

Information and Tips for Parents
Successfully Transitioning Students To SEP High School

Website link: [SEP High School](#)

Change can be challenging for anyone. Parents and students may have many questions about how things will change when transitioning to a new grade level, building and/or program. It can be beneficial for IEP teams to start planning early for a student's transition to a new environment. If you see a need consider requesting an IEP meeting to discuss any of the following:

- Foreseeable challenges and ways to bridge the gap for a smooth transition
- Identification of individuals who can help facilitate a smooth transition
- Ideas focused on how/what parents can do to partner with the school throughout the transition

Prior to the transition, review and reflect upon the following information for your child's future success. Please consult with district staff if additional information is needed.

Information About SEP High School

1. Building: What is the layout and where are the classrooms, drop-off locations, nurse's office, and bathrooms in relation to the classrooms?
 - a. [Traffic Flow](#) - This map shows drop off/pick up zones for SEP High School
 - b. [Bus line up](#) - This map shows the line up of buses on the West side of building.
 - c. **Daily Schedule**
 - Doors Open.....6:30 a.m.
 - School Starts.....7:50 a.m.
 - Dismissal.....3:01 p.m.
 - Buses Leave.....3:06 p.m.
 - Late Start Wednesdays School Starts at....9:50 a.m.
2. Building Contacts: Who do I contact if I have questions for SEP High School staff?
 - a. Phone Number: (515) 967-6631
 - b. Principal: Stephen Pettit - stephen.pettit@southeastpolk.org
Assistant Principal: Cory Goldsmith - cory.goldsmith@southeastpolk.org
Assistant Principal: Glenn Dietzenbach - glenn.dietzenbach@southeastpolk.org
Assistant Principal: Scott Belger - scott.belger@southeastpolk.org
 - c. Counselors: Lance Brand - lance.brand@southeastpolk.org

- Michelle Feldman - michelle.feldman@southeastpolk.org
Amy Daugherty - amy.daugherty@southeastpok.org
Kari Fast - kari.fast@southeastpolk.org
Jessica Nolting - jessica.nolting@southeastpolk.org
Valerie Powell (TAG Counselor) - valerie.powell@southeastpolk.org
Molly Brandhorst (Harbor) - molly.brandhorst@southeastpolk.org
- d. Administrative Assistant:
- i. Front office - Marla Kelly - marla.kelly@southeastpolk.org
 - ii. Front office - Karole Turner - karole.turner@southeastpolk.org
 - iii. Assistant Principals' AA: Kelly Brinker - kelly.brinker@southeastpolk.org
 - iv. Nurse: Melissa Hensen - melissa.hensen@southeastpolk.org
- e. Instructional Coaches:
- i. Justin Dehmer - justin.dehmer@southeastpolk.org
 - ii. Kathy Henry - kathy.henry@southeastpolk.org
 - iii. Amy Johannsen - amy.johannsen@southeastpolk.org
 - iv. Kelly Knowler - kelly.knowler@southeastpolk.org
 - v. Carol Von Tersch - carol.vontersch@southeastpolk.org
 - vi. Jason Nolting - jason.nolting@southeastpolk.org
 - vii. Sp. Ed. Instr. Coach: Jeff Crowley - jeffrey.crowley@southeastpolk.org
- f. District Special Education Director: Charlie Taylor - (515) 957-3428, charles.taylor@southeastpolk.org
3. Parent Information/Involvement Meetings: How can I be involved as a parent?
- a. Attend Parent/Teacher Conferences -
- i. Fall Conferences - October 13th and 18th
 - ii. Spring Conference - March 7th and 9th
- b. Other ways to engage
- i. Booster Groups - Athletics/Activities have their own groups, for example, Band and Music, RhythAMettes
 - ii. Check Infinite Campus for grades and announcements
 - iii. Ways for Students to get involved in extracurricular activities - [High School Activities Page](#)

Information About High School Procedures and Routines

Below is some basic information about the operation of the SEP High School. For more detailed information consult the High School Student Handbook which can be accessed from this link.

[Student Handbook Link](#)

1. How are grades determined?

- a. Grading will vary according to subject matter
2. What are the ways information is commonly shared with parents?
 - a. High school staff use Infinite Campus to post grades and send mass communications to parents regarding upcoming events.
 - b. The high school is a Google school and uses a variety of methods to convey information (i.e. Gmail and Google Classroom)
3. What are the routines and expectations of the building?
 - a. Bells: The bells ring at the beginning and end of the day. 7:40, 7:50, and 3:01. In addition, bells ring at the beginning and end of each class period. Information on the building tardy policy can be found in the student handbook on page 22.
 - a. Lunch Shifts: There are five (25 minute) lunch shifts. Your student's lunch time depends on his/her assigned teacher's scheduled time.
4. What are teachers' expectations regarding students' typical levels of independence?

Students are expected to independently complete the following:

 - a. Bring expected materials to class. Most teachers have certain materials expected every day and will post or request any additional materials beyond routine items.
 - b. For students to advocate on their own behalf. This may look like asking for help when needed, asking questions when they don't understand or need clarification, etc.
 - c. Additional support and assistance in these areas will be provided to any student who needs it.

Suggestions for Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

1. Prior to the end of the 8th grade year consider the possible need to have an IEP meeting to discuss your child's transition to the High School. If you determine that a meeting is needed and request a meeting:
 - a. Develop a list of questions and concerns that you would like to discuss at this meeting - feel free to share these questions ahead of time with the IEP team to make sure they are addressed.
 - b. Share ideas on things that might help your child with this building transition. i.e. building tours, practice opening lockers, etc.
 - c. A small number of students have a great deal of difficulty adapting to change. For these students, consider whether your child needs to spend time at High School before transitioning full-time in the fall. Discuss this with your child's special education teacher or the building principal/counselor.
2. My student's High School schedule:
 - a. Schedules will be available on Infinite Campus approximately July 1. If schedules become available sooner, a notice will be sent to families through Campus Messenger. Schedules will include teacher and locker information.

- b. Review your child's High School schedule with your child.
 - c. High School is open most of the summer. Consider bringing your student to the High School to help him/her acclimate to the building, find classrooms and practice using the combination lock on their locker.
3. Opportunities to learn about the building prior to the start of the school year:
 - a. Orientation - TBA - freshman Jump Start Orientation Assembly (2:00-3:00 - [advance registration requested](#))
 - b. No summer Mission Transition - All freshmen go through a freshman seminar class the first semester of their 9th grade year.
 - c. Open House: Time for parents and students to briefly meet teachers and walk around the building with their schedule in hand. Families are encouraged to walk around the building following their student's daily schedule.
4. Important dates: Information on upcoming events can be obtained through:
 - a. Infinite Campus emails
 - b. High school webpage
 - c. Emails from classroom teachers
 - d. District calendar
 - e. Calling the high school for information on important dates.
5. Encourage independence and self-advocacy.
 - a. Help your child work on his/her self-advocacy skills, including asking questions and requesting help.
 - b. Help school staff learn the level of prompting and support your child may need when presented with familiar and unfamiliar tasks.
6. Anticipate and address your child's anxiety and your own. We all experience fear of the unknown; sometimes this can be heightened if a student has a disability and needs support in communicating needs.
 - a. Some of these worries are natural and part of the growing process.
 - b. Consider brainstorming with the IEP team about possible solutions and supports to positively meet your child's needs.
7. Send a brief note to High School teachers letting them know you are interested in feedback and to collaboratively find a mutually beneficial communication method.
 - a. What is your communication preference?
 - i. Do you prefer to be contacted via phone, email, or text?
 - ii. What time of day do you prefer?
 - iii. For non-emergency communications-- do you prefer phone or email?
8. Encourage positive risk taking. Students may need a push to try something new such as:
 - a. playing a musical instrument,
 - b. joining a club/sport/activity or
 - c. making new friends

9. Stay positive! We are committed to partnering with you to work through any situation should it arise. Working together to address the needs of your child works best! Students respond based upon the reactions of adult role models. Those behaviors and attitudes can quickly impact their own perceptions of school, circumstances, and people. Work together with the school to ensure you are on the same page with the IEP team and school staff as it greatly impacts your student.
10. Once you have reflected on these questions and key points, think about how you will introduce this new information to your child.
 - a. Consider what is important for your child and how to make sure he/she feels comfortable, too.
 - b. Communication is the key to a successful transition.
 - c. Even with the most thoughtful planning, there may be something unexpected that arises.
 - d. If so, communicate in a calm, open and honest manner with school staff to ensure a workable solution.

Other Resources: Click [here](#) for special education resources posted to the SEP district website.