

School Transition Guide for Administrators

THE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

School leadership is the second most significant influence on improvement in student learning, second only to teacher instruction. It is therefore imperative that our school leaders be prepared for a change in their assignment, and have a positive impact on their new community.



Learn the School's Culture and History

Engage in Self-Reflection and Determine Your Approach

Build Relationships and Establish Trust

Be Visible and Available

Outline Your Expectations

Establish and Maintain Communication

Be Consistent and Accept and Provide Feedback

KEY REFERENCES

- Allison Martin, Effective Strategies for Successful Administrative Transitions, July 2011
- Dr. Dennis Sparks, Leading for Results, 2004
- Ontario Principal Council Emotional Intelligence Report (Stone, Parker, Wood)
- Steven Covey, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, 1990
- Deal and Peterson - 1999
- Hargreaves and Fink , 2006
- Dr. Bob MacMillan
- Ontario Leadership Framework
- Todd Whitaker, What Great Principles Do Differently, 2002
- Simon Sinek, Start with Why, 2009

THE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Learn the School's Culture and History

Best Practices

Talk to people in the school and in the wider school community

Develop a timeline of critical events in the life of the school, and how they were dealt with: audit the organization's collective memory

Observe what is posted around the school, and highlighted on the school website and/or in the school newsletter

Conduct a survey with staff and community concerning culture and history

Possible survey questions:

- when did the school open
- why was it built
- who was the first population
- what are its core values
- what does it stand for
- what have been the major influences
- what does its architecture convey
- what are its celebrations
- what practices/policies/procedures should be continued
- what practices/policies/procedures should be stopped
- what practices/policies/procedures should be started
- what do I need to know
- what are the goals of your division/department
- what has been the school's goal or focus for the last 2 years
- what are the trouble spots in the building
- who's on leave and how they are communicated with
- what technology is available in the building
- what is the school's relationship with the neighbourhood
- what is the most recent celebration
- what is the most recent tragic event
- their perception of the School Improvement Plan

THE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Engage in Self-Reflection and Determine Your Approach

Best Practices

Understand your personal intentions, values, feelings, perspective

Review your EQ 360

Determine how your strengths can be utilized to strengthen the school's culture

Demonstrate how your practices fit with the school's culture

Model a vision of excellence

Appreciate people's work and share your gratitude

Understand how you come across to others

Establish a network of administrative colleagues

THE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Build Relationships and Establish Trust

Best Practices

Be visible

Establish ongoing communication

Listen, and then listen more

Find out the school community's expectations and wishes

Conduct a survey; if you do it is essential that you collect the data, collate it and share it in a meaningful way

Once you measure and find out what people want, you create an expectation for action; meet this expectation

Do what you say you are going to do

Do not share personal information that a staff member has shared with you

Make no excuses

Keep an eye on teacher workload

THE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Be Consistent and Accept and Provide Feedback

Best Practices

Make and keep promises

Share information and the reason(s) behind a decision so that everyone understands your values and your beliefs

When you ask for and are provided with feedback, respond by communicating with people what is happening and why

Be open to feedback and encourage others to share their thoughts

Be authentic, specific, and immediate with feedback

Demonstrate your values through your actions; walk the talk

THE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Be Visible and Available

Best Practices

Show you are interested and build trust

Spend time on what you believe is important and show what you value; visibility expresses concern and trust

An open door promotes communication and is inviting

Attend school events, committee meetings, student club meetings

Tell everyone how you can be reached, or how to set up a meeting time

Let staff know when you will be away and who is “in charge”

Be on time for meetings and make the participants feel valued by actually “being there”

Have planned visibility and unplanned visibility

THE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Outline Your Expectations

Best Practices

Articulate your beliefs and establish understanding

Be clear

Have informal, and formal, conversations with the staff in your building

Articulate your vision and values in your introductory communications

Have meetings with groups and individuals; adults and students

Model the behaviour you expect in others

THE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Establish and Maintain Communication

Best Practices

Be open, honest, direct, clear, and timely

Keep in mind that your language and the way you interact with people communicates what you value and can motivate (or de-motivate) people

Listen for understanding

Observe your office layout; welcoming to students, staff, parents, community

Communicate with your wider school community; variety of languages needed, medias used

Ensure that the school website is current and informative

Write an introductory letter to the school community and the wider school community

Stay connected with your administrator network

TRANSITION PLAN TO DO LIST

Meet or Call	Current principal	
	Superintendent	
	School Council Chair	
	Current Parents' Group Chair	
	Secretary	
	Custodians	
	Division Leaders	
	Department Heads	
	IT Arrange for Computer Access	
	Workplace Steward / Branch President	
Prepare or Order	Newsletter to Community	
	Intro letter to staff	
	Staff Survey	
	Business Cards	
	Letterhead	
Get Copies	Staff List with summer phone numbers	
	Staff Photo (with names)	
	Staff Handbook	
	Code of Conduct	
	Dress Code	
	School Brochure	
	Purchasing Card	
	School Improvement Plan	
	School Effectiveness Framework Summary	
	Map of School	
	School Profile	
Miscellaneous	Arrange signing authority for non-board account	
	Staff Meeting Agendas	

School Information

Name	
Address	
Phone Number	
Fax Number	
Principal's Line / Cell	
VP's Line	
Attendance Line	
Website	
Security Code	
Mascot	
Colours	
Community of Schools	
Superintendent's Phone / Cell	
Superintendent Admin Assistant Phone	
COS Meetings	
School Population (size, demographics)	
Hours	
Day 1 Procedures / Routines	
Meet the Teacher Practices / Routines	
Boundaries	
Bus Company Phone	
Number of Buses	
Bus Company Contact	
Out of Area Students	
Neighbouring Schools	
Special Education Coordinator	
Attendance Counsellor / Social Worker	
English as a Second Language Teacher	
Psychologist	

Staff Information

Administrative Assistant	
Attendance Secretary	
Intermediate Division Leader	
Junior Division Leader	
Primary Division Leader	
Early Years Division Leader	
Department Heads	
Clarify Job Descriptors (appendix)	
Review Custodial Runs	
Before and After School Care Contact	
Teacher Librarian	
Learning Support Teacher(s), RST	
Guidance	
Educational Assistant(s), ECE's	
Probationary Staff	
NTIP Staff	
Leadership Track	
Transfer Track	
Attendance Reporting	
Increase in Assignment	
LTO Staff	
Reciprocal Transfer Staff	
Learning Classroom Participants	
Teachers with Specialized Roles (SST, Markbook Facilitator, Athletic Director)	
TPA Status	

Shading Indicates Secondary Panel only.

Student Information

Population	
Special Classes	
IEP's	
Physical Challenges	
Heath Concerns / Medical Plans	
Discipline Procedures	
Discipline Record Keeping	
Incentive Program	
Lunchroom Supervisor(s)	
Student Council (Parliament)	
Recognitions / Awards	
Assemblies	
SEA equipment	
Safety Plans	

Community Information

School Council Chair	
Members	
Meeting Dates / Time	
Issues	
Parent Group Name	
Parent Group Chair	
Meeting Date / Time	
Issues	
Date for first Parent Council meeting	
Community "Hot Spots"	
Block Parents	
Key Parents	
Limited Access Parents	
Trespass Letters	
Community Issues / Sensitive Topics	
Multicultural Make-up	
Key cultural contacts	
Before and After School	
Community Use of Facilities - Group / Date / Time	
Public Health Nurse	

Materials

Budget Status	
Responsibility	
Budget Lines and Numbers	
Capitol Expense Planning	
F&E Planning	
Instrument Repair and Replacement Plan	
Textbook Purchase Plan	
Computer Plan	
Classroom Supplies - ordering / when / storage	
Office General Supplies - ordering / when / storage	
Art Supplies	
Science Supplies	
Physical Education Supplies	
Non-Board Funds Status	
Responsibility	
Signing Authority	
Procedures for Requests	
Budget Committee Members	
P-Card Holders	

Emergency and Health and Safety Information

First Aiders	
Heath Room Ordering - Who?	
Closest Hospital / Clinic	
Medication (s)	
Heath Plans	
CAS / FACS Phone Number	
Other Community Contacts / Agencies	
Individual Student Emergency Behavioural Plans	
Evacuation Site (must be TVDSB site)	
Fire Alarms	
Fire Extinguishers	
Location of Emergency Plan	
Fire Safety Plan	
Emergency Procedures - Fire Drill Log	
Emergency Procedures - Tornado Drill Log	
Emergency Procedures - Early Closing	
Emergency Procedures - Lock Down	
Local Police Phone Number	
Gas Shut Off	
Water Shut Off	
Security System	
Playground Concerns	
Heath and Safety Committee Members	
Date of first Heath and Safety Tour	
Heath and Safety Information and Minutes	

At a Glance

Keys	
Mission Statement	
Website (password and moderator)	
Dress Code	
Crest / Logo	
Motto	
School Profile	
ARC Involvement - Procedure	
School Improvement Plan	
Newsletter	
Staff Handbook	
School Brochure	
Timetables	
Class lists	
Trillium Student Information Sheets	
Supervision Schedule(s)	
Staff Responsibilities - Co-curricular	
EQAO Results (school password)	
Parent Involvement Grant	
Learning Cycles	
Professional Development Plan	
Staff Meetings - Day / Time / Format / Length	
Weekly Bulletin	

SEPTEMBER START-UP - ELEMENTARY

Items	Date:	Who:
Timetables		
Yard Schedule and Map		
New Meds Forms		
Alert Postings in Office - update		
Staff Binders - Trillium		
- Supply Teacher Insert		
- Staff Manual		
Medical Forms - Alert Plans		
- Administration of Medication		
First Day Packages - Staff		
- Yard Schedule, memo, staff information		
First Day Packages - Students		
- Calender, Newsletter, Terry Fox		
Bells - set and check		
Update school map		
Prepare Response Plan Binder (review with Superintendent)		
Prepare Fire Safety Plan (review with Superintendent)		
ATE Interviews - August		
- review applicants		
- contact and schedule interviews		
- review procedure for hiring / print forms		
- create questions		
Room allocation for staff (eg. lunch room, intinerant)		

Items:	Date
Plan on a contact from Facility Services to meet regarding work to be done at the school. (TIP: Do a health and safety inspection in the first part of September to see what rooms need painting etc. to help with creating of lists between yourself and Charge Custodians)	
Plan on a call from your Superintendent to set a meeting. Be prepared with the school visit form completed (Assistant usually mails)	
Review staff list concerning medical issues and those with accommodations. More information is available from Human Resources	
Review student list of medical issues - ensure that there is a binder near the first aid kits or in a central location that is current	
Ensure that there are pamphlets on the Employee Assistance Program available in the staff room	

NOTES:

SECONDARY START-UP

Items:	Date
Meet with Guidance and Student Success to do transition/orientation plans for grade 9	
Review staff manual - names on emergency response, attendance, meeting dates, VP portfolios, school expectations	
Meet with In-charge custodians, review high priority items and big budget needs/wishes	
Review school improvement plan and plan the professional development over a multi-year term	
Prepare letter to staff and what information you would include	
Write a newsletter to be sent in August	
Determine opening day and start-up procedures	
Prepare a letter to students and what other information you would include in the mailing	
Prepare a letter to grade 9 students and what other information you would include in the mailing	
Set up synervoice with report card pick up information	
Meet with Admin to determine portfolios	
Meet with Guidance and VP to set up registration dates and procedures	
Proof all documents - specifically emergency procedures	
Finish staffing	
Prepare reporting chart for staff, Annual Education Plan and supervision reports	
Schedule meetings with NTIP staff	
Prepare opening day information for students - timetables, planners, other information not included in the mailing e.g., computer use agreement	
Prepare opening day information for staff - manual, planners	
Check class sizes	

Items:	Date
Send current list of class sizes to custodians to determine desks in rooms. Note: This will need to be updated after new registrations complete	
Check on preparations for Grade 9 tours	
Set up synervoice for Grade 9 tours and start day	
Prepare agenda for new teachers and teachers new to the building	
Have agenda for opening staff meeting and September meeting - what must be covered before school starts, and what can wait. Keep the August meeting as brief as possible	
Prepare agenda for opening Cabinet meeting and September meeting	
Communicate with School Council chair (if elected). If not, set elections	
Begin to plan for Grade 9 Parent Night	
Review information collected during the information gathering reports and put together in School Effectiveness framework to report to staff	
Meet with Police Services Liaison	
Review Assessment Policy	
Review the supervision schedule - Be sure that the teacher team starting this year is not the same that finished in June. Also ensure that the first few weeks the schedule is made of a balance of experienced and novice staff to set the tone	
Plan social for first Friday	
Plan on a contact from Facilities Services to meet regarding work to be done at the school. (TIP: Do a health and safety inspection in the first part of September to see what rooms need painting etc. to help with creation of lists between yourself and Charge custodians	
Plan on a call from your Superintendent to set a meeting. Be prepared with the school visit form completed (Assistant usually mails).	
Review staff list concerning medical issues and those with accommodations. More information is available from Debbie Kenny at the Board Office	

Review student list of medical issues - ensure that there is a binder near the first aid kits or in a central location that is current	
--	--

Items	Date
--------------	-------------

Ensure that there are pamphlets on the Employee Assistance Program available in the staff room	
--	--

NOTES: