

Transfer Student Induction Model: Providing a Path to Connection

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Abstract:

Schools implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports work to establish and maintain fidelity of school-wide systems and practices. Depending on the mobility rate of the student population, initial efforts may not be enough to adequately support and personalize the induction experience for highly mobile students. This monograph will share a framework for a student induction model specifically designed to meet the needs of highly mobile students. The Transfer Student Induction Model, or TSIM was developed and implemented on the middle school level in Excelsior Springs, Missouri in 2010. TSIM was designed to support the specific social, emotional, and academic needs of highly mobile students. This model was carefully designed as a Tier 1 support with practical steps that protect existing school climate. Several structures and steps are suggested to implement this model with fidelity. This model was designed to be implemented using existing school personnel. TSIM is informed by educational research, tested by practitioners in the field, and easily adapts to different grade levels and community demographics.

Transfer Student Induction Model



Providing a Path to Connection

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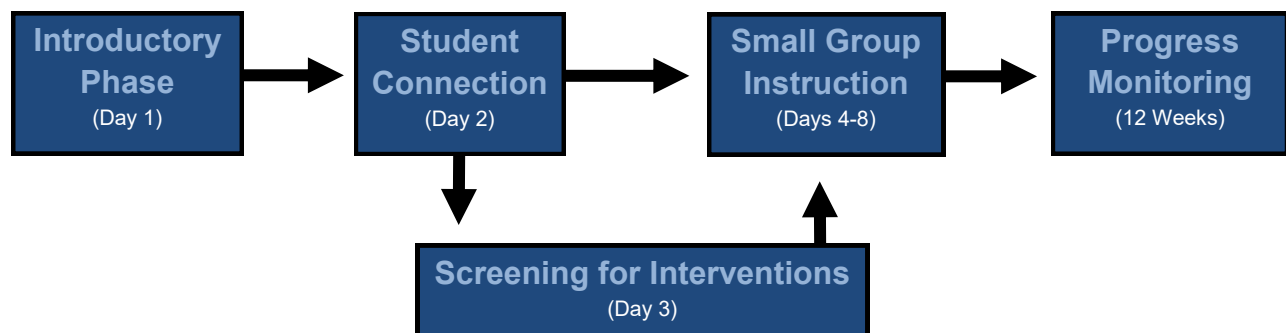
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About This Model

The Transfer Student Induction Model, or TSIM was developed during the fall of 2010 by Chris Hubbuch and Keelie Stucker at Excelsior Springs Middle School in Excelsior Springs, Missouri.

TSIM was designed to support highly mobile students and their specific social, emotional, and academic needs. This model was carefully designed as a Tier 1 support with practical steps that protect existing school climate. Several structures and steps are suggested to implement this model with fidelity. This model was designed to be implemented using existing school personnel. TSIM is informed by educational research, tested by practitioners in the field, and easily adapts to different grade levels and community demographics.



TSIM has been featured in multiple national publications and conferences including the following: The Missouri SW-PBS Summer Training Institute (2011), Middle Ground from AMLE (2012), Principal Leadership from NASSP (2012), The 40th Annual Conference for Middle Level Education (2013), The National PBIS Leadership Forum (2014), The 12th Annual International Conference on PBS (2015), The Powerful Learning Conference (2015), and The Missouri SW-PBS Summer Training Institute (2015).

Visit www.tigerpbis.org to learn more about the TSIM process.

About the Authors



Chris Hubbuch is principal at Excelsior Springs Middle School in Excelsior Springs, Missouri. He has served as an assistant principal, middle school teacher, mentor teacher, and elementary teacher during his career in public education. He is the founder and a co-moderator of #pbischat on Twitter. He shares his learning and thoughts about education at www.chrishubbuch.com. Follow him on Twitter at [@ChrisHubbuch](https://twitter.com/ChrisHubbuch).



Keelie Stucker is assistant principal at Excelsior Springs Middle School in Excelsior Springs, Missouri. She was named the GKCPA Assistant Principal of the Year in 2014. Prior to becoming an administrator in 2010 she served as a band director. She is a co-moderator of #pbischat on Twitter and shares her learning and thoughts about education at www.keeliestucker.com. Follow her on Twitter at [@KeelieStucker](https://twitter.com/KeelieStucker).

Getting Connected



Research on Student Mobility

Summary of Mobility Challenges

Basic Needs that Drive Behavior

Prioritizing Personalization & Connection

Supporting Highly Mobile Students: A Strategy

Transfer Student Induction & the PBIS Framework

Research on Student Mobility

"Much of the research conducted on mobility and achievement concludes that mobility is a large threat to academic achievement and the school environment. (Biernat & Jax, 2000; Kaase & Dulaney, 2005; Reynolds, Chen, & Herbers, 2009)" as cited by Isernhagen & Bulkin (2011)

Highly mobile students face the following challenges: *"low achievement due to differences in curriculum between schools, behavior problems, problems developing relationships with peers, and a greater risk of dropping out."* (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2004)

Mobile students *"are largely disengaged, with little or no vested interest in the school or the educational process."* (Sanderson, 2003)

Negativity and aggressiveness of mobile students is thought to make it *"more difficult on the educator to 1) assimilate the student to his/her new school environment, 2) provide the student with a group of friends for social support, and 3) assess the newcomers' academic foundations."* (Sanderson, 2003)

A negative relationship exists between mobility and student test performance and behaviors. (Engec, 2006)

High mobility rates effectively shift the learning environment focus from lesson plans to classroom management. (Weisman, 2012)

The constant introduction of new students into a classroom throughout the year causes massive disruption to lesson plans and student interaction. (Weisman, 2012)

Summary of Mobility Challenges

Challenges for Students

- Low achievement
- Lost with curriculum
- At-risk for dropping out
- Problems assimilating
- Friendship issues

Challenges for Teachers

- Loses focus on lessons
- Focus must shift to classroom management
- Disrupts lesson plans
- Difficulty getting an accurate screening on new student

Challenges for Schools

- Threat to school climate
- Widespread classroom management issues
- New students have no vested interest in the educational process
- Unbonded students enrolled without a system of monitoring

Basic Needs that Drive Behavior

Success and being capable. Acceptance and belonging. Influence over people and events. Generosity and helping others. Stimulation and fun. (Medler, 1992) as cited by Blankstein (2004)

Belonging, Usefulness, Competence, and Influence. (Boys and Girls Clubs of America) as cited by Blankstein (2004)

Prioritizing Personalization & Connection

An effective improvement plan for all students includes components of both prevention and intervention (Blankstein, 2004).

Transfer students—those students who join the school after the traditional enrollment period—comprise an often-overlooked constituency in most schools (Hubbuch & Stucker, 2012).

Ensuring that students who arrive after the beginning of the school year receive a personalized welcome that incorporates the essential elements of PBS and RtI increases the likelihood they will form positive connections and helps maintain a safe learning environment for everyone (Hubbuch & Stucker, 2012).

An essential strategy for student success is the degree to which your school is personalized (NASSP, 2006).

Personalized learning depends on being able to gain acceptance within the whole school community for productive and distinctive achievements (NASSP, 2006).

Supporting Highly Mobile Students: A Strategy

By Chris Hubbuch - Adapted from the original article at www.chrishubbuch.com

During my three years as an assistant principal I noticed a disturbing trend. Each year students joined our learning community midyear and appeared to feel disconnected and struggle to find success. Despite our best efforts there was no uniform way to track the progress of new students. This issue became more evident as I examined disciplinary data in the spring and noticed the relatively high number of new students with referrals. This trend surfaced annually and resulted in a predictable reactive response from administration and staff. Clearly something was amiss.

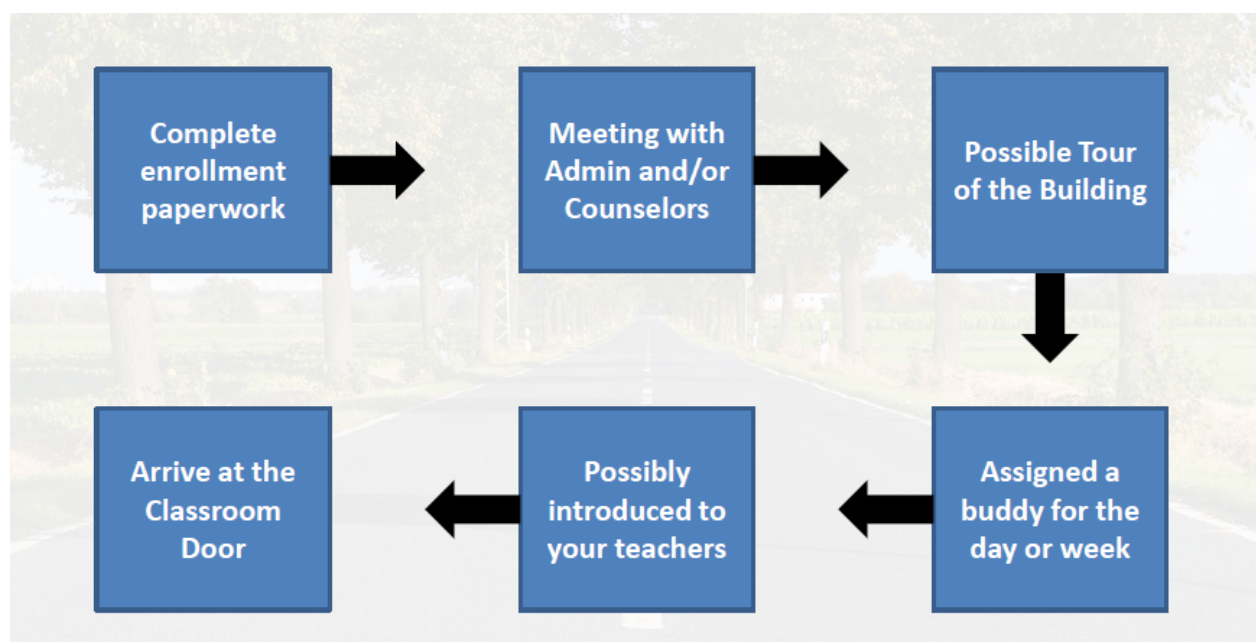
Disturbed by what I noticed in the data I began to explore how our school could better meet the needs of highly mobile students. What we had identified was a national trend that places millions of students at-risk of dropping out of high school each year (Isernhagen & Bulkin, 2011). Given the rise of the accountability movement, student transition programs garner little attention in discussions of K-12 education. Following discussion with my principal, I was determined to develop a system that fit our context and better supported new students.

By the end of my third year as assistant, I found myself preparing to transition into the role of building principal at Excelsior Springs Middle School. Our school also faced an uncertain future with budget cuts and staff reductions on the horizon. The local economy struggled through the recession of 2009 and like many other school districts ours took proactive steps to maintain an appropriate level of academic services for students. As I prepared to become principal I braced for the impact of a new master schedule, the loss of ten staff members, and the end of teaming on the middle school level. During this time our school also enrolled several new students who struggled greatly and consumed a significant amount of time for school personnel. Culturally it wasn't the best of times. Our staff worked through the restructuring as well as possible and I set out to plan our transition with my new assistant principal. As summer break arrived so did a surprise. My assistant principal had the good fortune to become an

elementary principal that summer leading to an unanticipated search for a replacement. Fortunately there was a pool of candidates that included a talented teacher leader at our school, Keelie Stucker. A change in leadership can be difficult for a faculty. Eliminating the teaming structure and losing staff amplified the impact of administrative transition. Determined to be more responsive to new students, Mrs. Stucker and I explored ways to better meet the needs of highly mobile transfer students. Still recovering from the 2009 recession, the 2010-11 school year was one of our most active in terms of new students with 35 students enrolling between November and March. The profile of many new students was concerning as most had attended several schools that same year and had significant discipline incidents at previous schools. Clearly something had to be done to support our existing school culture and meet the needs of at-risk children.

Transfer Student Induction Model

Initial research of student induction models didn't turn up new ideas. The turning point was finding an online resource from UCLA. The informational packet entitled *Transitions: Turning Risks into Opportunities for Student Support* became a source of inspiration for what would later become the Transfer Student Induction Model, or TSIM. Upon reflection of traditional practice, it was evident that several problems existed with our induction



process for mobile students. Our process had the following flaws: it perpetuated fidelity issues, it didn't build relationships with new students, and it failed to safeguard our existing school climate and culture. The Transfer Student Induction Model (Stucker, 2014; Hubbuch & Stucker, 2013; Hubbuch & Stucker, 2012) was carefully designed to address those specific concerns and better support students.

Fidelity of Implementation

Our traditional induction was efficient, but flawed. As depicted by the picture above it quickly flowed from the completion of paperwork, to a hastily planned meeting with a counselor or administrator, to a possible tour, and then placement within a classroom. Fidelity issues abound whenever a systems approach is not in place. The induction of new students involves several key personnel including our registrar, administrative staff, and counselors. Without a well-defined process that specifically outlines the task for each person, there may be breakdowns. Each school day brings its own unique challenges and unexpected events that can quickly take personnel away from their usual routine. The TSIM process ensures the fidelity of new student induction by defining the outcome of the contact between each staff member, parents, and the student. A process has been established that tracks the induction system from start to finish. TSIM provides clarity about what will be covered and which staff members will be responsible for coverage. This structure ensures that transfer records are reviewed and that the information informs decision-making and intervention from the moment the student enrolls.

Relationship Building

Moving in the middle of a year is difficult for all parties involved, parents and siblings. If schools are not intentional about differentiating their induction process they may treat midyear enrollment like they would an August enrollment. The needs of families and students during each transition are completely different and require differentiation. Our traditional approach to midyear enrollment lacked any connection with current students. The TSIM process now affords new students the opportunity to connect with student leaders and learn about our culture from them. The TSIM process also intentionally incorporates relationship building into the induction

experience. By design our students meet with the assistant principal to discuss school-wide climate, culture, and expectations. During this time students are able to build a relationship with a trusted adult. The TSIM process was designed to support middle school philosophy and what research says about the unique needs of highly mobile transfer students. TSIM has shifted the student experience from sink or swim to one of guided support and success.

Climate Control

We want all students to find success at school, don't we? It's surprising how little research or investment has gone into the development of induction systems for highly mobile students. This is hardly an unpredictable phenomenon and given tough economic times, it may become a significant issue for educators and communities. Failure to adequately plan for new students opens the door to potential conflicts and compromises an otherwise strong school climate. Without a system such as TSIM, your school's culture may be adversely impacted by a surge of student enrollment. Our traditional approach to induction wasn't designed to support school climate. TSIM embeds social skill instruction, the teaching of school-wide expectations, and screening for interventions. Through proper planning we are able to meet the unique needs of highly mobile students and protect our existing school-wide systems and practices.

Every student holds promise and deserves a quality education. Research confirms how harmful mobility is on student achievement. If you want to meet the needs of all students while maintaining a safe, predictable, and focused environment for learning you should consider implementing a system that incorporates fidelity, relationships, and protects school climate. What about your school? What steps does your school take to foster connection and meet the needs of new students?

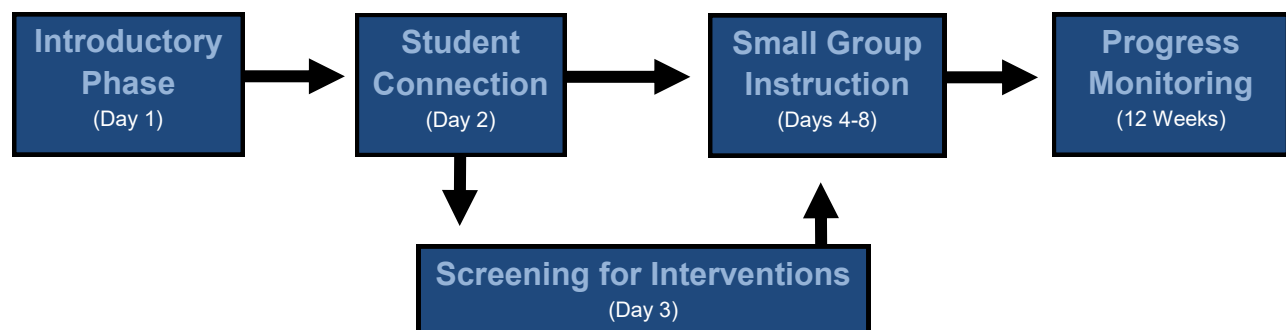
Transfer Student Induction & The PBIS Framework

By Keelie Stucker - Adapted from the original article at www.keeliestucker.com

Can you imagine starting a new job and your introduction consists of your boss handing you some keys and saying, “Here you go, Good luck!” I can’t conceive how that situation would benefit anyone. Some people learn quickly on the job, but without any direction it’s uncertain how effective they will be. If students enroll at our school and we only hand them a schedule and say let me know if you need anything, we are waiting for them to fail. We have no idea what they are capable of or if they need additional supports. New students often fail or fall between the cracks when they move. Now imagine if these students changed schools more than once in a calendar year. Highly mobile students face the following challenges at school: “low achievement due to differences in curriculum between schools, behavior problems, problems developing relationships with peers, and a greater risk of dropping out” (Education Week, 2004). This is a known challenge calling for a site-based solution.

Systemic Approach to Connection

Excelsior Springs Middle School has developed a proactive induction process known as the Transfer Student Induction Model, or TSIM (Hubbuck & Stucker, 2012). This carefully designed system provides individualized support for the first 12 weeks of the induction period. Each phase of this process is designed to meet the specific social and academic needs of students throughout their adjustment to our learning community. We want to give students direction and set them up for success. TSIM is a multistep process involving parents, students and staff.



Having a structured process for student induction prevents inconsistent practice on the part of school staff. Schools are busy places year round, especially from October through April. It makes little sense to formulate detailed plans for the launch of school in August and not offer a similar experience for new students in November. TSIM safeguards the fidelity of the induction process through its design.

Supporting SW-PBS

The constant introduction of new students into a classroom throughout the year causes massive disruption to lesson plans and student interaction (Weisman, 2012). Our vision at ESMS is to provide a welcoming, orderly and respectful environment that does not allow bullying or threatening behavior. The TSIM process helps us protect this vision of safety by proactively teaching school-wide expectations and developing relationships from the first day of attendance. This process helps minimize or avoid the disruptions which are likely to occur in the absence of an induction plan. Because of this intentional and proactive structure, TSIM is categorized as a part of our Positive Behavior Intervention Support structure.

Relationships & Intervention

Negativity and aggressiveness of mobile students is thought to make it “more difficult on the educator to 1) assimilate the student to his/her new school environment, 2) provide the student with a group of friends for social support, and 3) assess the newcomers’ academic foundations” (Sanderson, 2003). The TSIM process helps parents and students feel better about the transition. It fosters relationships with parents and staff and allows students the opportunity to connect with current middle school students. During the parent meetings we can discuss starting behavior or academic plans for students who may be struggling, or discuss how to meet the needs of high achieving students. Many times we have started a student on a Tier 2 behavior intervention plan to provide immediate positive supports from our teachers.

Social Skill Instruction

The most significant part of the TSIM process is the daily adult connection focused on school-wide expectations. Highly mobile students “are largely disengaged, with little or no vested interest in the school or the educational process” (Sanderson, 2003). For the first five days of the TSIM process the assistant principal meets with students for thirty minutes during extended learning time, the time when other students receive academic or social interventions. Small group instruction occurs during this time and may include multiple students depending on how many new students have enrolled during this time of the year. Social skill lessons are condensed and cover school-wide expectations. During the first week of enrollment new students are screened for interventions to identify areas of academic needs. Students are assigned to an intervention group once the small group instruction phase concludes after the fifth day of enrollment. This component is designed to foster a positive connection with an adult, identify and academic needs, and provide consistent instruction about school-wide expectations.

Student Connection

As previously stated, part of our vision is to provide all students a welcoming learning environment. An essential strategy for student success is the degree to which your school is personalized (NASSP, 2006). The TSIM process was developed with that purpose in mind. The TSIM process includes a step to familiarize new students to our building through a student ambassador program. The student ambassador is carefully selected and trained to provide the new student with the tools to have a smooth transition. This component helps facilitate a connection with other students.

Fidelity of Implementation

The TSIM structure requires the collaboration of several staff members. This degree of coordination and teamwork is by design to support our school-wide system of PBIS. This systems approach “...focuses on the collective actions of individuals within the school and how they contribute to the way the school, as a whole, operates” (MO SW-PBS, 2014).

To maintain the fidelity of TSIM implementation, a monitoring structure should be developed. Our team developed a cloud-based tracking document to monitor and ensure steps are being taken consistently. Personnel responsible for implementation are granted access to the document and note when tasks have been completed.

Progress Monitoring

The final step in the TSIM process is progress monitoring. Students meet informally with the assistant principal at the following intervals: 2, 4, 8, and 12 weeks. This structure is designed to maintain a positive relationship with new students and check to see if further supports are needed. We are always looking for ways to support new students and improve this process. Last spring our school convened a new student forum to hear what was working and what needed improvement. Students provided us great advice and we made several changes to help new students as they enroll.

The Transfer Student Induction Model has helped new students acclimate to our learning community. Rather than maintaining a “wait to fail” induction model, we are taking a proactive approach to help some of our most vulnerable students. The intended outcome of this process is connection to the school environment, good attendance, and social competence.

Goals & Structure

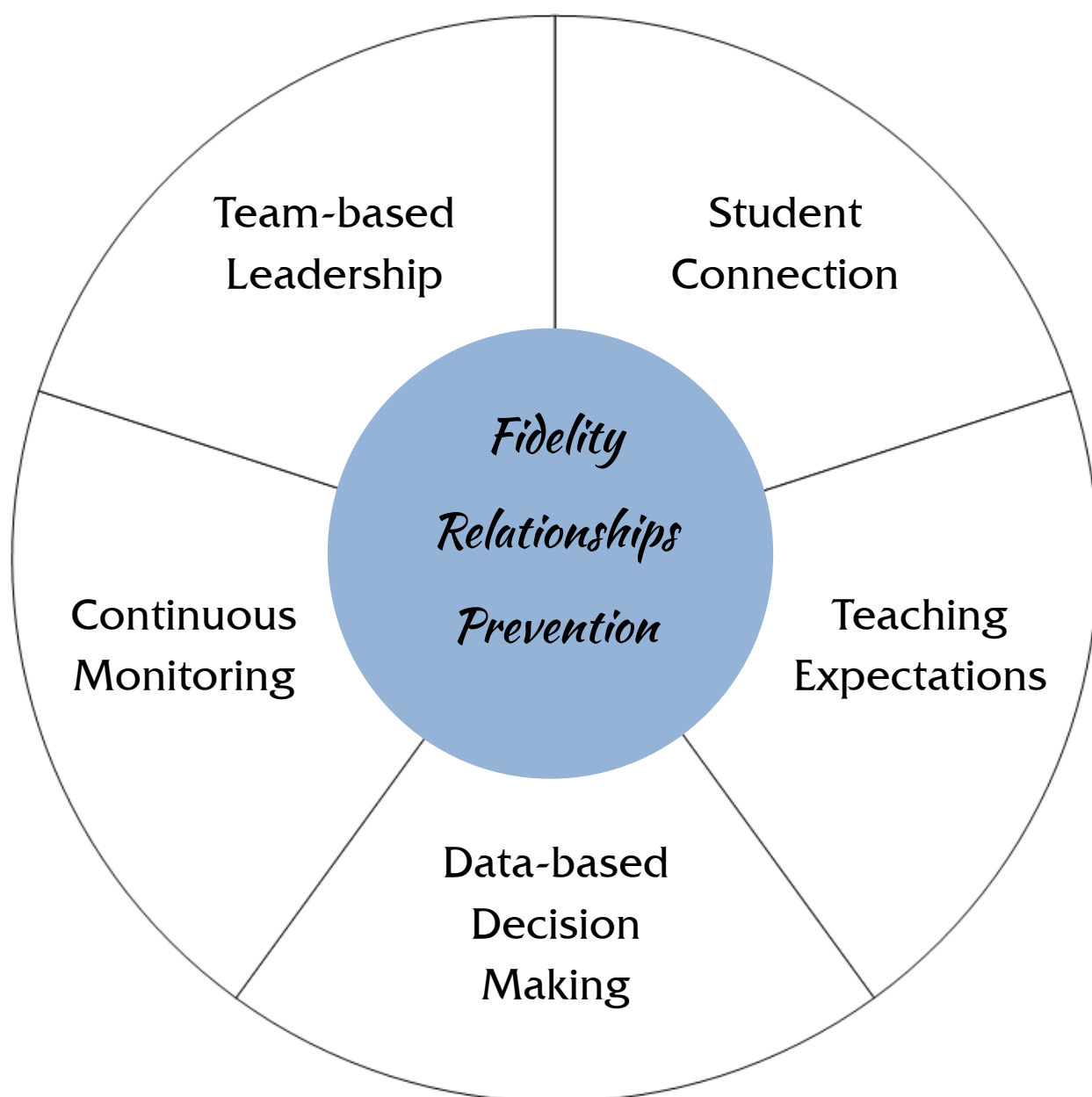


“Clearly defined outcomes with the selection of effective practices, use of meaningful data, and attention to systems together lead to successful outcomes.”

(Missouri SW-PBS, 2014)

Goals and Structure of TSIM

The TSIM model has three core purposes or desired outcomes: fidelity of implementation, relationship building for students, and the prevention of problem behaviors. These rightfully stand at the center of this induction model and are supported by five core structural elements aligned to the PBIS framework: team-based leadership, data-based decision making, continuous monitoring of behavior, teaching of expectations, and student connection. The next two pages explore each goal and structural element in detail.



Goals of this Process

Fidelity

This model ensures the fidelity of new student induction by defining the outcome of the contact between each staff member, parents, and the student. A process has been established that tracks the induction system from start to finish. TSIM provides clarity about what will be covered and which staff members will be responsible for coverage.

Relationships

This model affords students the opportunity to connect with student leaders and learn about our culture from them. The TSIM process also intentionally incorporates relationship building into the induction experience. By design our students meet with the assistant principal to discuss school-wide climate, culture, and expectations.

Prevention

This process embeds social skill instruction, the teaching of school-wide expectations, screening for interventions, and progress monitoring. These features work together to provide consistent, targeted, and timely supports for new students. These structures meet student needs and also protect the existing school climate and culture.

Structure of this Process

Team-based Leadership

This model is designed to support our school-wide PBIS systems and practices. A small team (assistant principal, counselors, and intervention coach) coordinates supports.

Data-based Decision Making

Transfer records and screening data guide the induction process and may result in the timely assignment of Tier 2 interventions.

Continuous Monitoring of Behavior

This process is designed to allow ongoing progress monitoring from our intervention coach and assistant principal.

Teaching of Expectations

This process embeds the teaching of our school-wide expectations across all settings.

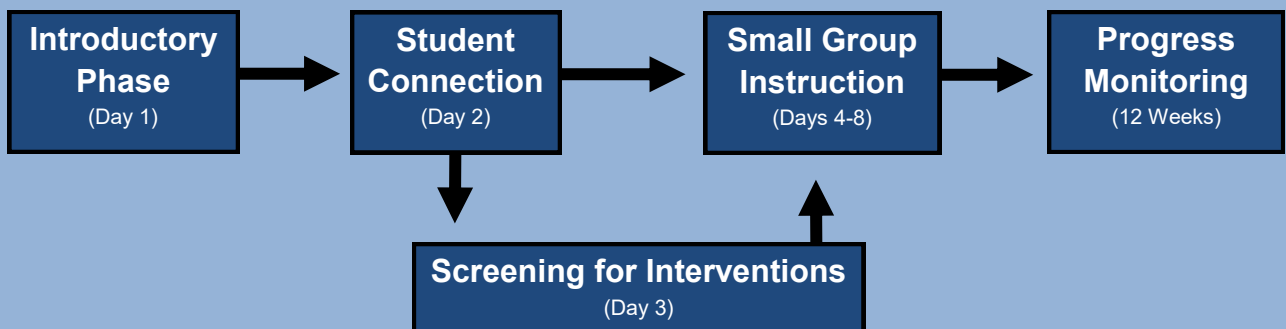
Student Connection

Our student leadership team plays a part in the induction process, making a connection and answering questions during the process.

Steps of the Process



The TSIM process will be described in detail in this section. The graphic below depicts how the five steps of the process interact to support student success, effective instruction, and school climate.



Introductory Phase

This is completed after enrollment papers have been filled out and takes up to 60 minutes. It involves the registrar, an administrator and a counselor.

Registrar

The following tasks are completed:

- Enrollment paperwork is completed
- Contact information is collected from parent
- Student is signed up for the activity bus
- Attendance brochure provided to parent

Administrator

The following tasks are completed:

- Discussion of mission, vision, and values
- Provide information about PBS and review student's discipline record
- Discussion of interventions and development of support plan if necessary

Counselor

The following items are discussed:

- School-wide bullying policy
- Student code of conduct
- The Tiger Pledge
- Confidential reporting process



See pages 26-27 of this monograph for resources used during this phase of the process.

Student Connection

This is completed on the first day of attendance by the new student. This step takes up to 45 minutes and involves a counselor and student ambassador.

Counselor

The following tasks are completed:

- Assigns student to WEB Group (6th grade only)
- Assigns student to a student ambassador for initial induction and ongoing supports

Student Ambassador

The following tasks are completed:

- Students tour the building
- New student is introduced to staff
- New student guided through schedule
- Student is helped with locker
- Ongoing support provided for new student

Screening for Intervention

This is completed on day three of enrollment by the new student and the intervention coach. This may take a few hours to complete.

Intervention Coach

The following tasks are completed:

- Review of previous performance on MAP Grade Level Assessments
- Review of transfer grades from previous school attended
- Reading screenings (R-CBM, MAZE and SRI)
- Review of previous placement in courses including ELA and math
- Math placement exam administered

Administrator, Counselor, or Intervention Coach

The following supports are considered:

- Tier 1-2 literacy
- Tier 1-2 math
- Tier 1 science
- Social Skills Group

Small Group Instruction

Small group instruction takes place during a daily intervention block. This takes 30 minutes each day and is usually complete within 5 days. The administrator who primarily manages student discipline is involved.

Administrator

Small group instruction follows the following schedule for five days:

- Day 1 - Arrival and Dismissal; Lunch Procedures
- Day 2 - Bus and Hallway expectations
- Day 3 - Restrooms and Cafeteria expectations
- Day 4 - Miscellaneous Areas; Dress Code; Technology
- Day 5 - Respect and Accountability; Lockers

Progress Monitoring

Ongoing progress monitoring and problem solving as needed. These meetings usually last anywhere between 5-10 minutes as needed and are led by an administrator or counselor.

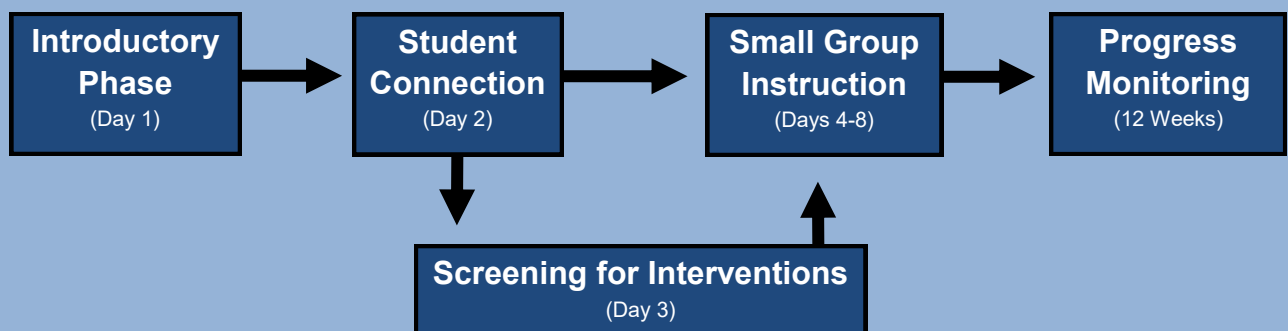
Administrator or Counselor

- Informal meetings with students at the following bi-weekly intervals: 2, 4, 8, and 12 weeks.
- Based on progress several Tier 2-3 supports may be considered: Check-in, Check out, Social Skills Group, or Action Team Meeting.

Staff Resources



This section shares two resources that are used during the TSIM process. The first is designed to support fidelity during the introductory meeting and the second is used to monitor progress and support decision making.



Introductory Notecard

This is a simple tool that was developed to support fidelity during the first part of the induction process. This card is provided to the parent at the conclusion of the introductory meeting with the administrator.

The **front of the card** has general information about the daily schedule and includes contact information such as our phone number and website address. If the student is a bus rider their bus number and pick up time is written on the card.

Welcome to Excelsior Springs Middle School.
Thank you for choosing to be a part of our

Tiger Family

Things to remember:

6:40 Building opens
7:10 Students enter hallways
7:25 Tardy bell rings
1:27 End of day (Wednesday only)
2:27 End of day

Bus number _____ Middle School
Bus pick-up time _____ 816-630-9230

Visit us online at www.essd40.com/2/home

Chris Hubbuch, Principal **Keelie Stucker, Assistant Principal**
Taylor Lane, Counselor (A-K) **Bob Mason, Counselor (L-Z)**

Introductory Notecard

This is a simple tool that was developed to support fidelity during the first part of the induction process. This card is provided to the parent at the conclusion of the introductory meeting with the administrator.

The **back of the card** has talking points that the administrator will cover during the introduction to our school. This resource helps ensure that regardless of what might be happening that day or who is leading the meeting the student and parent receive the same information.

- Start and End times
- Bus pick-up, #, and wave
- Handbook
- GRR Matrix/PBS/Tiger Paw
- Cell phones
- Dress Code & PE dress code
- Passing time
- Lunch time
- Lockers
- After school opportunities
- Bully Prevention (reporting to AP)
- Golden Opportunity to make good friends
- Keep good communication with parent, they are your advocate

Sample Tracking Form

The next three pages share a screenshot from our Google Sheets file that is used to track all steps of the TSIM process. When a new student enrolls a new tab is created with the information below.

	<u>Date completed</u>	<u>Data</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Student Name			
Nickname			
Grade Level			
Date of Enrollment			
Parent Name			
Parent phone			
Prior Discipline		1- No Risk 2- Moderate Risk 3- Needs Intervention	
Attendance Concerns			
Technology Contacted			
Health Concerns			
SpEd			
Section 504			
Academics		Previous year MAP CA Previous year MAP Math Previous year MAP Science SRI at time of move in SRI December SRI May Acuity Predictive B ELA Acuity Predictive B Math Acuity science (8th grade only) Acuity Predictive C ELA Acuity Predictive C Math RCBM-If needed at move in time RCBM-January RCBM-May MAZE-Month of move in MAZE-January Benchmark MAZE-May Benchmark	

Sample Tracking Form

This part of the Google Sheet is completed during part one and two of the TSIM process, introduction phase and student connection.

Conferences

Date completed

Administrator: (name)

Handbook

Code Conduct

GRR Matrix

GRR Brochure

Counselor: (name)

Bully Prevention Efforts

Confidential Reports

Tiger Pledge

Schedule and classes

Student Leader: (name)

Tour of building

Locker

Schedule

Sample Tracking Form

This part of the Google Sheet allows the administrator to get to log personal interests of the new student and track parts three, four, and five of the TSIM process.

Prior Grades

Favorite Course

Favorite Activity

Favorite Sport

Favorite Book

GRR Lesson

Day 1 - Arrival/Dismissal, Lunch

Day 2 - Bus and Hallway

Day 3 - Testing

Day 4 - Restrooms/Cafeteria

Day 5 - Misc areas/Dress code/Technology

Day 6 - Respect, Accountability, Locker

Primary concerns

Parent

Student

Date of Review

2 weeks

(calendar request)

4 weeks

8 weeks

12 weeks

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