**A Guide to Developing a
Middle School Transition Plan**

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Undergoing a school transition can be difficult for many young adolescents. School administrators, teachers, counselors, and families can make a positive impact on how students experience this change by working together to plan and implement strategies that ease the transition in and out of the middle school. Based on the research-based AMLE Position Paper, “Supporting Young Adolescents’ Transition In and Out of the Middle School,” this guide will help you develop a comprehensive transition plan that welcomes students, supports their exploration of a new school community, and helps them develop important relationships that are necessary to successful learning experiences.

Link to AMLE Position Paper: [**www.amle.org/transitionspp**](http://www.amle.org/transitionspp)

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| **Administrators, Teachers, and Counselors Can:** | **Our School Transition Plans:** |
| Encourage collaboration among administrators, teachers, and counselors at the sending and receiving schools; |  |
| Provide a comprehensive transition program that includes multiple transition activities before, during, and after the transition; |  |
| Make the planning, implementation, and evaluation of transition activities an annual focus; |  |
| Engage in collaborative planning with equivalent counterparts at the sending and receiving schools to ensure a smooth academic transition that recognizes and accommodates variations in curricula across feeder schools; |  |
| Become knowledgeable about and engage in instructional practices, including opportunities for peer interaction (e.g., cooperative learning) that support the developmental characteristics of young adolescents where students can experience academic success; |  |
| Create a climate that values and supports effective home/school communications; |  |
| Review the bell schedule(s) and map of the middle/high school prior to making the transition; |  |
| Practice procedural tasks with students prior to making the transition (e.g., bell schedule, combination lock); |  |
| Review the middle/high school student handbook and create activities that focus on pertinent information prior to the transition; |  |
| Talk about middle/high school academic and behavioral expectations; |  |
| Review examples of middle/high school assignments; |  |
| Review necessary academic skills (e.g., note-taking, study skills); |  |
| Focus on teaching life skills (e.g., responsibility, communication, time management); |  |
| Provide counseling at both the elementary and middle levels to address transition concerns and assure students of the availability of ongoing support; |  |
| Make use of developmentally responsive organizational structures at the middle school (e.g., teaming). |  |

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| **Examples of transition activities include:** |  |
| Offering opportunities for middle/high school students to act as academic tutors for elementary/middle school students prior to the transition; |  |
| Arranging a tour of the new school prior to the transition; |  |
| Having a day for only incoming students to attend their new school without upperclassmen on campus (typically the day before school officially begins); |  |
| Offering an informational session conducted by administration, teachers, counselors, and students from the new school; |  |
| Engaging students in a "Rite of Passage" celebration activity at the end of elementary/middle school; |  |
| Shadowing of a middle/high school student for a day; |  |
| Implementing a "big brother/big sister" mentoring program where middle/high school students mentor elementary/middle grades students; |  |
| Inviting a panel of middle/high school students to talk with elementary/middle school students about the academic, social, and procedural aspects of the transition and answer questions in the spring before the transition; |  |
| Hosting a family orientation held at the receiving school; |  |
| Arranging for a middle/high school student mentor for each student who is making the transition; |  |
| Arranging a teacher swap day where teachers at the sending and receiving schools trade classes for a day; |  |
| Hosting an extracurricular day where school coaches, club sponsors, and other extracurricular representatives provide information about their organization and how to get involved; |  |
| Organize a high school curriculum/academic fair for teachers to share academic information; |  |
| Create a vertical team of middle and high school teachers to focus on streamlining the middle and high school curriculums. |  |