

Powerful Partners



Student Onboarding for Successful Transitions

Basic premise of good transitioning

Research shows that a smooth transition to ninth grade is an indicator of success in high school and beyond.

(Erickson, Peterson & Lembeck, 2013)



“Rather than sessions that last two to five days at the beginning of the year, consider a comprehensive plan that includes specific touch points and systems that connect student with student and, in particular, student with faculty. So much thought goes into recruiting, selecting, and admitting new students, it only makes sense that equal effort goes into ensuring their transition is a holistically positive experience - one that is consistent with the school they got to know during the recruiting process.”

(Ann Halupka, Think Beyond September: Transitioning and Orienting New Students, 2016)

Why do freshmen get off track?

- Social & developmental adjustment
 - Friendships, peer relationships, parental independence
 - Cross-cultural competencies & engagement
 - Physical, emotional, cognitive & identity development
- Academic rigor & decline in achievement
 - Heightened expectations and accountability
 - Inadequate preparation
- Structural & organizational change
 - Procedural changes
 - Overburdened academic, social, athletic & extracurricular schedules
 - Increasingly early focus on the college process



(Erikson, Peterson & Lembec, 2013)

Orientation is a challenge for all schools

Traditional events that occur during the first week of school

1. Campus and building tours
2. Introduce students to advisors
3. Review academic schedules
4. Present school supply lists
5. Share student conduct expectations
6. Issue lockers and key cards
7. Tech training for email and new devices



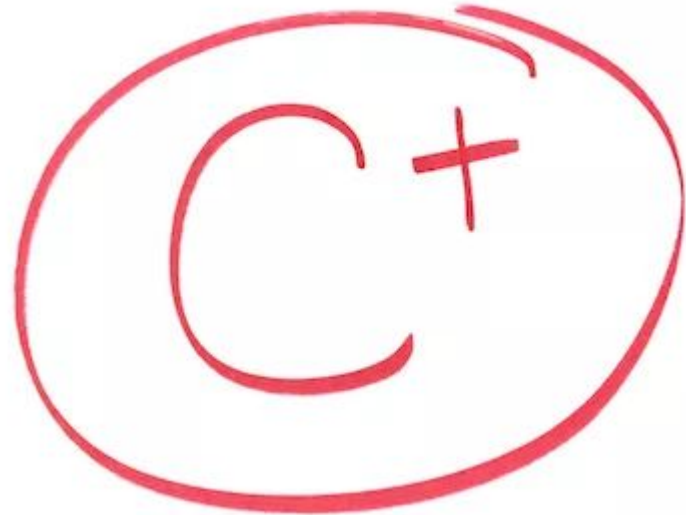
A low bar for student transitions

- Design and implementation by one office
- Lack of leadership continuity
- Few mechanisms to support student diversity
- Static and perfunctory programming
- Designed to keep kids “busy”
- Completed before classes begin
- Transition completed in five days



NSCDS Transition Program cir. 2013

- No primary stakeholder(s) or continuity in leadership
- No connection or “thread” among events and activities
- Not grounded in a core mission or philosophy
- Largely geared towards registration events
- Not envisioned as crucial to supporting students



Transition planning at NSCDS

- In 2014, we began a process to revamp our onboarding practices
- Transition process increasingly seen as an extension of our mission
- Gradual development towards an advanced state

Four Guideposts of Development

- Reframe the Timeline
- Embed Admission Office
- Team-Oriented Approach
- Focus on Relationships & Connections

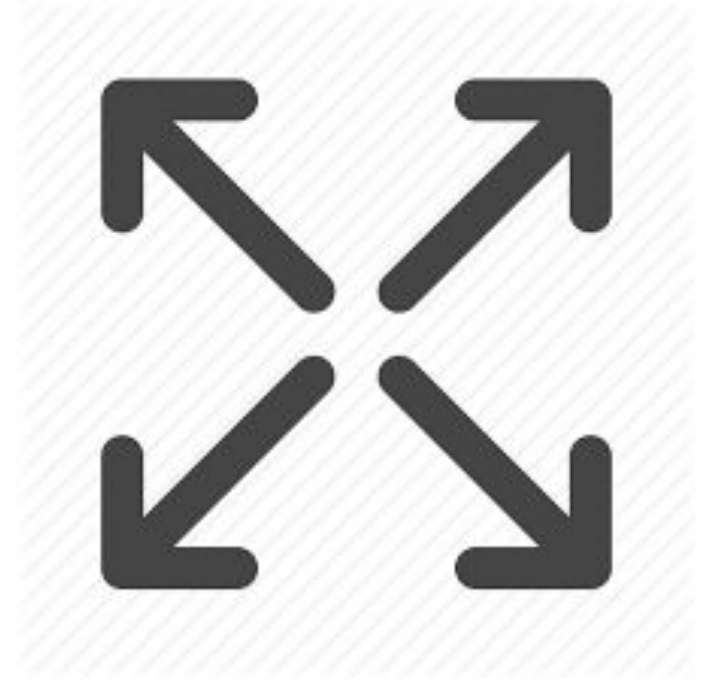


1. Reframe the Timeline

A Conscious Commitment to OnBoarding

- Traditional enrollment cycle 12 months from Sept-Sept.
- Reframed it is 18 months Sept - following January.

This approach honors the true student and parent journey from initial inquiry - to successful and connected student (reenrollment).



2. Embedding Enrollment Management

With a reframed timeline Enrollment Managers become vital to on-boarding activities. This partnership provides two distinct values:

Continuity: Leverages relationships built through the application process

Partnership: Strong working relationship with colleagues aids student transitions and connects them to the work of enrollment.

3. Connections & Relationships

Creation of a dedicated “ninth grade team” to design and implement philosophy, programming and events.

- Director of Admissions
- Dean of Students
- Ninth Grade Advisors
- Upper School Head
- Upper School Counselor
- Learning Specialists
- Middle School Grade Team
- Middle School Counselor
- Middle School Head

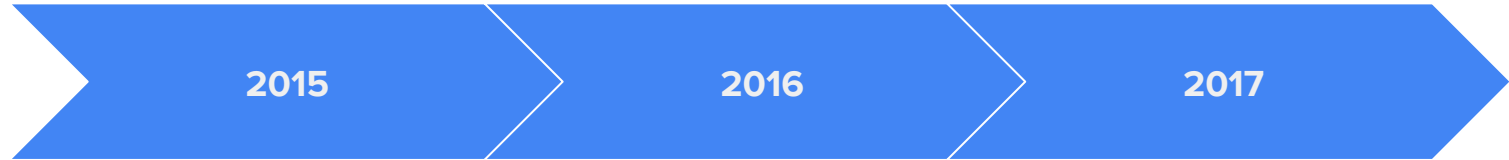


4. Focus on Connections & Community

- Foster personal and community relationships with adults and peers
- Facilitate the natural transitions that occur at the start of high school
- Promote school values in character development, safety and student conduct
- Promote intentional partnerships with academic and emotional supports

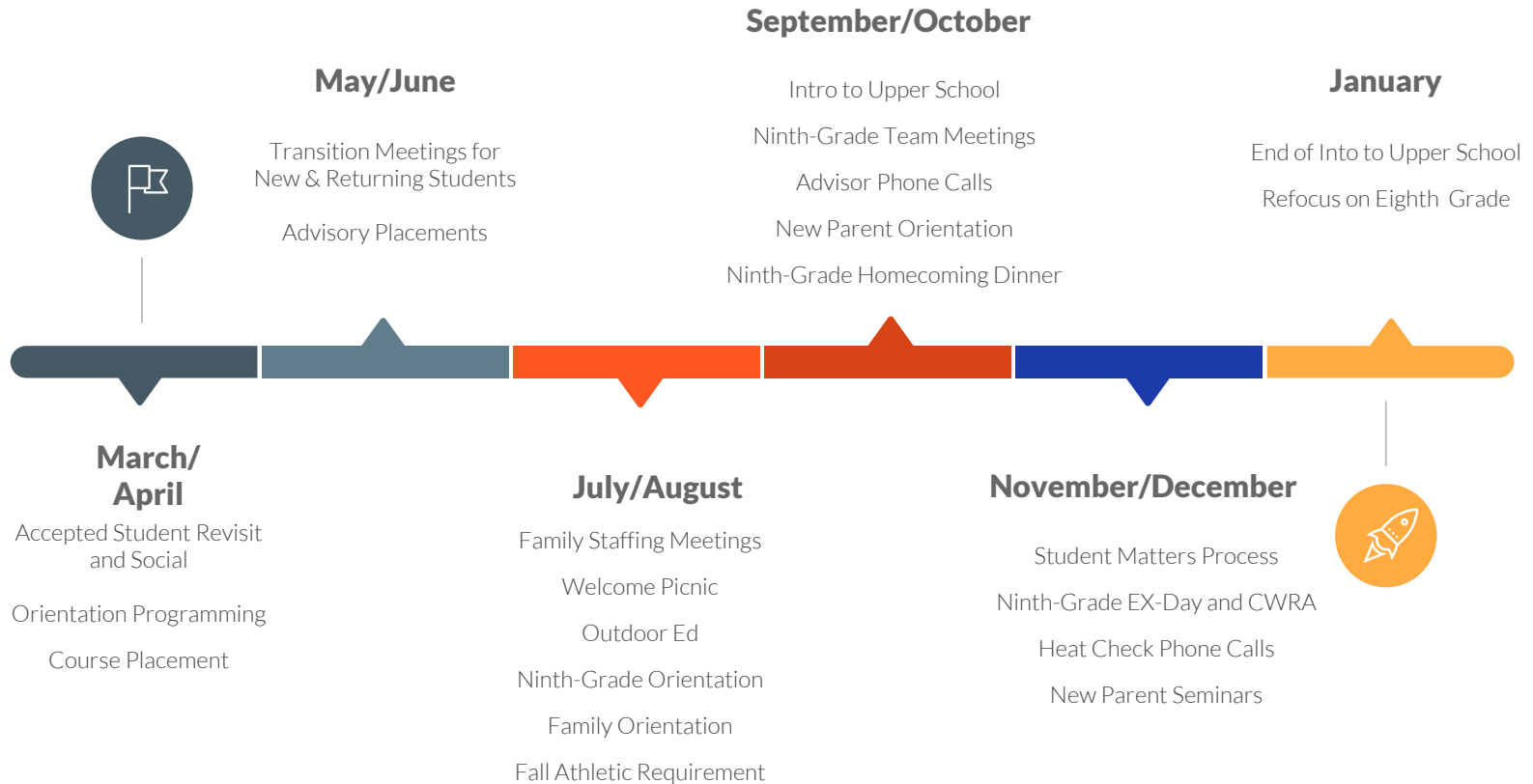
NSCDS Onboarding Program

- Enlisted dedicated 9th grade advising team
- Created new “hybrid” advisory model
- Created a student-mentor program
- Developed “Intro to Upper School” curriculum
- Reenvisioned ninth-grade family picnic
- Revised Outdoor Ed & Student Orientation
- Implemented New Family orientation
- Created ninth-grade Ex Day in October



- Created transition team meetings for new & returning students
- Offered family meetings for all incoming students with complex learning profiles
- Implemented “Student Matters” program to monitor and support struggling students
- Incorporated Student Mentors in admissions & Bridge programming

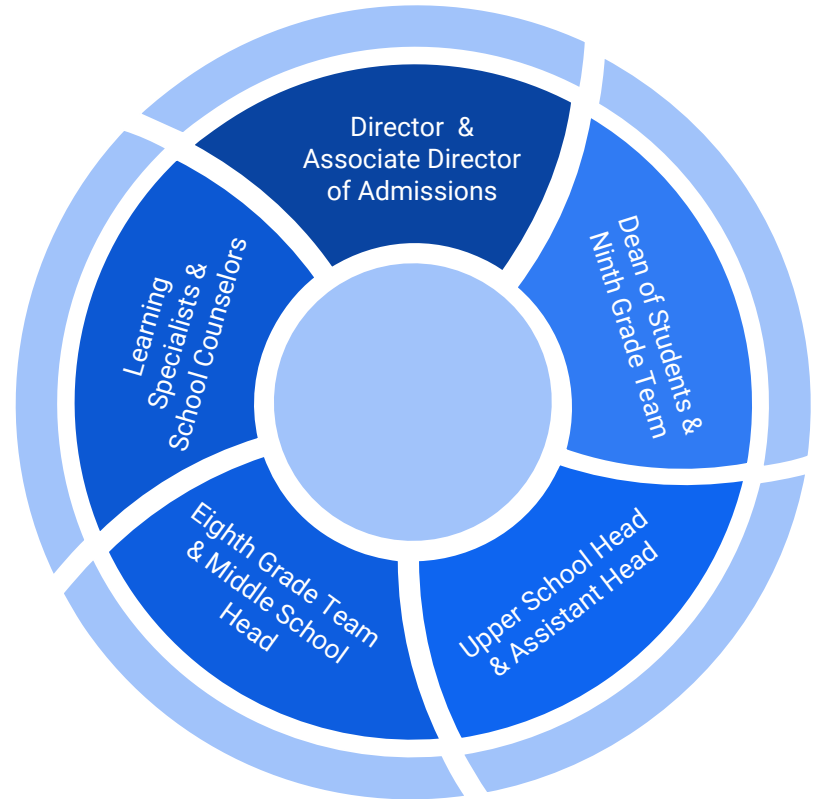
NSCDS OnBoarding Timeline



Transition Meetings

Two ninth-grade team meetings in May to share student information, identify optimal advisory placements and promote successful transitions academically, socially and emotionally.

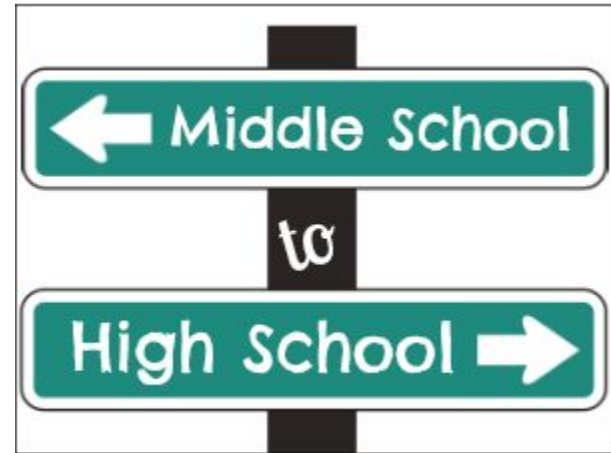
- Comprehensive student profile
- Personal interests & activities
- Learning profile & educational accommodations
- Conduct & disciplinary history
- Parent, family or guardian issues
- Current progress and questions moving forward



Intro to Upper School

Intro to Upper School was inaugurated in 2015 to help support the natural transition that ninth-graders experience matriculating to high school

- Class connections & social icebreakers
- Academic Integrity training (2)
- Study Skills (2)
- Self advocacy training
- Online identity & digital footprint
- Public & private identity
- Freedom from chemical dependency
- Big Eight Identifiers (10)
- Depression awareness (2)
- Civil discourse



Next Steps? Measurement

Measurement to determine how students are impacted by transition to high school:

- Attendance & Attrition
- First semester and year GPA
- Advisory change requests
- Academic integrity violations
- Referrals for negative student conduct
- Connection to adults & community survey
- Course placement & leveling
- Proactive metrics (ontrack calculator)



Next Steps? Summer Bridge Program

A program to designed to transition new students to the NSCDS community with particular attention to academic preparation.

- Develop study & organizational skills
- Strengthen confidence in English & Math
- Interact with peer leaders
- Get to know faculty & staff
- Gain familiarity with campus & resources
- Participate in social events
- Develop personalized action plans before the start of school



Guideposts to Successful Transitioning

Embed Admission Office

Reframe the Timeline

Team-Oriented Approach

Focus on Relationships & Connections

- What are the most successful elements of your onboarding efforts with ninth-grade students?
- Are there particular resources that you've found helpful in framing your transitioning goals and planning?



Contact Information

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Advisory & House Model

Frederick	Doar	Wollin-Casey	Castilla	Hester	Cousineau	Marcus
Packy M. 12	Zach B. 12	Mia A. 12	Philip H. 12	Rachel B. 12	Chris A. 12	Ben B. 12
Kali P. 11	Emily C. 11	Mark S. 12	Evelyn N.12	Ben B. 12	Sam S. 12	Aidan M.12
Maxwell B. 9	Amelia A. 9	Martina C. 12	Matthew B. 12	Isa A. 11 (N)	Evan F. 11	Caroline L. 12
Dusty K. 9	Nick P. 9	Anna R. 12	Thanos D. 11 (N)	Kate B. 11 (N)	Henry E. 11	Claudette K. 11
Emily Y. 9	Jack S. 9	Billy P. 11	Caroline S. 11	Gavin S. 10	Zoe B. 11	Luke A. 11
Taylor V. 9	Marissa Y. 9	Theodore B. 10	Charley B. 10	MK C. 10	Xas M. 11	Phoebe C. 11
Anna U. 9	Charlotte B. (N)	Elizabeth S. 10	James K. 10	Panagiotis K. 10	Sophie B. 10	Alex C. 11
Mason M. (N)	Lila G. (N)	Jada A. 10	Axel G. 10	Ian G. 10	Rachel O. 10	Abigail K. 10
Alex P. (N)	Cooper R. (N)				Nico S. 10	Eli S. 10