

Successful Completion Components for Ninth Grade PSD Students

“Components” to successfully transitioning 9th graders into the high school include:

1. Transition efforts should begin well before the start of the 9th grade year. A variety of strategies that go beyond 9th grade course scheduling must be considered. To achieve a seamless transition for students from grades 8 to 9, students and parents need repeated exposure to high school opportunities and expectations throughout the 8th grade year and during the summer before 9th grade begins.

2. Development of a comprehensive communication/dialogue plan. Schools should plan communications and conversations involving all of the parties critical to 9th grade success—high school and middle school staff, students, and parents.

- New student orientation plan.

3. Student anonymity is not an option. Every school should have a plan whereby there is an ongoing effort to personalize the 9th grade year for every student, even for those who appear unlikely to struggle.

4. Early and frequent identification of students at risk of failure. There should be a planned, targeted, prescriptive, and proactive approach to immediate intervention when students begin having academic or behavioral problems. Research shows that almost all students that have a successful academic 9th grade school year will go on to graduate.

- Middle schools and high schools create schedules that will allow for remediation and enrichment to occur within the school day.
- High schools will need to consider academics, small learning communities, or teams to create support for students. (Emphasis on getting the right teachers with the right kids).
- Modify grading practices to meet the developmental needs of an early adolescent.
- Middle schools and high schools will need to identify key groups of students who may need special supports. These groups may include, but are not limited to special education; at risk; students not involved in sports, clubs, activities, or leadership; ELL; or other identified groups.
- Students’ academics, attendance and overall well-being will need to be monitored in short intervals (no longer than four weeks) and interventions (RtI) will need to be implemented to ensure academic success of student. (Emphasis on interventions).

- Develop summer school or jumpstart opportunities for students in need of additional support.
- Middle schools need to clear and broaden the pipeline so students can enter AP, IB or other post secondary options.
- Middle schools (current junior high schools) will need to have interventions in place to insure a successful “Core” for each student including a course or college plan (ColoradoInCollege.org).

5. Instructional and organizational strategies that focus on learning and keep students motivated. Uncompromising high expectations, and high support, for all students should be the norm.

It is important to note that while these components are applied specifically to the transition from 8th to 9th grade, many are equally applicable and necessary for a 9th grader transitioning to 10th grade during the first year of our transition. [The transition from grade 8 to grade 9 is a process](#), not an event. A specific plan for the process is necessary, and there must be accountability and follow-up. Additional components and strategies can be found on the attached document by the National Board called “High School Reform Strategies: A Summary of Research and Implications.”