

Bibliography

Transitional Programs From Middle Level School to High School

Bottoms, G.; Cooney, S. (2003, Fall). Helping Students Succeed: Linking the Middle Grades and High School. *ERS Spectrum*. 21(4), 28-38.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) has worked with states, districts, and high schools since 1988 and with middle-grades schools since 1999 to improve student achievement. SREB followed students tested in 2000 and 2001 from eighth grade through ninth grade and found both middle-grades schools and high schools must find ways for students to “catch up” to succeed. In this article, SREB offers six steps to a successful middle grades-high school transition, based on its findings.

Cooney, S.; Bottoms, G. (2003). Middle Grades to High School: Mending a Weak Link. *Research Brief*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

This research brief describes a study of the readiness for high school of eighth-graders who participated in the Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB) Middle Grades Assessment in spring 2000. The assessment included testing in reading, math, and science, and surveys of students and teachers. Following the 2000-01 school year, SREB gathered course-assignment and performance data on about 3,100 students--about 60 percent of the original sample--who had completed the ninth grade. Following are some of the key findings. Many students who expected to go to college were not taking the necessary courses in high school. Enrollment in more demanding courses did not result in more failures. Studying algebra or pre-algebra in the middle grades led to enrollment in higher level math courses in high school and did not increase failure rates. Teachers matter enormously; students in the middle grades who had teachers as advisors were more likely to have had educational goals and plans for high school. The report concludes with recommendations for leaders in middle schools and high schools to help students succeed in college-preparatory classes, and for states and districts to improve the transition from middle grades to high school.

Chapman, M. V.; Sawyer, J. S. (2001, October). Bridging the Gap for Students At-Risk of School Failure: A Social Work-Initiated Middle to High School Transition Program. *Children & Schools*. 23(4), 235-40.

Elementary, middle, and high schools often become separate islands for children as they move toward their diploma. This article describes the Culbreth Middle School Communities-In-Schools High School Transition Initiative, a program designed to make connections between a supportive middle school program for at-risk students and the high school environment. Recommendations for replication and evaluation are presented.

Elias, M.J. (2001, March). Easing Transitions with Social-Emotional Learning. *Principal Leadership*. 1(7); 20, 6.

Middle schools represent challenges that strongly affect how much energy and focus students bring to academic learning. Kids must develop skills to resist inappropriate sexual behaviors and

analyze stressful social situations. Schools should encourage students to develop certain developmental assets: appreciation, belonging, confidence, competencies, and contributions.

George, P. S.; McEwin, C. K. (1999, April). High Schools for a New Century: Why Is The High School Changing? *NASSP Bulletin*. 83(606), 10-23.

Growing student diversity, reports and government mandates, ninth-grade transition problems, and middle-school influences have produced new enthusiasm for high-school reorganization. Restructuring approaches such as block scheduling, differentiated instruction, academic teaming, house plans, career academies, heterogeneous grouping, and integrated curricula are transforming many high schools.

Grier, T.; Peterson, K.D. (April 2005). It's Cool to Succeed. *Educational Leadership*. 62(7), 65-68.

A freshman advisory program urges students to connect to school resources and activities.

Haviland, J.E. (2005, November). For Freshmen Only. *Principal Leadership*. 6(3), 28-31.

Although most students welcome moving high school, many are anxious about how they'll fare in the larger, more impersonal, more competitive, and grade-oriented environment.

Hayes, R.L.; Nelson, J.; Tabin, M; Pearson, G.; Worthy, C. (2002, December). Using School-Wide Data to Advocate for Student Success. *Professional School Counseling*, 6(2), 86-94.

Examines the academic trajectories of a cohort of grade 8 students. Results showed that students are most likely to drop out during the first three months of the calendar year, which indicates that this is a critical time for students that demands a collaborative response across schools to support students as they make the transition from middle to high school.

Hertzog, C. J.; Morgan, P. L. (1999, Jan-Feb.). Making the Transition from Middle Level to High School. *High School Magazine*. 6(4), 26-30.

A survey of 97 Florida and Georgia middle schools and their receiving high schools revealed that schools with two or fewer transition practices had significantly higher attrition and dropout rates than schools implementing three or more practices. Sample programs include the ninth-grade house, parent nights, advisory/mentoring programs, and teacher-swap days.

Hertzog, C. J.; Morgan, P. L. (1998, April). Breaking the Barriers between Middle School and High School: Developing a Transition Team for Student Success. *NASSP Bulletin*. 82(597), 94-98.

Discusses results of a study examining self-perceptions of students moving from middle level to high schools. Kids reported a significant drop in perceived physical appearance, job competence, romantic appeal, conduct, and global self-worth. A transition team can help eighth graders develop an understanding of the academic rigors and co-curricular options at the high school. Team-building steps are outlined.

Holland, H.; Mazzoli, K. (2001, December). Where Everybody Knows Your Name. *Phi Delta Kappan*. 83(4), 294-303).

Describes experiences of teachers, administrators, and students in a freshman academy in a medium-sized midwestern city high school designed to help ninth-graders, many with at-risk behaviors, to make smooth transitions from middle school to high school.

Kerr, K. A. (2002, Summer). An Examination of Approaches to Promote Ninth-Grade Success in Maryland Public High Schools. *ERS Spectrum*, 20(3), 4-13.

Investigates three types of practices used by Maryland high schools to support the transition of ninth-grade students into high school: traditional transition activities, reform-oriented practices promoted by the literature on communal school organization, and practices providing additional instruction. Discusses policy implications.

Kneisler, T. (2001, March). A School in Transition. *Principal Leadership*, 1(7); 31, 4.

In 1997, Philomath (Oregon) High School acted to change a school culture that allowed older students to treat rising ninth-graders and each other disrespectfully. A 4-year journey by the school, students, and community (spurred by unfavorable asset-development scores) led to lasting collaboration and improved climate and achievement.

Letrello, T.M.; Miles, D.D. (2003, April). The Transition from Middle School to High School: Students with and without Learning Disabilities Share Their Perceptions. *Clearing House*, 76(4), 212-14.

Considers how although for some the transition from middle school to high school can be easy, many young adolescents experience a decline in grades and attendance and begin to view themselves more negatively and experience an increased need for friendship. Notes that students with learning disabilities making the move to high school face even more challenges. Presents six recommendations to enhance the transition.

Matthews, A.; Swan, W.W. (1999, Summer-Fall). TOPS: An Alternative Approach for the At-Risk Middle School Student. *Journal of At-Risk Issues*, 6(1), 24-31.

Longitudinally examined the effects of two linked at-risk programs (a middle school dropout prevention program and a high school transition program), focusing on attendance, promotion/retention, courses passed, discipline referrals, suspensions, sequence of services, the effects of passage of time following the intervention, and dropping out. Follow up interviews suggested success for many of the former intervention students.

Mizelle, N. B. (April 2005). Moving Out of Middle School. *Educational Leadership*, 62(7), 61-64.

To ensure high school success, make the middle school program challenging and supportive.

Mizelle, N. B.; Irvin, J.L. (2000, May). Transition from Middle School to High School. What Research Says. *Middle School Journal*, 31(5), 57-61.

Summarizes research relating to young adolescent's transitions into high school. Notes studies suggesting it is time for educators to reemphasize articulation as a function of middle level education to assist these transitions.

Mizelle, N. B. (1999, August). Helping Middle School Students Make the Transition into High School. *ERIC Digest*.

Young adolescents entering high school look forward to having more choices and making new and more friends; however, they also are concerned about being picked on and teased by older students, having harder work, making lower grades, and getting lost in a larger, unfamiliar school. For middle school students, including those who have been labeled "gifted" or "high-achieving," the transition into high school can be an unpleasant experience. This Digest discusses how educators can ease students' transition into high school by providing challenging and supportive middle school environments and by providing well-designed transition programs. These programs should include activities that provide information to students and parents, activities that provide social support, and activities that bring middle and high school educators together. Finally, the importance of parents being involved in their young adolescent students' transition from middle to high school can hardly be overestimated, and parent involvement in the transition process can be encouraged through a variety of activities, including conferences with the high school counselors and school visits.

Morgan, P.L. (2001, March). Designing Comprehensive Transitions. *Principal Leadership*. 1(7); 10, 7.

To determine students' areas of concern while moving from middle- to high-school level, two college deans surveyed all eighth- and ninth-graders in four northwest Georgia school systems. Comprehensive transitional programs targeted concerns about curriculum, facilities, safety, discipline, staff, and general routines. A Wisconsin transition project is profiled.

Natale, J. A. (1999, June). A Year in the Life. *American School Board Journal*. 186(6), 18-21.

Minnie Howard School, just outside Washington, D.C., caters exclusively to 14-year olds. Started seven years ago to relieve enrollment pressures, the school protects its 747 9th graders from typical high-school pressures and has reduced suspension and truancy, enrolled more kids in honors classes, and enticed privately educated students back to public school.

Potter, L. (2001, March). The Transition Years: When It's Time to Change. *Principal Leadership*. 1(7), 52, 4.

Adolescents are challenged to adjust to a new physical sense of self, new intellectual abilities, and cognitive demands; expand verbal skills; establish emotional and psychological independence from parents; establish adult vocational goals; develop productive peer relationships; manage their sexuality; and develop self-control. Transitional programs must support adolescence.

Queen, J.A. (2002). *Student Transitions from Middle to High School: Improving Achievement and Creating a Safer Environment*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Most students pass through five major transitions from one level of schooling to another. This book-for principals, teachers, and counselors-focuses on the transition from middle school to high school. The book is grounded in Queen's Twelve Factors for Successful Student Transitions, a research-based set of findings and guidelines. Each factor is detailed, along with related research

and analyses of some of the larger studies. The book furnishes guidelines for reducing teacher, student, and parent fear; improving student achievement; and providing school safety. For principals and teachers, there is a discussion of roles, a set of principles for guidance, a long list of references, policy recommendations from a variety of sources, and strategies to apply, which include games and activities for students, teachers, and staff development. The book also examines successful transition programs and provides practical guidelines for developing a transitional plan for the local school system.

Reents, J. N. (2002, March). Isolating 9th Graders. *School Administrator*. 59(3). 4-19.

Argues that creating separate schools for ninth-grade students improves their academic and social transition to high school. Supports argument with research results and personal anecdotes. Describes school district experiences in developing and operating ninth-grade centers.

Rourke, J.R. (2001, March). The Ninth Grade Experiment. *Principal Leadership*. 1(7), 26, 5.

Several districts have taken a radical approach to middle/high school transitions, removing ninth-graders from the mix to give them the attention needed to succeed in high school. Three ninth-grade-only schools with 720 to 750 students in Virginia, Texas, and Pennsylvania are profiled. Students experience less social pressure from upper-classmen.

Sheets, R. H.; Izard-Baldwin, G.; Atterberry, P. (1997, December). Bridge: A Program Designed to Ease the Transition from the Middle Level to the High School. *NASSP Bulletin*. 81(593), 93-99.

To tackle low achievement and a 22% freshmen student withdrawal rate, a Seattle, Washington, high school gradually restructured its vision, policies, and curriculum. A committee fashioned the Bridge project, providing all freshmen with access to opportunities promoting academic achievement, responsibility, school spirit, fellowship, acceptance, and empowerment. An evaluation revealed the importance of well-designed, comprehensive transitional programs.

Smith, J.B. (1997, January-February). Effects of Eighth-Grade Transition Programs on High School Retention and Experiences. *Journal of Educational Research*, 90(3), 144-52.

This study evaluated the effect of middle-to-high-school transition programs on educational progress (student performance and retention) in a nationally representative sample of public school students. Data from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey indicated that transition programs targeting students, parents, and school staff together had a positive impact.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2002). *Opening Doors to the Future: Preparing Low-Achieving Middle Grades Students to Succeed in High School. 2002 Outstanding Practices*. Atlanta, GA: Author.

This publication describes the efforts of 15 schools to address systemic change needed to help low-achieving students move successfully from middle to high school. Section 1, "Getting Students Ready for High School," examines "Interdisciplinary Approach Helps Eighth-Graders Improve Their Scores on State Tests"; "Two-Year Interdisciplinary Program Advances Students' Achievement Several Grade Levels"; "Middle Grade Students Find Success in a Small-Group Environment"; and "Failure Not An Option in Summer Program for Middle Grades Students." Section 2, "Smoothing Transition from Middle Grades to High School," includes "Building

Success through the Keystone Program"; "Ninth- and 10th-Graders Get a School of Their Own"; "Special Program Helps At-Risk Students 'Cross the Road' from Middle School to High School"; and "At-Risk Freshmen Get Boost from Academy." Section 3, "Helping Students Catch Up to High Standards in High School," includes "Students Select a School That Helps Ninth-Graders Meet High Standards in English and Mathematics"; "This School's Business is Freshman Learning"; "Summer Academy Gives Ninth-Graders a 'Head Start' on High School"; "Urban Ninth Graders Focus on Academic Skills in Small Learning Community"; "School for Ninth-Graders Achieves Success One Step at a Time"; "Rise in Students' Mathematics Achievement Linked to Mastery Algebra"; and "Support Team Helps Ninth-Graders Raise Achievement in Reading, Writing, Mathematics."

Walsh, M. M. (2002, March). Delivering the Promise to 9th Graders. *School Administrator*. 59(3), 20-22.

Principal describes experience in establishing and operating the Minne Howard School, a separate school for ninth-grade students in Alexandria, Virginia. Describes keys to success: Create a teacher advisor component, eliminate inschool suspension, teach five classes, and institute a school support team.

White-Hood, M. (2001, March). Mapping the Road to High School. *Principal Leadership*. 1(7), 48, 3.

A Maryland middle school helps students navigate passage to high school with 10 crossings: parent engagement, mentoring transitional opportunities program, a middle-school exit form, a special assembly, a closing ceremony, a unification process, departmental articulation, a roundtable involving middle- and high-school principals, and a high-school induction program.