

Community of Practice in Transition: Social/Emotional and Behavioral Needs (SEBN)

Recommendations and best practice for successful student transition

Report to Wyoming Department of Education

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Social/Emotional and Behavioral Needs (SEBN) Members



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Introduction

During 2013 the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND) in collaboration with the Wyoming Department of Education, Special Programs Division developed a community of practice for student transition (CoP-T). The goal of this project was to bring together leading professionals and parent advocates from around the state to identify best practices and recommendations for improving transition practices in Wyoming.

Three small communities, consisting of 10-15 members each convened at the University of Wyoming in Laramie in February/April and again in October for two in-person working sessions. These sessions were designed to address improving the transitions of students in three identified critical areas: a) transition from early childhood programs to the school districts; b) transition from secondary schools to post-secondary education, employment and community living; and c) transitions of students with social, emotional, and behavioral needs to and from behavioral interventions. Each community, through weekly and monthly E-mail correspondence and teleconference meetings, developed a guidance document. Although final recommendations for improving practices are similar across all documents, key differences exist that are critical to successful transitions for the targeted population or identified transition period.

This guidance document consists of five sections: purpose, background, best practices, challenges, and recommendations. The purpose and background sections describe key areas of focus for the community's specific area of transition. The best practice section was developed through a robust literature search to identify nationally-recognized best practices that could be appropriately implemented in Wyoming. The challenges section presents agency infrastructure, educational and advocacy practices, and service disparities that may present challenges for successful student transitions. The recommendations section provides the ideas and information from the community members that are most likely to result in successful student outcomes.

The following document is the culmination of the hard work and yearlong commitment of the members of all three Community of Practice in Transition and WIND Facilitators, Sandra A. Hubert and Laurie Westlake; WIND administrators, Sandy Root-Elledge and Canyon Hardesty; and WIND information specialist, Sara DiRienzo. This document represents professional and expert recommendations for improving transition practices throughout Wyoming. This document, although intended for improving practices of the Wyoming Department of Education as well as local school districts addresses the multiple state, community, and individual stakeholders whose collaborative involvement is key to successful outcomes of students during transition periods.

Purpose and Background

We live in an ever-changing world of educational and work requirements. Students in this world must successfully navigate multiple transitions across a variety of levels in a variety of directions in order to function well and meet demands. The demands occur in various time frames from hour-to-hour, day-to-day, year-to-year. Transition demands also occur from age-to-age, grade-to-grade, and change-to-change in terms of needed support resources. In an endeavor intended to promote educational and personal growth, transition planning is a vital topic for all who guide and educate students.

As a student progresses through the educational system, it is crucial to nurture positive experiences and proactively plan to meet social, emotional, and positive behavioral support needs, especially for students with exceptional circumstances or challenges. For decades, most of the funded research and focus on transitions has been concentrated on students moving from secondary education to post-secondary employment or education. That work has demonstrated successful transition outcomes reduce retention rates; lower dropout rates; satisfy students, parents, and support groups; and provide the means by which more students succeed in higher-level academic courses; thereby preparing students for a successful future beyond school.

Our Community of Practice (CoP) studied this issue from a broader perspective across a student's entire tenure in the Pre-K to 12+ educational system in Wyoming. We concluded transitions of all kinds can be made more positive for students, with higher chances of success through deliberate planning where possible, adjustment assistance where needed, and monitoring of progress in terms of successful adjustment. Failing to adequately plan, to execute a plan, or to adjust to transition challenges often contributes to negative outcomes for students and sometimes for the environment as well.

We also adopted an overarching commitment to seek out and promote evidence-based practices in this process-where they were available-and recommend consensus best-practice recommendations where quality research-based evidence was lacking. Throughout we strived to be conscientious about promoting considerations of developmental appropriateness, cultural sensitivity and respect, and strengths-based, positive factor assessment in planning and evaluation, rather than thinking in a deficits-based model only. In a practical vein, we also looked for and promoted the use or adaptation of existing policies, plans, and programs that were applicable and feasible, rather than recreating the wheel.

Our particular CoP turned its attention to the transition needs of children with recognized social-emotional-behavioral needs (CoP-T-SEBN). These challenges make students' courses through the multiple transition aspects of the educational process more difficult, put them at higher-risk for failure and more likely to need explicit proactive planning in order to raise the odds of achieving success. Our goal was to gather together the best existing evidence of strategies, programs, or concepts-in-action that increase students' chances for successfully making critical transitions, large and small, across multiple settings and for a variety of reasons. In that regard, we started with some clarification of our task through definition of key terms as follows.

Community of Practice - Our Community of Practice consists of teachers, parents, agency representatives, and coordinators from Wyoming school districts. We came together as a community of practice to tackle the goal of providing better transition outcomes for students. In order to achieve this goal, we reviewed multiple examples of best practices for successful transition outcomes (e.g., Borenson, 2006; Carnegie Council, 1996; Daggett, 2005; Davis & Sondheimer, 2005) and offered informed recommendations.

Target group – The CoP-T-SEBN focused on the needs of students Pre-K (age three) through 12th grade+ (age 21) who have social-emotional-behavioral challenges. We particularly concentrated our efforts on making recommendations that would improve the success of life transitions these students make vertically (Baylor University, 2004; Elias, Gara & Ubriaco, 1985; Fabian & Dunlop, 2007; INTO, 2008; State Guidance & Policy...ECTA, 2012; Tilleczek & Ferguson, 2007; Vogler, Crivello & Woodhead, 2008) through the school system as well as

horizontally and/or orthogonally (Dary, 2010), based on their individual life circumstances (e.g., poverty or low SES, minority status, marginalization/disenfranchisement, family losses, and disruptions, etc.) and resulting needs (Blum, 2005; Galton, Gray & Ruddock, 1999; Gonzales, Dumka, Deardorf, Jacobs-Cart & McCray, 2004; Reyhner, 1992). These students include children qualified for IEP-based supports, services, and adaptations; those with Section 504 plan-based accommodations and allowances; and other students with social maladjustment issues that might be involved in a pattern of repeated disciplinary referrals within school, or with social services and/or law enforcement and/or juvenile justice and/or other child welfare agencies outside of school in a given community (Dishion, 2000). Our target population, therefore, included students who might be moving to or from residential mental health treatment, residential childcare and foster placement, alternative school placements, dropped-out to back-in-school, into or out of correctional facilities, etc.

Transition – For our purposes, an educational transition involves 1) moving from a known educational environment, setting, or level to an educational environment setting, or level that is less known or unknown, requiring adjustment on the part of the student and the environment and 2) movement between environments that is precipitated by one or more motivations. These motivations can include events such as predictable status changes in age or grade; natural changes such as developmental maturity and readiness; less predictable or controllable external changes in the student’s support group such family moves, job changes, family changes and disruptions (e.g. siblings, divorce), illnesses, results and consequences of poor choices, etc. Outcomes of some transitions are expected to inherently lead to feelings of success and achievement while others present negatively stressful, even potentially overwhelming challenges that might or might not open opportunities to positive changes and adaptation.

Success – Successful transitions are defined for our purpose as 1) the student’s needs for support are well-articulated based on a good match of personal traits and environmental traits and demands (Clark, G., 2007; Clark, H., 2013); 2) training and practice in critical readiness skills, including maximum self-determination opportunities and considerations (Agran, M., Blanchard, C. & Wehmeyer, M., 2000), as well as an adequate knowledge base is provided ahead of transition or phrases of a transition (Martin, Marshall, Maxson & Jerman, 1996; Martin, Van Dycke, Christensen, Greene, Gardner & Lovett, 2006); and 3) the full complement of IDEA special education goals and expected outcomes is included in each child’s plan (NCYT, 2013; Turnbull III, H., Turnbull, A., Wehmeyer, M. & Park, J., 2003).

For students who fall within the purview of this project, our hope is that students with social-emotional-behavioral challenges will benefit from the proactive planning and preparation offered in an effectively organized way by the caring adults and programs surrounding them in their schools, homes, and communities of support (Felner, 2000; Kaser, 2007). For some students, the journey of working through and rising above their challenges can also result in realization of potentials they never knew they had. The profit from these efforts increases readiness for life’s transitional demands beyond school and increases self-determination, modeling and leadership, in the process of meeting those demands.

Beyond the work of producing this guidance document, our CoP expects to contribute to an ongoing effort of making a readily accessible information data base of resources, thought provoking literature, models for developing successful transition planning and implementation, and links to like-minded communities that share this interest in promoting successful transitions

for these students. Our hope is that by working together with parents (Modern Parents, 2010), educators (McIntosh, Herman, Sanford, McGraw & Florence, 2004) service agencies, etc. we can disseminate and expand this work across Wyoming. We envision this effort can be sustained to keep these resources and goals updated and reviewed for relevance and effectiveness.

We would like to acknowledge the WDE for its vision of receiving useful input from a stakeholder group in this CoP process and organizing the efforts of invested people from various related roles within the framework of this common objective. The Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND), as an organization and as passionate and hardworking individuals, has provided critical management and inspiring facilitation of the project. We also want to express appreciation to the trainers and presenters that helped us coalesce as a working group around our tasks. At the risk of unintentionally overlooking someone, by name we would particularly like to thank Sandy Hubert, Sandy Root-Elledge, Laurie Westlake, Canyon Hardesty, Sara DiRienzo Marjorie Daley, Brandy Brummond, Suzy Wagner, Tiffany Dobler, Kimberly Harper, Karen Hannan, Karl Hunrick, and Martin Agran.

Best Practices

In the course of discussions regarding our collective and varied experiences with the challenges of promoting positive transitions for these students, our CoP arrived at consensus around the following best practices. Where available, this consensus was bolstered or tempered by broadly reviewing and referencing a portion of the available literature, programs, and strategies in this area.

Examine school and curriculum design to minimize transitions throughout the school day or environment. Our CoP agreed modern school life involves multiple transitions. Time to study a concept or to develop and apply a skill in-depth before moving on to the next is also perceived as a positive educational factor. These two elements seem to be minimally available in the modern school environment. We encourage further study and thought in this area as a potential major proactive step by which Wyoming educators might improve the overall educational environment for all students, especially those with social-emotional-behavioral needs.

Develop a proactive transition plan with adequate scope and sequence. The best transition experiences for students (and their parents/guardians, and school staff) are not left to chance or unmonitored circumstances. The best experiences occur when a team of stakeholders invested in the process critically evaluate the key factors involved in the transition challenge and make a unified, well-articulated written plan to address those factors. The best plans are likely to be those that go beyond the immediate circumstances and extend through a student's school tenure when appropriate. As soon as the student enters one level or environment proactive planning should begin for the next level or environment. For example, when a student is placed in a more restrictive environment, planning for transition back to a less restrictive environment should begin immediately.

Consider and address at least the following key multi-dimensional transition plan factors. Identify type or nature of transition(s) including – vertical/progressive (such as grade advancement, less restrictive environment to more restrictive or vice versa, etc.), lateral (such as one educational setting to another educational setting within or between schools), anticipated (such as elementary school to middle school), unanticipated (such as family or support group changes, losses or crises, etc.), educational (such as more or less independence capability in the

instructional setting), life (peer relationship challenges, after hours activities such as jobs or social life demands, etc.).

Consider the match of student characteristics with environmental demands; take the time to carefully evaluate the student's relative capacities and vulnerabilities related to the environment into which the student is transitioning. Identify areas of likely success and strong functioning vs. areas of likely need for supports.

Consider the match of the student's developmentally appropriate, self-determined needs with the supports available. Evaluate the student's expressed needs or goals, and check the fit of the supports and supportive processes.

Examine the student's readiness for the predictable challenges of a given transition. For example, transitioning from small classroom settings with lots of support to larger classroom settings where more independence is expected. Train and coach the student to self-assess and to self-evaluate these challenges as a way of increasing self-efficacy.

Evaluate the quality, quantity, extent and actual accessibility of school, home, and community support resources available to the student when needed.

Promote positive peer relationships and peer activities. One of the most critical features in nurturing successful transitions for these students is to assure, whenever possible, that they connect or reconnect with relatively healthy, thriving peers. The ability to build these social connections with peers must not be taken for granted since it is often one of the most difficult tasks faced by students with SEBN. Careful consideration must be given in this process to cultural sensitivity, safety and security concerns, parental involvement, etc.

Develop facility-wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) models, expectations, processes, and procedures that focus on building positive behaviors rather than simply reducing negative behaviors. The creation and implementation of successful transition plans has the highest chance of success in schools, school districts, and/or other child service facilities that build and maintain a working PBIS system based on well-articulated levels of intervention fitting the child's needs. Such systems understand the root definition of *discipline* to be *teach* rather than simply *punish*. Their interactions with all their students reflect this and the results tend to be more successful in reducing problem behaviors and increasing pro-social peer and adult interactions.

Promote family involvement in the student's planning and implementation by soliciting, recognizing, and honoring their input about self-evaluation and specific needs. Facilitate the meeting of needs by empowering the autonomy and self-determination of the student and family via training (such as in evidence-based parent training), coaching in-team leadership, and other appropriate supports.

Make student self-determination a priority in planning. To the degree that is realistic and developmentally appropriate, we perceive that it is always in the student's best interests to allow and encourage a student to choose supports and self-evaluate his or her effectiveness according to his or her goals and perceived needs.

Develop the role of an inter-agency coordinator (e.g., Wraparound case worker, transition coordinator, etc.). Having support service and resources (such as education, social work, legal, judicial, medical, therapeutic, etc.) collaborating deliberately on a unified, coordinated plan is far more effective than having them operating in artificially separate silos of scope of service. In that regard, at a bare minimum, make a concerted effort to integrate and not to duplicate services via IEPs, 504 Plans, wraparound plans, mental health treatment plans, DFS MDT plans, etc.

Make skill development a priority for staff members who plan or implement transition plans. The development and implementation of successful transition plans does not seem to be included in the basic training of most helping professionals. The vision and skills required to do this process well probably requires additional specific training.

Use progress monitoring and program evaluation process routinely. At the individual and programmatic level plans with measurable objectives, built-in fidelity checks and outcomes measures stand a higher chance of success than those without these elements built in.

Challenges

The challenges and solutions identified in this document are those our Community of Practice evaluated as having the most impact on the following points of transition: Pre-K through 12th grade (age 21); children who qualify for IEP-based supports, services and adaptations: Section 504 plan-based accommodations and allowances; and students moving to or from residential mental health treatment, residential childcare and/or foster placement, alternative school placements, dropped out to back in school, and correctional facilities.

Challenge: Stakeholder buy-in is necessary for successful implementation of best practices.

Solution: 1) Stakeholders need to understand the importance of transition planning and implementation. When stakeholders understand this, they are more willing to invest the time, resources, and funding needed to make it successful. Motivation for stakeholder buy-in could be achieved when best practice leads to cost effectiveness and positive outcomes for students. 2) Annually survey relevant stakeholders. Assess stakeholders about the progress and needs related to promoting positive, successful transitions for their students. In that regard, the survey could study the number, types and impact of transitions and the presence of proactive vs. reactive plans and strategies occurring around the state.

Challenge: Cultural diversity exists from county to county, and different communities have varying needs and resources. Transition plans and strategies within communities may differ based on these variables.

Solution: 1) Survey communities; WDE could promote a process by which communities can identify and consider the transition needs of their students, as well as report what is present and missing in their communities. 2) Recognize available resources; provide research suggesting how to access and/or develop these resources and other related topics.

Challenge: Funding and access to resources may be barriers for schools trying to implement best practices in transition planning.

Solution: The construction of the WDE Web portal will provide access and knowledge with regard to resources. The CoP aims to provide low cost/high impact transition strategies that can benefit all districts, big and small, and these strategies will be posted to the website.

Challenge: Training will give teachers, parents, students, administration, and community members the knowledge and skills to improve transition outcomes for Wyoming's students.

Solution: 1) Develop the WDE Web portal; the development of the Web portal will offer specific training support for each stakeholder. 2) Program evaluation will need to be built into the process for the purpose of ensuring fidelity to effective plans and models. 3) Create a transition hotline. In addition to a state website aimed to promote positive, successful transitions, a hotline phone number should be established by which state patrons can be quickly guided to available basic transition support resources for their children, their schools, and/or their communities as needed. One existing resource that should be explored is the WY 211 Information and Referral Agency. The CoP could be a contributor to this agency. 4) The WDE transition conference is another avenue for updating stakeholders' awareness of effective programs and resources.

Challenge: The needs of students with SEBN are complex and require strategic teaching and management skills. This population of students is particularly individual and diverse.

Solution: 1) Develop teacher trainings. Increase exposure and experience with applying transition theory to practice. Teacher training programs and ongoing professional development need to include transition best practices and how to participate effectively as wraparound team members. 2) WDE personnel development initiatives could play a very positive role in funding and promoting access to trainers and training from the most successful existing programs in order to increase the understanding and skill of Wyoming's own service providers. The training structure already exists for collaboration between Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) and Department of Family Services (DFS). WDE could be included in this collaborative training structure. There would be an annual WDE transition conference.

Challenge: The depth of knowledge needed to identify and invite outside agencies for transition planning when implementing best practices is extensive. It is a broad subject that requires thoughtful collaboration among numerous entities.

Solution: 1) Develop the role of interagency coordinator (e.g., Wraparound case worker, transition coordinator, etc.) to facilitate the transition process for students with SEBN across environments throughout the child's school career, a need identified by our CoP. The role of a transition coordinator goes well beyond that of just helping secondary students move successfully to post-secondary work or training. The transition coordinator should have the knowledge and skills needed to help teams create successful transition plans for students at all stages of their education. 2) Of the many support resources examined, the High Fidelity Wraparound is an evidence-based practice that seems uniquely well-grounded to support most or all of the best practices cited above. The State of Wyoming has already embraced this model in several of its agency mandates and we perceive that it applies very well here also.

(Please see addendum at the end of this document for a testimonial illustrating successful transitions.)

Recommendations

The following strategies or programs are recommended by the CoP-T SEBN to address successful strategies and the best practices identified during the literature search.

Transition coordinator – In a modern school, the role of a transition coordinator goes well-beyond that of just helping secondary students move successfully to post-secondary work or training. We encourage the WDE to envision this task as contributing to the smooth facilitation of transitions for children with SEBN across various environments and demands throughout a child’s school career, from pre-K to post-secondary. This role might include managing the training needs cited in item #9 above.

Community survey and recognition of available resources – WDE should promote a process by which communities can consider the transition needs of their students to identify the individual student need. This should include what is present or may be missing in their community and action steps to increase access to missing components.

Transition hotline – In addition to a state website aimed to promote positive, successful transitions, a hotline phone number should be established by which stakeholders can be quickly guided to available basic transition support resources for their children, their schools, and/or their communities as needed. One existing resource that should be explored is the Wyoming 211 Information and Referral Agency. The CoP could be a contributor to this information.

High Fidelity Wraparound – Of the many support resources examined, one that seems uniquely well-grounded to support most or all of the best practices cited above is this evidence-based program. The State of Wyoming has already embraced this model in several of its agency mandates and we perceive that it applies very well here also.

High quality professional development (theory-to-practice) – WDE should play a positive role in funding and promoting access to trainers and training from the most successful existing programs in order to increase the understanding and skill of Wyoming’s service providers.

Annual survey of transition issues and needs of Wyoming stakeholders – WDE should annually survey relevant stakeholders about the progress and ongoing needs related to promoting positive, successful transitions for their students. In that regard, the survey could study the number, types, and impact of transitions and the presence of proactive vs. reactive plans and strategies occurring around the state.

Annotated bibliography of references and exemplar resources

Agran, M., Blanchard, C. & Wehmeyer, M. (2000). Promoting transition goals and self-determination through student self-directed learning: the self-determined learning model of instruction. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 2000, 35(4), 351-364.

This is an example of research focused on promoting self-determination and self-advocacy in children with disabilities of all kinds, contributing to improved personal, proactive engagement in transition planning.

Baylor University's Community Mentoring for Adolescent Development (2004). *Transitions to and from middle school*. http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_432.pdf

This article is a relatively comprehensive coverage of key elements for improving transitions into and out of middle school. It includes references to research, to various model programs around the country, and to best practice recommendations.

Blum, W. (2005). Best practices: Building blocks for enhancing school environment. Military Child Initiative, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense, Military Community and Family Policy. www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/military.../Best_Practices

This paper examines key school environment issues that hold potential for improving school transitions for military children that must move often from school to school, site to site; could be relevant for all students.

Borenson, L. (2006). Transition to adulthood: resources for teachers working with students with emotional behavioral disabilities. *Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction*. <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/doc/ebdtransit.doc>

This document is a brief summary of basic relevant research findings, best practice recommendations, and useful resources in several categories.

Cameto, R., Levine, P. & Wagner, M. (2004). *Transition planning for students with disabilities*. National Longitudinal Study 2, Final Review Draft. SRI Project P11182. SRI International. Menlo Park: CA http://www.nlts2.org/reports/2004_11/nlts2_report_2004_11_execsum.pdf

A highly pertinent and influential report of an extensive longitudinal study focused on key issues for secondary level students with disabilities.

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1996). *Great transitions: Preparing adolescents for a new century*. Carnegie Corporation, New York: NY.

This multifaceted report is the culminating document of three other related major public policy reports focusing on preventive strategies and activities to prevent failure during key transitions.

Clark, G. (2007). Transitions assessment. *Assessment for transition planning*, 2nd Ed., pp. 1-2. PRO-ED, Austin: TX.

This book addresses the comprehensive transition planning process for helping “individuals with disabilities of all ages and their families in making all critical transitions...both successful and satisfying.”

Clark, H. (2013). Transition to independence process (TIP) system: A community-based model for improving the outcomes of youth and young adults with EBD. <http://tipstars.org/>

This brief summary article represents the array of information on this topic found at the website noted. The TIP guidelines present core features of a “practice model” transition promotion and support system meant to be applied by different agencies and support groups depending on available community resources.

Daggett, W. (2005). Successful schools: from research to action plans. *Presentation to the International Center for Leadership in Education*. www.leadered.com/pdf/Successful%20Schools%206-05.pdf

Although not the main topic of this presentation, the author includes descriptions and suggestions of good transition planning and proactive steps as a key component of his recommendations for creating successful schools overall.

Dary, T. (2010). Scaffolding behavior for student success: moving beyond seclusion and restraint. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Madison, WI.

This document describes the process of creating “the right set of conditions that make it possible for all students to succeed in our classrooms.” This discussion includes concepts that would facilitate successful transitions throughout a school and a school day.

Davis, M. & Sondheimer, D. (2005). State child mental health efforts to support youth in transition to adulthood. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research*, 32, 1, 27-42.

This article is essentially a survey report of the current status of various efforts within their systems around the country to facilitate transitions for adolescents to adulthood.

Dishion, T. (2000). Adolescent transitions program (ATP). *Prevention of Mental Disorders*, Jun, 66-68.

This article reports on a research project designed to foster concomitant parent and adolescent skills to promote positive transitions for students with high-risk antisocial behavior.

Elias, M., Gara, M. & Ubriaco, M. (1985). Sources of stress and support in children’s transition to middle school: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 14, 2, 112-118.

This research article is representative of a body of studies being done to examine in finer detail the factors that increase or decrease chances of a child experiencing successful transitions at various school-life junctures.

Fabian, H. & Dunlop, A-H. (2007). Outcomes of good practice in transition processes for children entering primary school. *Working papers in early childhood development*, No. 42. Bernard van Leer Foundation, The Netherlands. Retrieved from http://www.bernardvanleer.org/Outcomes_of_good_practice_in_transition_processes_for_children_entering_primary_school

This document examines strategies for developing linkages for young students between their home, school and extracurricular programs.

Felner, R. (2000). School transitional environment project (STEP). *Prevention of Mental Disorders, Jun, 131-132.*

This article reports on research into school environment factors that interact with levels of transition success.

Galton, M., Gray, J. & Ruddock, J. (1999). *The impact of school transitions and transfers on pupil progress and attainment.* Transitions and Transfers: A Review, Research Review No. 131. The Crown Copyright Unit, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich NR3 1BQ. Retrieved from:
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR131.pdf>

This relatively extensive document by British personnel reviews research mostly from the UK and the US related to two specific transition experiences: the move (transfer) from one school to another and the move from one year group to the next within a school.

Gonzales, N., Dumka, L., Deardorff, J. Jacobs-Carter, S. & McCray, A. (2004). Preventing poor mental health outcomes and high school dropout of Mexican-American adolescents following transition to junior high school. *Journal of Adolescent Research, Vol. 19, No. 1, 113-131.*

This study is one example of a small but growing body research aimed at understanding and responding with programmatic interventions (e.g., “Bridges to High School”) to “prevent school disengagement and negative mental health trajectories during...transition....”

Irish National Teachers' Organisation [INTO] (2008). Transitions in the primary school. INTO Consultative Conference on Education: Discussion Document. Belfast, Ireland.
www.into.ie/ROI/Publications/TransitionsPrimarySchool.pdf

This comprehensive discussion document summarizes the collaborative work of multiple committees around Ireland tasked with studying the challenges of special needs children as they move through the primary school system. The document is expansive in its inclusion of research and resources from international references.

Jacob, B. & Rockoff, J. (2011). Organizing schools to improve student achievement: start times, grade configurations, and teacher assignments. *Discussion Paper 2011-08; The Hamilton Project, Brookings Institute.* Washington, DC. Retrieved from:
http://www0.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty/jrockoff/papers/092011_organize_jacob_rockoff_paper.pdf

This paper addresses interesting ideas for changes in school environments that would potentially, as one of the outcomes, reduce transitions and transitional stresses.

Kaser, C.H. (2007). Successfully managing student transitions, Pt. 6. *Series on Highly Effective Practices*. Old Dominion University, Norfolk: VA. Retrieved from <http://education.odu.edu/esse/docs/transitions.pdf>

Part 6 from this series provides a broad summary of basic, practical classroom management and behavior management strategies and approaches (with research and/or best-practice publication references) that tend to promote success for students in making day-to-day school-based transitions.

Levinson, E. & Palmer, E. (2005). Preparing students with disabilities for school-to-work transition and postschool life. *Principal Leadership, National Association of Secondary School Principals, April, 11-15*. Retrieved from <http://www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/Transition%20Planning%20WEB.pdf>

This article presents an example of a “comprehensive transdisciplinary vocational assessment” model, with an emphasis on postschool planning that principals can refer to when leading a team in their school.

Martin, J., Marshall, L., Maxson, L. & Jerman, P. (1996). *The self-directed IEP*. Sopris West, Longmont: CO.

This citation refers to a research-based set of sequential lessons developed to help teachers and IEP teams promote effective, autonomous self-advocacy in students with disabilities.

Martin, J., Van Dycke, J., Christensen, R., Greene, B., Gardner, J. E., Lovett, D. (2006). Increasing student participation in IEP meetings: establishing the self-directed IEP as an evidence-based practice. *Exceptional Children, 72, 3, 299-316*.

This citation refers to a research-based set of sequential lessons developed to help teachers and IEP teams promote effective, autonomous self-advocacy in students with disabilities.

McIntosh, K., Herman, K., Sanford, A., McGraw, K. & Florence, K. (2004). Teaching transitions: Techniques for promoting success between lessons. *Council for Exceptional Children, Sep/Oct, 32-38*.

This practice-based article provides a rationale and model for teachers to use in explicit skill teaching and practice of transition skills as they train students.

Modern Parents Magazine. (2010) *Supporting students in their transition to middle school*. Retrieved from <http://www.modernparentsmagazine.com/middle-school/supporting-students-in-their-transition-to-middle-school>

An example of well-presented advice at a practical, parent-consumable level.

Johnson, D. (2004). *Discussion paper: Current challenges facing the future of secondary education and transition services for youth with disabilities in the United States*. National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis: MN, January.

This paper presents findings from research, examines national policies, and articulates major challenges related to transition services for students with disabilities nationally.

National Center for Youth Transition for Behavioral Health (NCYT) (2013). Retrieved from <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/content/national-center-youth-transition-behavioral-health-ncyt>

This website provides multiple resource links intended to “make the connection between youth with disabilities and employment.”

Neumark, D. (2007). *Improving School-to-Work Transitions* <http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9781610444262>

Written for educators, policymakers, researchers, and anyone concerned about how schools are shaping the economic opportunities of young people, this book draws on evidence from national longitudinal studies, surveys, interviews, and case studies to examine the successes and failures of the '90s-era school-to-work initiatives. It also assesses how high schools, colleges, and government can help youths make a smoother transition into stable, well-paying employment.

Reyhner, J. (1992). Plans for dropout prevention and special school support services for American Indian and Alaska Native students. U.S. Department of Education Indian Nations at Risk Task Force. <http://www2.nau.edu/~jar/INAR.html>

Although not focused on transitions specifically, this paper is an example of attention paid to multiple thought-provoking themes that create high risk for school failure, including cultural transition for native children. Considering that young adult Native American males are the absolute highest percentage risk group in the U.S. for suicide, they essentially constitute a special SEBN group on that point alone.

SAMSHA Healthy Transitions Initiative - Georgetown University, Washington, DC. (2013) Website: <http://gucchdtcenter.georgetown.edu/transitions.html>

This ongoing initiative is a five-year grant-funded program to promote a “system-of-care” approach in five states to creating “seamless” transitions to independence and successful adaptation of adult roles and responsibilities for youth and young adults with serious mental health conditions, as well supporting their families.

Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study (SEELS) (2006). Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in the U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC. <http://www.seels.net/info/product.htm>

SEELS is a recently concluded large-scale longitudinal study conducted in two waves of data collection to assess eight topical areas of progress throughout a child’s course through the IEP-based services provided in schools. The researchers interpreted data subsets within those eight topical areas relevant to children with emotional disorders and/or behaviorally based disabilities.

St. Clair Atkinson, J. & Lee, H. (2006). *Transition planning for 21st Century schools*. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/curriculum/home/transitions.pdf>

This is a self-study report document intended to provide “strategic directions” to help NC schools meet the needs of individual children “as they transition throughout the years in the public school system.” The overarching goal expressed here included engaging children at their

developmental level, providing differentiated instruction, and providing “a support system for the many changes they will incur as they grow from being a child into the teen years and adulthood.”

The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) *State Guidance & Policy Relating to Transition from Part C*. (2013) Retrieved from <http://ectacenter.org/topics/transition/stateex.asp>

This nationally oriented website provides a number of reference and guidance documents pertaining to state efforts and policies regarding planning for infants and toddlers with disabilities, including - [Memorandum of Understanding between the Wyoming Department of Education and the Wyoming Department of Health, Behavioral Health Division](#). Refer to Section 7, page 5, for the transition planning provisions from Part C to Part B. (January 2012)

Tilleczek, K. & Ferguson, B. (2007). Transitions and pathways from elementary school to secondary school: A review of selected literature. *Community Health Systems Resource Group, The Hospital for Sick Children, Ontario Ministry of Education*. Toronto, Canada. www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/studentsuccess/transitionliterature.pdf

This extensive, fundamental paper on the transition process in schools is a comprehensive review of major points in the transition process for secondary students to post-school lives.

Turnbull III, H., Turnbull, A., Wehmeyer, M. & Park, J. (2003). A quality of life framework for special education outcomes. *Remedial and Special Education*, 24, 2, 67-74.

This article proposes a perspective on measuring academic progress for children with disabilities as “the means for achieving the other...four outcomes that...IDEIA declared: equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.”

Vogler, P., Crivello, G. & Woodhead, M. (2008). Early childhood transitions research: A review of concepts, theory, and practice. *Working Papers in Early Childhood Development*, No. 48. Bernard van Leer Foundation, The Netherlands. http://www.bernardvanleer.org/Early_childhood_transitions_research_A_review_of_concepts_theory_and_practice

Along with the earlier work cited by Fabian & Dunlop (2007) these are extensive reviews of relevant international research addresses the transition needs of young children with high-risk situations in the context of all young children.

Glossary of Terms

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS): Positive Behavior Supports refers to the implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students.

Self-determination: Self-determination is defined as acting as the primary causal agent in one's life, free to make choices and decisions about one's quality of life, free from undue influence or interference (Wehmeyer, 1998).

Social/Emotional and Behavioral Needs (SEBN): The CoP-T defines SEBN as the need for extra behavioral supports emotionally, academically, and socially in order to achieve success. For this paper's purpose, the term is used in reference to students who exhibit behaviors that present barriers to academic achievement and social success, and need extra, individualized supports such as a behavior plan, IEP, accommodations, transition planning, medication, as well as an array of other services to help them be successful.

Success: The CoP-T defines success in transitions for children with social-emotional-behavioral needs as encompassing the following indicators:

- The student's needs for support are well articulated based on personal traits. The student is trained in critical readiness skills.
- The student has the ability to manage anticipated events (such as predictable status changes in age or grade), natural changes (such as developmental maturity and readiness), less predictable changes (such as family moves, job changes, family changes, family disruptions such as divorce or illnesses), and the student realizes the results and consequences of poor choices.
- Student outcomes of transitions are expected to lead to feelings of success and achievement.

2) Projected outcomes determined by this project indicating success for students with SEN are realized when the student:

- Benefits from the proactive planning and preparation offered in an effectively organized way by the caring adults and programs that surround them in their schools, homes, and communities of support.
- Experiences the realization of potentials he or she never knew he or she had.
- Is prepared with increased readiness for life's transitional demands beyond school.
- Is self-determined (behaviorally competent to make informed choices) in the process of meeting those demands.

Transition: The CoP-T defines transition as a process of moving from one educational environment, setting, or level to another requiring adjustment on the part of the student and the environment. The process also involves understanding the motivations that precipitate the need for the transition (see page 3 of guidance document).

Examples moving from one environment to another:

- Pre-school to kindergarten
- Grade to grade
- School to school
- Out of district to in district
- More restrictive to less restrictive

Examples of motivations precipitating the need for movement:

- Change in age, grade
- Change in family, job, illnesses
- Consequences of poor choices

The transition process may lead to feelings of success or to feelings of stress and overwhelming challenges.

Multidisciplinary Team (MDT): Multidisciplinary Team. This team is made up of the student, parents, and professionals with different kinds of training and experience (psychological, academic, behavioral, medical, etc.) who collaborate to make decisions about a child's eligibility and services. The MDT is the body that determines a child's eligibility for special education, makes recommendations for services, prescribes individualized plans, and facilitates the implementation of plan services based on the needs of the student.

Wraparound- "High Fidelity": Wraparound is a philosophy of care with a defined planning process used to build constructive relationships and support networks among students and youth with emotional or behavioral disabilities (EBD) and their families. It is community based, culturally relevant, individualized, strength based, and family centered. Wraparound plans are comprehensive and address multiple life domains across home, school, and community, including: living environment; basic needs; safety; and social, emotional, educational, spiritual, and cultural needs (Eber, L. 2005).

The High Fidelity phrase requires strict adherence to the following principles: family voice and choice, team-based, natural supports, collaboration, community-based, culturally competent, individualized, strengths-based, persistence and outcome-based (Vroon & VanDenBerg, 2007).

Addendum

(Bridges is a for-profit Subchapter S corporation)

PO Box 1642 219 7 th St. Evanston, WY 82931-1642	David M. Canen President/CEO Robin Whitmore Director Wraparound Services	Phone: (307) 789-0955 Fax: (307) 789-8036 E-mail: robinwhitmore74@yahoo.com
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Dear Community Practice,

Stephanie Fisher asked me to share some Bridges wraparound stories in relation to Uinta County School District #1(UCSD) and Lincoln County School District #1(LCSD). In the past year, Bridges wraparound staff members worked with four clients funded through IEPs (Individual Education Plans). The first client we provided wraparound services for was with LCSD to help a young man obtain his GED. The second was through UCSD to support a young man and his family to gain the skills to maintain in the community. The third is with a young man who is coming back from residential treatment and the fourth is for twin five year olds that are displaying behavior outbursts in class.

Lincoln County School District agreed to financially support wraparound services for a young man in their county who was being discharged from the Children’s Mental Health Waiver. He was in a program called BOOST in Evanston. BOOST is a grant program through Work Force services that pays individuals to obtain their GED and receive life skills. This young man’s last day with the CMHW was three weeks prior to the end of the BOOST program. He was living with a family in Evanston. Bridges staff was coordinating with the family, the BOOST program, and the Kemmerer family and mental health professionals. The young man needed rides in the morning, help with overseeing medication and daily living support. Lincoln County School District chose to pick up the wraparound services until the young man completed the BOOST program. There wasn’t a gap in services and the young man was able to obtain his GED. He scored high enough on the GED testing that he was offered the Hathaway scholarship and he was also able to complete driver’s education. The combination of financial support from CMHW and LCSD allowed wraparound services to continue until the young man accomplished his goals.

Uinta County School District #1 has been actively involved in wraparound services for children funded through CMHW. Classroom teachers, resource teachers, and school counselors have attended team meetings and willingly provide feedback and input to support their students. School staff referred one young man to Bridges for wraparound services. The family followed through with completing the CMHW application but everyone involved knew that the family could be on the waiting list for an indefinite amount of time. Instead of waiting for funding through CMHW, UCSD chose to fund wraparound services through the young man’s IEP. At the time of referral, the young man was in a resource classroom 100 percent of the time. He displayed physical outbursts toward teachers and students alike almost daily. School staff

implemented what they could from within the walls of the school building, but was unable to affect what was happening outside of school walls. Bridges wraparound staff found out that the young man and his sister lived with their grandparents. Their mother was struggling with relationships, drugs, and finances. Wraparound staff started working with their mother weekly to help get her back on her feet. The young man has had no physical outbursts at school since wraparound services began. He is making academic gains and his mom now has a job. The success of this individual and his family has lead the UCSD staff and school board to financially support wraparound for two more families.

Wraparound services are just beginning for the third and fourth families with UCSD. Both school district and Bridges wraparound staff are hoping for similar success stories with our new families. Our hope is that wraparound for the twins will eventually be financially supported through CMHW. UCSD will financially supporting wraparound for the young man transitioning out of residential for six months. His family already has a number of wraparound skills and should be able to complete wraparound transition in the six -month time frame.

Bridges wraparound staff members are honored to work in a community that allows for a system of care approach with our children. UCSD is and will continue to be a strong supporter of wraparound services.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with further questions regarding the connection between wraparound services and our surrounding school districts.

Sincerely,

Robin Whitmore

Director of Wraparound Services