



Easing the Transition

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A little background:



South Kingstown High School, Rhode Island

- **Suburban high school with 1130 students, grades 9-12**
- **117 faculty members**
- **14% of the students receive free/reduced lunch**
- **11.4% of the students are minority**
- **86% of the students attend 4 or 2 year post-secondary school**

Principal is dedicated to Professional Learning Communities

- **Common Planning Time, Wednesday Mornings 7:30-8:30AM**
- **Teacher Learning Center**
- **Summer Book Club, 2008: “Whatever it Takes” by DuFour**



One result of Summer Book Club:

***Need a better transition program for
students moving from
middle school to high school***

Types of Data



- Process - offers evidence only that an event or activity occurred or counts the number of students involved in a program
- Perception – data gathered from needs assessments or surveys
- Results – data which demonstrates changes in student behavior or performance

Co-Curricular Fair



- Held on a Wednesday morning in April at the middle school
- Expose all incoming 8th graders to clubs, activities, and athletic opportunities at the high school
- 8th graders sign up for activities and are contacted over the summer
- High School Parent/Teacher Group organizes the event

Co-Curricular Fair: Data Collected



- **Process Data:**

- 42 secondary students representing activities/clubs
- 11 secondary students representing athletic teams attended the Co-Curricular Fair
- 275 middle school students attended
- Activity/Clubs Represented:

Academic Decathlon, Amnesty International, Book Club, Drama Club, French Club, Invisible Children, Italian Club, Math Team, Model Legislature, Photography Club, Robotics Club, SADD: Students Against Destructive Decisions, SK Gay/Straight Alliance, SK Literary Journal, SK Rebellion, Student Council, SMILE, Students for Environmental and Social Justice, Surf Club

Counselor Watch List:

form completed by middle level counselors to assist secondary counselors



Section I:

Reason for Referral

Alcohol/drug use	Discipline issues
Exited from Special Education	Free/Reduced lunch
Medical issues	Mental health services
Peer relationship problems	Personal/family/friend problems
Poor academic progress	Poor attendance and/or truancy
School counselor services	

Counselor Watch List



Section I: (continued) Current Services at the Middle School	
Past and/or Present Programs/Interventions	Small groups, Check-in/Check-out
Current Services Received	Special Education, 504 Plan, Mental Health Support, ELL, Family/Drug Court, Truancy Court

Counselor Watch List



Section III: South Kingstown High School Interventions	
Attendance Monitoring	Social Work Services/Group
Counselor Check-In	Student Assistance Counselor
Nurse	Wednesday Morning Tutoring
School Psychologist	Weekly Progress Report

Counselor Watch List: Data Collected



- **Process Data:**

- 64 incoming freshmen listed on Counselor Watch

- **Perception Data:**

- *“This is a great program; it has helped us to identify students who need mental health or other supports before they come to the high school, and assist them with services beginning in September.”*

-SKHS School Psychologist

- **Results:**

- 64% of students named in Counselor Watch earned at least one D or F for Q1
- 26.5% of students named in Counselor Watch were retained in 9th grade

Summer Academy



- Two week program in August offered to all incoming 8th graders
- Organized by secondary school literacy teacher; academy is held at the high school
- Students receive academic support in literacy and math
- Students spend time becoming familiar with the high school building, lockers, schedules

Summer Academy: Data Collected



Process Data:

36 students attended Summer 2009

Perception Data:

(from students in the Summer Academy)

- *“The scavenger hunt really helped me get to know where everything is.”*
- *“Learning math that will be learned later on in the year.”*
- *“Study skills were really helpful!”*

(from parents)

- *“My daughter talks more enthusiastically about entering high school.”*
- *“I feel positive that this program will ease his transition into the high school.”*

Results Data:

- 83% of students who attended the Summer Academy were promoted to sophomore year

Wednesday Morning Tutoring



- The goal of the program is to improve grades by learning and using organizational skills and study habits.
- Tutors: National Honor Society and [local college students](#).
- Any freshman with a D or F grade from Q1 are initially invited to participate.
- Sophomores and freshmen with passing grades are invited to “drop-in” as needed.
- [Parents and students](#) are invited to an informational session prior to the start of the program.
- Teachers receive a list of students invited into WMT.

Wednesday Morning Tutoring: Data Collected



- **Process Data: (2009-2010)**
 - 19 tutors
 - 65 students with parent permission & 10 drop-in students
 - Teacher Assistant: helps with supervision of program; takes daily attendance
- **Perception Data: (from Second Year Tutors)**
 - *“More students are showing up, and are willing to ask for help. One student said she looks forward to our sessions every Wednesday.”*
 - *“The program has improved because there are many more students involved who are coming on a regular basis.”*
 - *“More communication is needed between teachers and tutors. Also, computers access is needed for students, so they can type papers or write summaries.”*

Wednesday Morning Tutoring: Data Collected



•Process Data: (Q3, 2010)

- 75 students in the program (10 drop in, 65 registered)
- 27 attended 4+ times (36% of all students in program)

•Results Data: (Q3, 2010)

- 70% had D- or better and attended 4+ times for Q3
- 44% had C- or better and attended 4+ times for Q3
- 45% either maintained or improved Q3 grade from Q2

Wednesday Morning Tutoring: Data Collected



- **Results Data: (Final Grades, 2010)**
 - 84% of the students were promoted to the next grade
 - 79% of the students passed the class in which they were tutored

Freshman Mentor Program (FMP)



- Junior and Seniors are mentors of Freshmen; [Application](#) process to be selected as a Mentor
- Mentors meet with freshmen during Advisory (one 30 minute period each week)
- Organized by FMP Coordinators; (Vice principal, 2 school counselors, 4 teachers)
- Responsibilities of Mentors:
 - attend summer training session, receive binder of activities and calendar of topics for discussion and attend monthly meetings with coordinators
 - volunteer at Open House, 8th Grade Orientation
 - befriend freshmen and share the culture of SKHS; be positive role models

Freshman Mentor Program: Data Collected



- **Process Data:** (2009-2010)
51 mentors are in 22 freshman advisories
- **Perception Data:** *(from Advisors)*
 - *“I would recommend my mentors without a doubt because they are confident, warm, well-mannered, intelligent, respectful and fun. My freshmen love them!”*
 - *“The mentors are able to get the ninth graders to listen. They willingly do the team-building activities and seem to enjoy the experience.”*
 - *“They have formed relationships with my advisees and they respect/like the mentors, as do I. Some days, my mentors basically just hang out/chat with my advisees. This works fine & the mentors and freshmen are open/comfortable with each other.”*

Freshman Mentor Program: Data Collected



- **Perception Data:** *(from Mentors)*
 - *“I have had a chance to meet freshmen and help them receive the best experience at SKHS.”*
 - *“I can answer their questions and it’s nice to know they trust me.”*
 - *“I like getting to know fellow mentors. I’ve learned how to interact with many different types of people.”*
 - *“The best part of FMP is developing diverse relationships.”*
 - *“I found I have more patience and improved my public speaking skills.”*
 - *“I like a lot of the kids in my advisory. For the most part, most of them participate. I’ve actually made some pretty good friends.”*
 - *“It’s fun. I feel more outgoing and that I am a better leader.”*

Freshman Mentor Program: Data Collected



- **Perception Data:** *(from Freshmen)*
 - *“They have told us the details about school traditions and made me feel welcome.”*
 - *“All three are hilarious and come up with unusual games for us.”*
 - *“They are always approachable and considerate. They are fun people and good role models.”*
 - *“They have explained activities and events to us.”*
 - *“The mentors have taught me many new games.”*
 - *“My Advisory is usually not all that exciting, so I look forward to Thursdays because the mentors always make it fun.”*

Results of Programs



Perception Data:

- Counselors seen as taking an integral role in transitioning of students from middle school
- SKHS is a high school concerned about the transition of 8th graders to secondary school

Results Data:

- 88.7% ninth grade students were promoted to tenth grade in 2009-2010
- 88.2% ninth grade students were promoted to tenth grade in 2008-2009

Lessons Learned



- Start small – pilot programs & focus groups
- Collaboration with faculty, administration, and students is important for sharing of information
- Communication about the program is key for support from community
- Resources- find small grants to fund these programs

Plans for Transition Program 2010-2011



- **Co-Curricular Fair:** monitor data collection, note if more freshman join activities/clubs/athletics
- **Counselor Watch List:** use list to identify students who may struggle academically; mental health staff to implement small group sessions; counselor watch form will be used district wide
- **Summer Academy:** add Geometry support
- **Wednesday Morning Tutoring:** quarterly training sessions for tutors, develop a drop-in center in the library
- **Freshman Mentor Program:** mentors will give tours to transfer students

Consider....



- *Can you take one of these programs and implement it for the incoming students at your school?*
- *What would you need to do start this for the fall or next year?*
- *For which program do you need more information or have a question?*



Easing the Transition

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*For electronic copies of forms and paperwork used in these programs,
visit www.rischoolcounselor.org, "Presentations"*