



School Transitions Tool Kit for Parents of LWSD

from



Created by LWPTSA Council

– To be customized by Individual Middle and High school PTAs

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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!



WHAT INCOMING MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS NEED TO KNOW:



1. What is different between elementary and middle school?



2. Parent - School communication



3. What to expect: keeping track of student work, assignments, grades and fees (Students more responsible)



4. Academics and tests during the school year



5. Sports and social activities (ASB-run, school run, PTA run)



6. After school clubs and competitions (ASB-run, school run, PTA run)



7. Know your PTA



8. Parent involvement in school and PTA

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

1. WHAT IS DIFFERENT

Elementary School



Curriculum – all subjects taught in one classroom with one teacher:

Student responsibilities:

- Students develop goals with the teacher and discuss at Parent teacher conference
- Teachers send regular emails with updates on classwork and assignments.
- Parents communicate with teachers regarding missing classes, assignments, grading questions, etc.

Student clubs: Most clubs are PTSA run

Parent involvement: Teacher's aide, Room parent, Art docent, etc.

Volunteer opportunities: Many PTSA run clubs

Middle School

Curriculum: different subjects with different teachers, students move between periods

Some courses are electives

Schools issue individual netbooks for kids

Student responsibilities:

- Students develop and manage their goals with guidance from the teachers
- Parents can request a meeting with a teacher for some specific needs but direct communication from students is encouraged.
- Students work with counselors for their needs

Student initiated clubs: process? How can students form a club?

ASB and other student Leadership activities?

Parent Involvement: As requested during the year, Chairing PTSA clubs, helping at Socials, etc.

WHAT TO EXPECT?

2. PARENT – SCHOOL COMMUNICATION -



Communication Methods:

Curriculum Night – opportunity to meet each of your student’s teachers and visit the classroom

No preset Parent Teacher Conferences in middle school

Email Communication with teacher – regular updates via email is not typical although this can vary **add possible frequency**

Asking for a Teacher meeting – **add process (may be teacher specific)**

Meeting with a **student counselor** – **what possible scenarios would need such a meeting?**

Additional resources for Emotional support – **does the School have a specific teacher working on SEL, add links for more resources**

Principal’s newsletter – **add when to expect**

Coffee with the Principal – **what is discussed typically? Who attends?**

WHOM TO CONTACT?

2. PARENT — SCHOOL COMMUNICATION —



School Connections (add names and emails)

Principal-

Associate Principal(s)-

Counselors-

Office staff-

ELL and other language resources-

Health room-

Librarian-

School sports-

Late Arrival / Absence / Early dismissal

School Bus route info (know your Student's bus number, whom to send a note about requesting a different bus pass)

STUDENT COUNSELING SERVICES (NEW IN MIDDLE SCHOOL)

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 the counselor. Among the services they provide are:

- **Course registration and scheduling**
- **Managing elective choices**
- **Monitoring of student academic credits**
- **Academic, personal/social and career advising**
- **Coordination of referrals for community resources**
- **Guidance for choosing high school path**

Counseling Office Contacts [Provide link](#)

New to the country? What possible scenarios would you need a meeting for, some examples: requesting special accommodations (physical or mental) for your student, questions about graduation requirements, emotional health support, etc.

Additional resources for youth mental health: Balance in Mind, Lake Washington Schools Foundation [link](#), Youth Eastside Services, [Evergreen Hospital Social Work link](#)

WHOM TO CONTACT? (CAN 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**



WHAT TO EXPECT :

3. KEEPING TRACK OF STUDENT WORK, ASSIGNMENTS, GRADES AND FEES

Useful Links

Microsoft Classroom Teams – learning management system and a gradebook used by staff, students, and families in LWSD schools – how often should Parents check this site? [add link](#)

Skyward parent access – how to? Who can help?

Lunch accounts – payment options? [add link](#)

Yearly Calendar: [School](#) + [PTSA](#) – [add link](#)

Daily schedule – where to find on the website

Curriculum & Documents Tracking

Main courses: are there any choices to make?, where are the textbooks? Can parents access curriculum? [Where to find this?](#)

Choice of electives – what is offered?, how many in each semester? when and how to decide? [Add relevant links](#)

Grades

Sign up on skyward – what all can be found here? [add link](#)

Follow up about missing grades, missing work, etc. - what is the best process?

Sports

ASB and sports membership dues – [payment link?](#)
[When to pay?](#)

Health form for school sports – [by when is it due?](#)

4. ACADEMICS , TESTS , IMPORTANT DATES

Books are online

Intermittent POP quizzes in the class ?

Regular testing [Follow on skyward]

Open book tests

SBA testing – mostly in May. When will dates be known?

Forms for the next school year – Apr – May

Students can keep track of grades which are updated continually on skyward?

Is there anything else for Parents to keep track of?

Testing schedules and specific due dates if any

Back to School Day – what can parents accomplish on this day?

Curriculum night – Dates for current year

1st Semester Electives – form submission due date

Battle of the Books – sign up process – due date

Music- Orchestra and Band – due dates?

School Musical/Drama – due dates?

Signing up for school sports – every quarter

Varsity vs Junior varsity sports teams? Tryouts beginning of each season

School socials – What does it entail? What is the level of parent involvement?

5. SPORTS AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES – SCHOOL/ASB RUN



Sports (4 seasons) – typical options for boys and girls sports each season? When to register? Link to school athletics page

Health forms needed for school sports? How often do you need to update?

Variety of school (ASB) clubs – meet before & after school, variety of membership fees, Can students start their own clubs? What is the process?

Student Leadership – Positions and Process ? Election process'? Whom to contact?

Honor Society - short explanation and link

School Socials / dances / events – specific times of the year – What does it entail? What is the level of parent involvement?

6. AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS AND COMPETITIONS – PTSA RUN



There are many **clubs** that students can and are encouraged to get involved in. Which clubs are PTSA-run at your schools?

PTSA website [link](#)

Your PTSA Board: Leadership names and contacts info- [where to find?](#)

Names of PTSA run clubs: [where to find a list?](#) [when to join or register?](#) [Sign up links?](#)

[PTSA chairs to contact for specific clubs](#)

7. PTA IS YOUR PARENT TOOL



Why is PTA important in this school? Great place to loudly shout out the value of your PTA. perhaps an information sheet that emphasizes your PTA's VALUE

Become a member – link to membership form

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,

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:

Beginning of the school year welcoming events, Reflections Art Program, teacher grants, principal coffees, staff appreciation, parent education events, and much more...

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

7. PTSA TO-DOS AND YEARLY ACTIVITIES

Add your
PTSA
Logo here

August : Back to School Day – what can parents accomplish on this day?

September: PTSA membership sign up- [Online form?](#)

PTSA club sign-ups -Can parents start a new club? [Process?](#)

PTSA Volunteering – typical options – [Contact?](#)

General membership meetings – 3 times a year – [add dates if known](#)

PTSA Newsletter – weekly – who can post articles? [Process?](#)

Parent Educations Events – Can parents request a topic? [Contact?](#)

Sep-Oct: Reflections Art Competition – [Link for details and Contact?](#)

Dec – Apr: Various Club competitions – [relevant PTSA webpages](#)

8. PARENT INVOLVEMENT & VOLUNTEERING



Parents still have several opportunities to volunteer in schools. Be on the look-out in the PTA newsletter for information and on how to sign up.

Sign up with the LWSD Volunteer Coordinator. Plan ahead, all volunteers must be approved by the district – [access application here](#)

Some of these happen at the beginning of the school year and include:

- * Laptop roll-out (beginning of school)
- * Picture day

Some clubs, such as Science club, Drama 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.

[note some of these your PTA roles](#)