families prepare their child for the next grade?</p> <p>See the guiding questions above in the section "What materials will you give to families transitioning <i>into</i> your school".</p> <p>What are some of the differences between the grade levels (5th to 6th, 8th to 9th, and graduating)?</p>	

	How can the school prepare families for the differences in middle and high school from elementary and middle school?	
What should families know about enrolling their student in middle or high school?	<p>What information do they need to bring to their new school?</p> <p>When and where is enrollment?</p> <p>What should families expect on enrollment day? How is it different or the same as enrolling at their previous school?</p>	
How will the school make the transition smooth for families (including how the school will partner with its feeder school(s))?	<p>How can a connection be made with the middle or high school?</p> <p>How will families be supported in getting to know the school that their child will attend (ex. Could the school reach out to staff members at its feeder school to come into school for a question and answer session)?</p>	