



School Transitions Tool Kit for Parents of LWSD

from



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High School Tool Kit

To be customized by
Individual High School
PTAs

WHY A TRANSITION TOOL KIT?

Feedback received from parents that participated in the Summer, 2019 National PTA Parent Focus Group taught us that along with students, **transitioning parents also need some additional support.**

So much information is available on school websites. However, the breadth of information can be overwhelming.

The Tool Kit seeks to streamline the information for parents and provide links.



Note for PTSA Presidents: Please add extra slides as needed if information exceeds the spaces provided

Some of our parents, including our international parents, have particular challenges we may take for granted:

- Navigating transitions from Elementary to Middle or Middle to High school to set yourself up for success is complex: Parents too need to learn the academic landscape: basic key terms, critical deadlines, and understanding the various post HS paths available to their kids.
- Families new to this country will be facing a completely new culture on many fronts, including in school: academic, but also the big role of sports, school dances, school spirit.
- The US's idea of encouraging independence in schools, particularly when entering middle school, may be a new concept culturally— a little explanation could go a long way.



PTSA Leaders! Customize the Tool Kit TO SEND out to INCOMING AND new parents throughout the year who relocate to your school.

This is meant as a guide. Personalize it, add links and make it your own! Add photos to make your presentation pop!

You know your school best and we can't wait to see your creative ideas at work!





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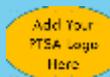
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Note for PTSA Presidents: Can choose numbered index slide. index with visual icons or both as illustrated here.



FROM MIDDLE TO HIGH SCHOOL: WHAT IS DIFFERENT?

Curriculum: **Grades, course selections and rigor start to really inform a student's post graduation path, especially if college is the goal.** Parents can help track work, however **students should become comfortable taking charge of their learning.** Parents sign off on their student's course selections.

Communication: It's helpful for **student to form a connection with teachers** (also later for letters of recommendation). Good for student to know his or her school counselor.

Extra-curricular: **Student involvement in clubs and/or sports are more targeted, and are highly recommended** for any, but especially college paths. Colleges like to see some balance in this regard. Students are expected to seek out activities and engage on their own. They can also start their own club! In addition to other electives, ASB and leadership, HS also has booster clubs, an entirely new support group.



PARENT TO SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Curriculum Night – plan to go! It's the opportunity to meet each of your student's teachers and visit the classroom (there are no formal Parent Teacher Conferences in high school) [Provide link](#)

Communication with teacher – parents will not typically be receiving updates or e-mails, though this can vary. Great for student to keep communication channels with their teachers open. Staying after class, e-mail and before or after school visits are all options for students. Also, schools have an intervention time [note your school's name for it here](#) during the day for students to check in with teachers. Parents can also reach out to teachers via e-mail for questions and can request a meeting. Note that teachers appreciate students advocating for themselves before the parent steps in. [Are there additional communication tools at your school?](#)

Communication with Principal - Principal newsletter? - [when to expect?](#)

Coffee with the Principal – [frequency and what is discussed?](#)

General - Where can I as a parent get the most up to date information? [Link School website and PTA website and sign up for PTA newsletter](#)

PARENT TO SCHOOL COMMUNICATION — KEY CONTACTS

School Connections (add names and emails)

Principal — [name and e-mail link](#)

Associate Principal — [name and e-mail link](#)

Often they will each be assigned to a class and have other areas they oversee.

Office staff — [name and e-mail link](#)

These folks are the front line and can answer just about all of your questions.

Athletic Director — [name and e-mail link and description of the role and when a parent might go turn to them with questions](#)

Activities Coordinator — [name and e-mail link](#)

This is typically the Leadership teacher, also in charge of all the ASB-coordinated fun!

Counseling Office — [name and e-mail link](#)

You generally have to make an appointment. Role of counseling detailed in Section 5.

Health room - [name and e-mail link](#)

Library staff - [name and e-mail link](#)

Late Arrival / Absence / Early dismissal [Contact and Process](#)

School Bus route info

[Add more slides as needed for space and perhaps add why a parent would contact that person, a few examples are provided.](#)

WHOM TO CONTACT?

(TO LIVEN THINGS UP YOU COULD ADD PICS OF KEY PERSONNEL FROM THE SCHOOL)

Principal

**Associate
Principal**

Counselors

**Office
staff**

Librarian

**PTSA
President**

**PTSA VP
FACE**

**PTSA VP
MEMBERSHIP**

**ASB
President**

KEEPING TRACK OF STUDENT WORK, ASSIGNMENTS, GRADES & FEES

Students and Parents can track student grades, work and assignments through: **Microsoft TEAMS**. It is a learning management system and a gradebook used by staff, students, and families in LWSD schools – [add link](#)

Skyward Family Access – [link to sign up](#). [Add help desk number?](#)

Graduation requirements – student needs 24 credits in different subject areas to graduate. [link](#) When in doubt, check with your student's counselor!
[link](#) There are alternate ways to get these credits, including Running Start, WANIC (see glossary) and students can test out of some (foreign language and PE) alternatives; [link and think about providing more explanation \(see glossary\) for live presentation](#)

Pathways to Graduation – required tests to graduate and alternatives to these tests (name them and general dates)

High School and Beyond Plan (Xello) – students are required to complete; they explore their interests, discover potential future careers, and research post-secondary education options. They then link their plan for high school course taking with their future goals.

Choice of electives – what is offered? When and how to decide? Course and elective selections are not guaranteed – based on space, timing, other course offerings, needs of graduating students, etc. [provide link](#).

Bell schedule – [add link](#)

FEES: [link to fees page on hs website](#)

ASB - All students are issued a school ID card. Students who wish to participate in an after-school sport or ASB club need to pay an ASB fee (\$50 at the high school) – [payment link](#)

Other fees – yearbook, PE shirts/shorts, ASB card, class fees, parking & graduation regalia. Note, financial assistance is sometimes available. [Link](#)

Lunch accounts – [add link](#)



ACADEMICS AND TESTS HIGH SCHOOL

Classes are explained by teachers on Curriculum Night. Homework, quizzes and tests are individual according to the teacher. Finals are scheduled for the last week in fall and spring semesters. Some classes (especially AP) have comprehensive finals with content from the entire year.

LWSD Graduation Requirements – the school works with student to make sure they are taking the classes they need for graduation. Sitting down with a school counselor is helpful if a student or parent has questions. High School and Beyond Plan. [link to HS or district website](#)

2020/21 Class Catalog [link](#)

AP Classes - Advanced Placement (AP) is a nationwide program that is designed to prepare students for higher education. AP classes provide rigorous, college-level curriculum in various subjects and the opportunity to earn college credits or advanced college standing. Also parents please note that finals days are not a typical schedule and students generally only take 2 finals per day.

[Link](#)



ACADEMICS AND TESTS HIGH SCHOOL

ELL or English Language Learning - empowers (English Learner) EL students to both participate in classroom curriculum and attain English proficiency. [Link](#)

World Language Credit - Students are required to graduate with two credits in a World Language. If your student would like to test out of taking a language class and has competency in another language, they may pursue this avenue. [link to district page here](#)

ACT/SAT – these are standardized tests widely used for college admissions in the United States. Prep classes are offered in the fall and spring; junior (11th grade) students and parents need to be on the look-out for the deadlines to sign up for practice and real tests. [great way to refer to PTAs newsletter and how parents can keep apprised](#)

Credit Transfer Opportunities - students can also enroll in classes at other institutions to pursue specific skills and receive both high school and college credit in some cases; see Glossary for more details on these programs;

There are many different **post graduation paths** available to students: the **College and Career Readiness Office** offers information and support to students wanting to attend college or visit college campuses, to do internships, etc. This is a great resources and parents are welcome to go learn for themselves! [provide contact at your school and link here.](#)



COUNSELING OFFICE SERVICES

The Counseling Office offers a whole host of services and your student will want to know who her/his counselor is (determined alphabetically). Encourage your student to meet with their counselor. Students can team up with their counselor to map out their High School and Beyond Plan. Among the services they provide are:

- **Course registration and scheduling**
- **Monitoring of student academic credits and on time graduation plans**
- **Academic, personal/social and career advising**
- **Coordination of referrals for community resources**
- **Comprehensive guidance programming delivered in classroom or other settings**
- **Guidance for post-secondary planning and application requirements**

Counseling Office Contacts [Provide link](#)

New to the country? Here are some reasons you or your student might connect with a counselor: requesting special accommodations (physical or mental) for your student, questions about graduation requirements, emotional health support, etc.

For additional resources for youth mental health, go to: [link to school counseling page that will often include resources](#)



EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ASB/PTSA/SCHOOL

ASB Clubs – generally meet after school or during lunch - Over 35 clubs!

- Clubs must have an advisor (generally a teacher or staff member) and oversight is provided by Leadership teacher
- Some examples – Key Club, DECA, Green Team, Latino Peer Counselor, Model UN, Poetry, Robotics
- Some are included as part of specific classes – DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America)
- Some clubs require students to meet specific requirements or have an application process– National Honor Society, Link Crew
- Students can form their own club – fill out paperwork and must be approved by leadership
- Fees sometimes apply including for outside competitions. Scholarships are available

PTSA Supported Activities for students

- Fear Free Testing
- College Application Workshops
- Parent And Student Educational Programs
- Sustainability Programming
- Senior Events – Salute and Senior Party
- Reflections – National PTA Art Competition
- Grants for existing clubs



SPORTS AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES — SCHOOL/ASB/PTA RUN

Fall Sports – register in August (forms online, final clearance in-person during summer office hours); teams may practice all summer, try-outs prior to the start of school

Winter Sports – register in November (forms online, final clearance in-person during lunch and after school)

Spring Sports – register in February (forms online, final clearance in-person during lunch and after school)

A **school's ASB funds athletic programs** (athletic budgets are approved by ASB and financed with ASB funds). Booster clubs help support athletic and some additional programs through separate non-student fundraising (and follow specific guidelines).

provide link to school athletics page and booster clubs page

Variety of school (ASB) clubs – list and link

PTSA Programs – provide program activities if applicable under this topic

School Dances – Homecoming (October) and Spring dance (March) – open to all students (others need a signed pass from their school); Senior Prom (June)

School musicals, plays and music concerts – brief description and possible links

Other Student Run Events (Leadership) – link to leadership advisor or class Instagram accounts



PARENT VOLUNTEERING

Parents have many opportunities to volunteer in schools. Be on the look-out in the PTA newsletter for information and on how to sign up. Or sign up with the LWSD Volunteer Coordinator.

All volunteers must be pre-approved by the district – access application here:

<https://www.lwsd.org/get-involved/volunteering-in-lwsd/volunteer-application-process>

- * Lap Top roll-out and roll-in (beginning of school and end of school)
- * Picture day (beginning of school)

Some classes, such as Urban Gardening or Robotics offer opportunities to parents with specific interests or skill sets to participate. Also music class trips always need parents to join in.

There are also many roles and specific PTA events that count on parent support all year long: staff appreciation, school beautification, Senior Party etc. We get that not everyone can show up in person. There are other ways you can help such as with donations (Kleenex and hand sanitizer!)

Booster clubs – these are parent run clubs that support sports, music, robotics and other programs; if your student is in a sport or music class and you have time, become involved; [link](#)

Add Your
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PTA IS YOUR PARENT TOOL

Why is PTA important in this school? Great place to loudly shout out the value of your PTA.

A key source of information and news for parents is the PTA newsletter that keeps you updated on school activities, key deadlines, resources and more. Sign up for PTA newsletter!
include link to sign-up, perhaps an information sheet that emphasizes your PTA's VALUE

General membership meetings: when, what decisions get made, parent ed events you plan to host this year - emphasize how easy it will be for parents to attend remotely

Key PTA Programming that support your children (examples):

Beginning of the school year welcoming events, SAT/ACT practice (Sept/Oct and Jan/Feb), Reflections Art Program, teacher grants, principal coffees, staff appreciation, PTA Scholarship Program (deadline for submittal), and much more...

For questions about PTA or how to get involved or manage a program, contact: e-mail



GLOSSARY (DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ASB, PTA AND BOOSTER CLUBS)

ASB - The **Lake Washington High School Associated Student Body (ASB)** is made up of both elected and appointed officials who run the student government. Students in this group manage the student body finances, plan all events such as prom and Homecoming, and work on building positivity in the school. ASB also refers to a student's school ID card. [Link](#)

ASB Card – Required for sports and other activities such as orchestra and band. A way to think about it is that ASB funds cultural, athletic, recreational and social. Any activity where a student receives a grade from a teacher is not eligible for ASB funding (because grades are academic). students who wish to participate in an after-school sport or ASB club need to pay an ASB fee (\$50 at the high school). [Link](#)

Booster Clubs — These non-profit organizations are parent-run and support and raise money for sports, music, robotics and other clubs in schools. They help to support competitions and trips that PTA, schools, and ASB are not allowed to fund. [Link](#)

CTE Dual Credit Courses - Through a partnership with community and technical colleges in the state, certain CTE courses provide students with the opportunity to earn both high school and college credit for the course, if they complete the course with a grade of "B" or better. If a course qualifies for CTE Dual Credit, it will be noted in the course description, and teachers will provide students with information about how to register for CTE Dual Credit. <https://www.lwsd.org/programs-and-services/college-and-career-readiness>

Microsoft Classroom Teams video tutorial for families

Need help using Microsoft Classroom Teams? Lake Washington School District (LWSD) has created a video tutorial to help families navigate this online learning platform. Visit <https://www.lwsd.org/help/classroom-teams-support>.

PTA — The parent–teacher association (PTA) or parent–teacher–student association (PTSA) is a formal organization composed of parents, teachers and staff that supports students and teachers, provides information to parents, is a community resource etc. [insert your PTSA link and mission here](#)

Running Start — Running Start is a program in which juniors and seniors who qualify may enroll in college level courses at Bellevue College, CWU Sammamish, Cascadia College, or Lake Washington Institute of Technology and earn high school and college credit concurrently.

<https://www.lwsd.org/schools/high-school/high-school-guide/more-ways-to-graduation>

WANIC (Washington Network for Innovative Careers) — A skill center program, courses offered through WANIC often introduce students to **specific career paths**. Many skill centered classes have AP attached, students can also earn industry certifications. Some classes include culinary, nursing, emergency response services, computer science, etc. <https://www.lwsd.org/search-results?q=wanic>

DISTRICT-WIDE INFORMATION RESOURCES

Welcome New Families PTSA Council/LWSD event: 9/16 and 9/23 from 4-6pm – this is a great way to meet district administrators, learn about the school system, network with other parents and community organizations and more; www.lwptsa.net

Parent Education Events – planned by the PTSA Council in conjunction with the LWSD; professional guests speak on topics of parenting as well as screenings of documentaries such as Screenagers www.lwptsa.net

Lake Washington School District (LWSD) – is another great source of information as headquarters to all the schools in the district; check out their website on back to school, COVID-19 updates and much more at www.lwsd.org. Have a question? Go to <https://www.lwsd.org/help/lets-talk>

Acknowledgements

This Tool Kit was created by parents for parents, in partnership with schools. It was inspired by conversations with the LWSD administration in the fall of 2019.

The original idea came from parents as part of a parent focus group initiative brought about by National PTA's Transformative Family Engagement and Whole Child Learning Grant that was awarded to the LWPTSA Council.

We are pleased to provide local school PTSA's with this tool to be shared with parents so that they can better support their children through the big transitions to middle and high school.

For questions, contact EngagementGrant@lwptsa.net

Grant Co-Chairs: Swarnima Aswinkumar and Irene Neumann

Grant Committee: Brandi Comstock, Yumna Green, Melissa Stone and Danit Erlich



Note, this slide is really for PTSA leader information and can be removed from your final tool kit. Feel free to do you OWN acknowledgements slide at the end!