

# Handout 4

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## Boundary Transitions

## Boundary Transition Resource Guide & Toolkit

**Purpose of the Toolkit:** To provide ideas, resources and supports for building leaders who are charged with sending and/or receiving large groups of students and families to schools based on boundary changes.

**Intended Outcome:** Create strong, supportive and positive environments for all stakeholders in order to implement effective transitions.

### **Key Staff at Schools to Include in Transition planning/work:**

- School Leadership- managers of the transition
- Data Entry/Registrar- ensure accurate records transfer
- School Nurse: coordinate the transfer of student health plans
- ESE Team Leaders and compliance teachers: coordinate the transition of IEPs and 504s
- School Counselors: assess and assist with the overall wellbeing of students on an ongoing basis

### **Tools, tips and resources for sending schools:**

- Take time to meet with building leader at receiving school to develop a deeper knowledge about the great things happening in the receiving school (programs, clubs, extra-curriculars, etc.)
- Learn the key players (principal, assistant principal, Student Services team) names at receiving school in order to begin to connect families with new school in a proactive way. Knowing these folks by name will help inspire confidence in families that their kids won't get lost in transition.
- In each and every opportunity that is presented, express your collective commitment to the work of the children and share excitement and positive news about their new school location.
- Avoid playing into fears, concerns or rumors that exist (even if you have them inside) and frame the conversation around the opportunity that exists for students to expand their own network and community.
- Be deliberate in conversations with ALL staff ensuring that they are prepared to share the positives that exist in the new school environment.
- Work side by side with office staff to ensure that there is a clear and easily articulated plan to transfer all paperwork, student information, etc.
- Provide families with tools/resources for how to talk to their students about these types of transition.
  - [Transition Tips for Parents](#)
  - [Coping with Transition](#)
- Have staff identify, reach out and/or support students who are already experiencing stress due to the transition. Ask Student Services team members and teaching staff to support in transition planning for individual students.
- Offer opportunities for staff members with families impacted by the boundary change to express their feelings in a safe way (care for those who are caring for others).

## **Tools, tips and resources for receiving schools:**

### **Semester prior to transition:**

- Request funds to provide school t-shirts and/or spirit wear to new students as part of a welcome to our community.
- Drive the new neighborhoods and communities coming to you in order to build your background and familiarize yourself with where your new folks are from.
- Develop a short and compelling story (elevator speech) about why your school is such an amazing place for kids and families.
- Host a variety of open house, town hall or "coffee with the principal/counselor" sessions during the semester preceding the change in order to share the school mission, vision and exciting work that is happening.
- Assess your facility situation and make sure you are ready for the additional enrollment (desks, chairs, computers, materials, lockers, etc.)
- Designate a team leader in the office to lead the work with transitioning families. Who is the most positive, friendly and resilient person in the front office? This is the person who needs to be the face of the change. Ultimately families want to be remembered, respected and know that someone will look out for their kid. Find someone in the office team who can do this.
  - Make a plan to check in with this person regularly to keep a pulse on the transition and to spoil them rotten as they will have to absorb lots of emotionally charged interactions and they need their buckets to stay full.
- Schedule time with sending school leaders in order to develop understanding of tricky kids, families or circumstances that may require additional time, TLC and attention. Incorporate school counselors into these discussions as appropriate.
  - Ask the following:
    - Who/which families will be helpful and positive ambassadors of the change (even if it isn't what they wanted)?
    - Who will struggle with the change?
    - Which students present unique circumstances that may require additional transition planning?
  - Based on the responses to the above questions, be proactive and build relationships with those families.
- Create a student ambassador structure the semester before the transition. Develop student ambassadors that will serve as supports for students when the new year begins. These should be students who will help new kids learn the ropes, figure out their way around and get adjusted to the new school.
  - Have these students write welcome letters to new students' and/or families welcoming them to the school and sharing that they will have a "friend" on day one.

### **Summer before transition:**

- Have teachers/counselors send personal welcome letters to students and families letting them know which adults they can count on to help their kid.
- Host a few opportunities for new students and families to tour the schools and learn their way around so that it doesn't feel so new on the first day. Kids will have more confidence if they are familiar with the environment.
- Make time daily/weekly to meet with families who are still showing their frustration in order to keep listening, acknowledging and moving them through the process. Lots of time up front will save time on the back end.
- Send home information that will help new families connect with the school, such as important dates for student activities, invitations to parent groups, your Developmental Counseling Program brochure if available, and parent-friendly information about Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) systems.

### **During the 1<sup>st</sup> year with new communities:**

- Kick off the year by sharing your excitement about all the new members of the school community.
- Send additional communication out to new families welcoming them and making them aware of all the different opportunities to be involved in your school.
- Seek feedback from them, frequently and intentionally, about how the transition is going and create supports based on responses.
- Do your VERY best to proactively communicate with new families about routines, traditions, etc. that they may not know about.