

# **Oskaloosa Community School District**

## **Special Education Transition Plan**



Drafted January 2011

### **Transition Between Buildings**

Transition between elementary and middle school reflects a significant decline in student achievement. At the same time, the transition from eighth grade to ninth grade shows a slight decline in academic achievement.

Anxiety increases as students move from a more controlled environment at the elementary, with one teacher, to an environment with additional freedoms because of movement between teachers for each period at the middle level. Middle school's goal is to prepare students for the increased expectations of high school; middle school therefore, increases academic and behavioral expectations for students. This causes academic, behavioral and even organizational problems for some sixth grade students.

In addition to the increased expectations at middle school, students must adapt to traveling to multiple teachers throughout the day; students must adapt to a variety of academic and behavioral expectations. While students adapt by the time they are in seventh or eighth grade, sixth graders are not developmentally ready for what they encounter in a new building.

While middle school prepares students for the rigor of high school, ninth grade teachers are preparing students for the rigor of higher-level course work, the expectations of the work world or the academic challenges of college. Students face another increase in classroom expectations; feelings of anxiety and isolation are not uncommon feelings of a new ninth grade student.

The transition between buildings is stressful and anxiety-filled for all students, but for students with an academic, social, or emotional disability being thrust into a new environment can be filled with even more stress. For this reason, individual transition meetings will be scheduled for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The transition process for students moving from the Elementary to the Middle School and for students moving from the Middle School to the High School is conducted in a consistent manner and students and families are provided the same opportunities during their visits to the new academic building.

### **Transition Considerations**

- The transition meeting will be solely for discussing and planning for the transition to the new building.
- The transition meetings will not be for the Annual Review or for the 3-Year Re-Evaluation staffing.
- The transition meeting will take place in the building students will transition into to provide additional opportunities to visit the new building and have students and parents ask specific questions related to the disability.

### **Prior to Transition**

- The Principals at each building and the Special Education teachers will be provided copies of each student's IEP for review prior to the transition meeting.
- Special Education teachers from each building will schedule a visit to introduce themselves and observe the incoming students in their current environment. Noting academic, social, or emotional issues that could make success at the next building more challenging. Conversations with the general education teacher should take place to communicate any issues not documented on the IEP. The observations will also help the special education teacher become more familiarized with particular goals, accommodations, or modifications being provided.
- Special Education teachers from each building will meet to discuss student needs, services available at each building, and available programs in place in the transition building prior to the transition meeting. IEP decisions will not be made during this discussion; rather it is to gather information regarding student needs only. Programs and services are not necessarily available at each building in the same format they were offered in the prior building so discussing the best placement is critical to the success of the student.
- The teacher of record sends out meeting notices for transition meeting - Transition meetings will be held the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of April and will be completed by the 1<sup>st</sup> week of May

### **Transition Meetings – Who Attends**

- Student
- Parent
- Special Education teacher from each building (example – Elementary and MS if transitioning to the MS) – the teacher of record conducts the meeting
- AEA representative(s)
- Building Administrators
- Others as needed – PT, OT, SpL, Nurse, Interpreter, Para-educator (where applicable)

### **Transition Meetings – Items Needed**

- List of students with IEP
- List of students who have been on an IEP in past (send to guidance – not part of meeting)
- IEP of students with goals
- District assessment data
- Behavior data
- Medical information and health release form if needed, when applicable – provide to nurse in advance
- Sign-in sheets
- Transition sheet (if applicable)
- Prior notices
- Special considerations/information regarding student

- Placement information/recommendation
- Medicaid Forms (When applicable)

**Meeting agenda: 30 minutes - 45 minutes**

Special Education teacher of record facilitates the meeting

- Introductions of all members/sign in
- Facilitating special education teacher discusses current classroom progress – academic and/or behavioral. They share observations or data to assist the team.
- Anyone else attending meeting with information to share will provide information – ie. nurse
- Review current goals and revise as needed for the upcoming school year
- Discuss accommodations and/or modifications
- Explanation of program options for the upcoming school year
- Schedules will be determined based on team decisions
- Answer questions from parents

**Transition Conversations/Orientation**

In order to alleviate parental worries or concerns, an individual meeting with the building administrator will take place either before or after the transition meeting. Communication is essential to the continued success of a child and because the transition year is especially stressful, having conversations with the building administrator is a critical component to the transition process.

- The building principal will be provided time to spend with each incoming student and his or her parent(s). They will be available to answer any questions or concerns as their child transitions to a new building.
- The building principal will discuss opportunities available at the new building related to clubs, organization, extra-curricular, teaming, etc.
- The building principal will conduct a tour of the building and will share the specifics related to that building. For example if an elevator is to be used or other specifics related to a disability.
- The building principal will provide access to parents who might want to see any special equipment their child might use while at school.

**Special Notes/Questions**

- Does the student require accommodations related to special requirements in each building or classroom? For example, the use of an agenda, test-taking, long-term projects. These items need to be discussed at the time of transition.
- Does the student require access to assistive technology?
- Does the student require specialized transportation?
- Does additional discussion need to occur for clarification regarding student goals?
- Does a student's curriculum need to be modified or will they be expected to master the grade level's Grade Level Benchmarks? What Grade Level Benchmarks can they master or should work toward mastery?
- Does the student require study skills strategies to help be successful? If so, what are they?