This toolkit is designed to help students, educators and families

- Understand the middle school transition process
- Develop a plan for students to transition to middle school successfully through the areas of social/emotional, organizational/environmental, academic, developmental, as well as college and career awareness;
- Implement activities to engage incoming middle school students and their families;
- Use transition-planning process to ensure that all students transition from elementary school to middle school with adequate support from the school, family, and community.
What is School Transition?

School Transition is a process that prepares all individuals involved – students, families, schools, and communities – to develop knowledge, skills, and relationships that help students move from one educational setting to another.

In this instance, students are transitioning or “changing” from elementary school to middle school. Transitioning from elementary to middle school is a change that affects not only students, but also their families, school staff, and the community. Transition should not be viewed from only the perspective of students and families, but rather should entail the perspectives of families, students, teachers (elementary and middle school), administrators, and community members as students move from one level of education to the next.

Why is Middle School Transition Important?

School transition is not a “one size fits all” approach, but a framework that includes strategies as well as policies and procedures tailored to meet the needs of all students. Making the transition into middle school is one of the first and most significant steps to insuring that students have a successful middle school experience. A well-planned transition program helps families and students have a greater peace of mind by providing the groundwork for a successful beginning of the middle school adventure.

A comprehensive middle school transition program includes supports designed to:

- Help students form a realistic expectation of what middle school will be like
- Provide a positive and successful first impression
- Respond to the needs and concerns of students
- Support school initiated family and community partnerships
- Demonstrate and inviting, supportive, and safe environment
- Ensure a successful introduction to the middle school experience.
Transition should not be viewed from only the perspective of students and families, but rather should entail the perspective of families, students, teachers (elementary and middle school), administrators, and community members as students move from one level of education to the next. Similarly, each has a role to play in providing or participating in quality middle school transition activities.

**Schools:** must play a primary role the middle school transition process. While partnerships between families, schools, students, and communities must be viewed equally important with shared responsibilities, it is essential that schools take the lead in offering quality middle school transition activities that equip staff, families and community members with the information needed in order for them to assist students in a successful transition process.

**Students:** must take an active role in their own middle school transition development. Under the guidance of school staff, families, and community stakeholders, students should understand the impact that smooth transitions have on their future success, and they should assume responsibility for completing the tasks assigned. Students are encouraged to ask questions and seek assistance in times of need and, most importantly, enjoy the new opportunities and increased freedom that comes with entering middle school.

**Families:** must be prepared for the middle school transition as well in order to provide the ongoing support, love, and guidance that is needed by students during the crucial transition period. Families should work with the school to participate in transition activities such as orientation and campus tour meetings.

**Communities:** can support students through middle school transition through ongoing collaboration, exposing students to careers or technology, and/or serving as positive role models through school involvement such as career fairs, STEM advisory board meetings, school sponsored events.
5th Grade

The transition to middle school is on the horizon for 5th grade students. This is the time when students begin to build on the basis they were taught from previous years to solidify their educational foundation. At this age, and knowing that they will soon be on a new campus, students can feel overwhelmed, excited, and scared by the transition.

By providing our 5th grade students with opportunities to get to know their new campus, teachers and administrators, it can ease their worries and concerns.

The following activity will be conducted beginning with the 2018-2019 school year to help 5th grade students begin the transition process.
Transition Activity

Title: Elementary School Visits

Activity: Middle School teachers, principals, counselors and other admin take turns throughout the school year conducting mini information sessions with fifth grade classes at the elementary in regards to middle school expectations, rules and procedures.

Outcome: Elementary school students will learn about middle school expectations and will become comfortable asking middle school staff questions in regards to middle school rules, procedures, academics, and other topics.

Audience: 5th grade students in small groups (class sizes not whole grade level group)

Areas of Focus: Academic, Social/Emotional, and organizational/environmental.

When: Throughout 5th grade school year

Process: Arrangements will be made between elementary and middle school administrators to conduct visits to the 5th grade classrooms throughout the school year to address questions and to allow students the opportunity to become familiar with people they will be encountering at the middle school. Visits will last no longer than 30 minutes per classroom session and will be held during the school day.
Transition Activity

Title: What is Middle School Like?

Activity: Middle School students (Student Council / NJHS members) take turns throughout the school year conducting information sessions with 5th graders at the elementary school about the middle school.

Outcome: 5th grade students will become comfortable interacting with older students and get an inside account of what goes on at the middle school through the eyes and experience of a peer.

Audience: All 5th grade students

Areas of Focus: Academic, Social/Emotional, and Organizational/Environmental

When: Throughout 5th grade school year

Process: Middle school student council and NJHS members will be recruited to conduct the mini question and answer sessions with 5th grade elementary school students. Sessions will be held after school and all 5th grade elementary students should be invited to attend. Students will be broken up into equal manageable numbers for a more personal group question and answer session. Each session should last no longer than 30 minutes. Topics covered could include: (1) What to expect the first day/week of school, (2) The role of the principal and counselors, or (3) What to expect when changing classes. A parent session will be conducted at the same time to provide parents with important information regarding transition.
8th grade

The transition to high school is on the horizon for 8th grade students. The end of the 8th grade year is the time when students begin to make decisions on their future education and career choices. Even at this age, knowing that they will soon be on a new campus, be the underclassmen once again, students can feel overwhelmed, excited, and scared by the transition.

By providing our 8th grade students with opportunities to get to know their new campus, teachers and administrators, it can ease their worries and concerns.

The following activity will be conducted beginning with the 2018-2019 school year to help 8th grade students begin the transition process.
Transition Activity

Title: High School Visits

Activity: High School teachers, principals, counselors and other admin take turns throughout the school year conducting mini information sessions with eighth grade classes at the middle school in regards to high school expectations, rules and procedures.

Outcome: 8th grade students will learn about high school expectations and will become comfortable asking high school staff questions in regards to high school rules, procedures, academics, and other topics.

Audience: 8th grade students in small groups (class sizes not whole grade level group)

Areas of Focus: Academic, Social/Emotional, and organizational/environmental.

When: Throughout 8th grade school year

Process: Arrangements will be made between the middle school and high school administrators to conduct visits to the 8th grade classrooms throughout the school year to address questions and to allow students the opportunity to become familiar with people they will be encountering at the high school. Visits will last no longer than 30 minutes per classroom session and will be held during the school day.
Transition Activity

Title: What is High School Like?

Activity: High School students (Student Council / NJHS members/Ambassadors) take turns throughout the school year conducting information sessions with 8th graders at the middle school in regards to high school life.

Outcome: 8th grade students will become comfortable interacting with older students and get an inside account of what goes on at the high school through the eyes and experience of a peer.

Audience: All 8th grade students

Areas of Focus: Academic, Social/Emotional, and Organizational/Environmental

When: Throughout 8th grade school year

Process: High school student council, NJHS members, and/or Ambassadors will be recruited to conduct the mini question and answer sessions with 8th grade middle school students. Sessions will be held after school and all 8th grade middle school students should be invited to attend. Students will be broken up into equal manageable numbers for a more personal group question and answer session. Each session should last no longer than 30 minutes. Topics covered could include: (1) What to expect the first day/week of school, (2) The role of the principal and counselors, or (3) What to expect when changing classes. A parent session will be conducted at the same time to provide parents with important information regarding transition.