



CONNECTION TIPS

Supporting Transfer Students Entering a New School

What's Going On?

Learning from home for students transitioning from one school to another during a pandemic may create more challenges. School staff may be concerned about the health issues, learning gaps and social-emotional needs of students new to the school district. Prior planning may be helpful for new students and staff.

Tips to Consider

- ❑ Sometimes students who transfer from one district to the other may be transferring due to critical life or COVID related issues. Others may be transferring due to work-related moves. And many students will simply be transferring into new buildings - from elementary to middle school for example. Whatever the reason for transition, transferring during a pandemic and changing to a new school environment and community will require additional support.
- ❑ Begin their experience by welcoming new families/students with positive and compassionate approaches. Anxiety about making a school move will be enhanced due to unknowns about how the school will be providing a safe learning environment amidst the possibility of COVID-19 spread/contagion. Communicate as much as possible about your school as well as your COVID-19 protocols. Students transferring from other parts of the country may have experienced different things in their home districts as states have handled the pandemic very differently.
- ❑ Have written materials available to include in Central Registration packets (on-line registration packets and hard copy) regarding COVID-19 procedures
- ❑ Secondary students: School counselors will likely be meeting with students (perhaps virtually in advance of school re-opening) in order to develop student schedules. Have School Counselors prepared to answer any additional concerns regarding the school's plan to re-open.
- ❑ Many school districts offer mentoring programs to support students new to the school district or building. These may be impacted by social distancing. Consider some social-distanced methods for students to develop connections with your "Welcome Crew" such as virtual after school social gatherings, one-on-one buddy zoom calls, etc.
- ❑ Elementary/Middle School: Consider offering socially distanced group counseling for students new to school. Some schools typically have "Lunch Bunch" meetings in the beginning of the year to help students connect to a new school and peers. These also provides an opportunity for School Counselors to assess the need for follow up mental health supports and interventions. Many of the traditional "get to know your school" activities such as fun nights, open-houses, etc. were cancelled last spring. As a replacement, this year schools may want to host these groups not just for students new to the district, but for K, 6th, and 9th graders who are entering their buildings for the first time. These can provide opportunities for students to ask questions, share concerns, and talk to others in small groups about their experiences of transition.
- ❑ Parent check-in: Home-school connections will be even more appreciated as new families move into your district. Proactively making contact early in the new year may be very beneficial to assist with transition and reduce anxious thoughts. Partner with your new parents.