

Bibliography

Transitional Programs to Middle Level School

Akos, P.; Galassi, J.P. (2004, April). Middle and High School Transitions as Viewed by Students, Parents, and Teachers. *Professional School Counseling*. 7(4), 212.

Respondents to a questionnaire about the elementary-middle and middle-high school transition experience respectively were 173 sixth grade students, 83 parents, and 12 teachers, and 320 ninth grade students, 61 parents and 17 teachers. Results revealed that school transitions posed both challenges and opportunities for students. Parents and teachers appeared to have a reasonably good appreciation of how these developmental experiences were perceived by students. Results from this study and from previous research suggest that distinct types of transition programming and a different temporal sequence may be needed in order to facilitate successful adjustment to three components--academic, procedural, and social--of a school transition. Suggestions about effective transition programming for each of the components are provided.

Akos, P. (2003, March-April). Moving On. *ASCA School Counselor*. 40(4), 14-18.

The way students start out at a new school--and the help they receive before and after transition--can go a long way toward a successful school year for students and school staff alike. Discusses how a yearlong, comprehensive transition program can make the difference regardless of whether the student is moving to or from middle school.

Akos, P. (2002, June). Student Perceptions of the Transition from Elementary to Middle School. *Professional School Counseling*. 5(5), 339-45.

This study sought to learn more about student perceptions during the transition from elementary to middle school. In response to students' concerns, it is suggested that school counselors implement preventive or proactive programming to assist students with the elementary to middle school transition.

Anderson, E.M. (1996, March). *The Middle School Experience: Effects on the math and Science Achievement of Learning Disabled Adolescents*. Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence, Boston, MA.

This study examined the relationship between transition from elementary to middle school and achievement gaps in math and science in eighth graders with (N=296) and without (N=1608) learning disabilities (LD). An abundance of research suggests that motivation and achievement decline during the early adolescent years, and that this decline is often attributable to the transition from elementary to middle grade schools during early adolescence. Using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study, the study found that on average there is a strong gap in achievement between LD and

non-LD early adolescents. Hierarchical linear modeling was used to examine school effects on these achievement gaps. Results indicated that the gap between LD and non-LD adolescents is greatly reduced for adolescents who do not make a school transition until at least the ninth grade. Findings suggest that the policies and practices of typical middle grade schools are particularly incompatible with the educational and psychological needs of early adolescents with LD.

Camoni, G.A. (1996, September). Crossing the Bridge to Middle School. *Principal*. 76(1), 48-49.

A transition plan offers students and parents an opportunity to become familiar with middle school's expectations, routines, curricula, classmates, and buildings before the new school year. The journey can be facilitated by surveying students about areas of concern, providing student mentors, and staging information day and transition day programs.

Coleman, M.R. (2001, Fall). Middle Schools: New Trends and Issues. *Gifted Child Today Magazine*. 24(4), 20-21.

This article explores three current trends in middle schools: the growing emphasis on curriculum; a redesign of the "chat" time or the advisor-advisee period; and the expansion of transition planning from the narrow focus on just academic to include social, emotional, vocational, and moral development.

Deemer, S.; McCotter, S; Smith, N. (2003, April). *Sharing the Responsibility: A University-School District Investigation of Middle School Transition*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

A collaborative study was conducted to investigate students perceptions of their learning environments in elementary and middle school and to suggest interventions that would aid the school district in creating developmentally appropriate practices at the secondary level as the students experience the transition into middle school. Data were collected from student, teacher, and school leader interviews and through surveys and observations. This study focuses on the responses of elementary and middle school students to surveys and interviews about their perceptions and experiences in the middle school transition. Surveys were administered to 350 sixth graders and 368 seventh graders, and interviews were conducted with 10 seventh graders. Approximately 20% of the students reported difficulty with the transition to middle school. Four themes emerged from the responses. Students felt disconnected from school in grades 6 and 7. They perceived middle school work to be more difficult, and they often felt victimized in their school settings. The fourth theme was that parents did not seem to be heavily involved in schooling in these grades. Findings suggest that the problems may have more to do with struggles faced by students who do not have strong academic profiles than with just making the transition to middle school.

Ecker, M; Dietz, M.J.; Carlile, S. (2002, March). Middle Schools Still Matter. *School Administrator*. 59(3), 30-33.

Three public school administrators (a superintendent, a middle school principal, and a central-office administrator) discuss why educators and parents should continue to support the middle-school grade configuration.

Ferguson, J.; Bulach, C. (1997, Winter). The Effect of the "Shadow" Transition Program on the Social Adjustment of Middle School Students. *Research in Middle Level Education Quarterly*. 20(2), 1-21.

The "Shadow" program at a middle school in Atlanta allows fifth graders to "shadow" sixth grade middle students to ease transition from elementary school. This study used questionnaires to compare the social adjustment of program participants and non-participants, as well as teacher attitudes toward the program. Results showed a significant difference in adjustment scores and supportive staff attitudes.

Forgan, J.W.; Vaughn, S. (2000, January-February). Adolescents with and without LD Make the Transition to Middle School. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*. 33(1), 3-43.

This study examined how 14 Hispanic adolescents either with or without learning disabilities fared academically and socially during the transition from elementary to middle school. Students had been in a sixth grade consultation/collaboration inclusive classroom. Findings suggested that both groups of students experienced the transition similarly and fared well during the transition.

Kaiser, J.S. (1997, September-October). Advocate for Your Adolescent: Encouraging Special Needs Parents to Get Involved. *Schools in the Middle*. 7(1), 33-34, 52.

Examines ways to strengthen the middle school's relationship with parents of special needs adolescents. Focuses on establishing a transition plan between elementary and middle school, maintaining ongoing communication with families, providing a variety of advisory options, and generating a school climate of acceptance for all students and families.

Leland-Jones, P.J. (1998). *Improving the Transition of Sixth-Grade Students during the First Year of Middle School through a Peer Counselor Mentor and Tutoring Program*. Fort Lauderdale-Davie, FL: Nova Southeastern University.

This practicum project evaluated the effectiveness of a peer counseling, mentoring, and tutoring program to enhance the transition of students from elementary to middle school by reducing behavior problems and absenteeism, and by enhancing students' ability to deal with academic or peer difficulties. The problem of adjustment to the transition from elementary to middle school was documented through school and teacher records, especially the number of teacher referrals for behavioral, emotional, and social problems and the number of student-generated help forms asking for assistance in resolving

academic and social problems. The 8-month intervention consisted of a peer counseling, mentoring, and tutoring program. The tutors were seventh and eighth graders in the same school. The Pause, Prompt, and Praise tutoring method was taught to student mentors and tutors. Sixth graders were matched to a mentor/tutor and they met twice weekly to become acquainted and to work on academic and other concerns. Both tutors and tutees maintained journals detailing the problems, discussions, and possible solutions for each session. The process was monitored to identify potential serious student problems. Evaluation findings indicated that there was a reduction in student-generated help forms requesting assistance with an academic problem, teacher-generated referrals for problem behaviors, and absenteeism. In addition, students were able to write transition problem statements with resolution strategies and achieve a passing 1.0 or better report card grade.

McElroy, C. (2000, December). Middle Schools That Work. *Phi Delta Kappan*. 82(4), 277-79, 92.

To serve early adolescents' needs, a Georgia middle school offers a comprehensive guidance program that includes individual and group counseling, transitional programs, tutoring and mentoring programs to improve academic skills, a conflict- management program to improve discipline, and an incentive program to recognize student accomplishments.

Perkins, P.G.; Gelfer, J.I. (1995, January-February). Elementary to Middle School: Planning for Transition. *Clearing House*. 68(3), 171-73.

Provides a planning transition model for teachers of elementary and middle school. Describes the five essential components of the model: (1) developing a planning team; (2) generating goals and identifying problems; (3) developing written strategic plans; (4) acquiring the support and commitment of teachers; and (5) evaluating the transition process.

Schumacher, D. (1998, June). The Transition to Middle School. *ERIC Digest*.

The transitions students make during their years of schooling are usually major events in their lives and in the lives of their parents. The stresses created by these transitions can be minimized when the new environment is responsive to each particular age group. This digest presents a brief overview of some of the issues involved in the transition from elementary to middle level school, including all middle grade and junior high school configurations, and provides suggestions for transition programs and activities. The digest delineates common concerns identified by students and specific challenges identified by teachers. It focuses on social, organizational, and motivational factors related to dealing with school transitions. Guidelines for planning effective transition programs are listed, including establishing a transition protocol that can be replicated and updated easily and asking participants to evaluate the transition programs. The digest also gives examples of several transition activities for use in designing a transition plan, including the distribution of school handbooks to families, and exchange of letters between students in the sending and receiving schools. The digest concludes by noting

that effective middle level transition programs establish a sense of belonging among the multiple constituencies involved, respond appropriately to incoming students' needs, and provide multiple opportunities to develop a meaningful role during the transition process and to maintain that role throughout the school year.

Shoffner, M.F.; Williamson, R.D. (2000, March). Facilitating Student Transition into Middle School. *Middle School Journal*. 31(4), 47-52.

Describes strategies to smooth students' transition to middle school, listing programs and activities prior to the school year, during the summer, and during the school year. Considers adolescents' changing developmental needs.