

# DIMENSION 2:

## Sharing Knowledge and Practice



**Primary and secondary schools working collaboratively and cooperatively to improve the transition experience of students and families**

Pivotal to improving transition practice as well as providing a safety net for transitioning students and their families, is the development of strong links between primary and secondary schools and with community organisations and agencies.

Partnerships between schools and community groups enhance outcomes for students through shared responsibility and collaborative approaches to transition strategies. Through the formation of transition clusters and networks, schools and community groups are able to combine their complementary capacities as well as their similarities and differences to work strategically to improve the transition experience for students and their families. Together they are able to articulate shared values and vision for a community approach to improving transition practice. Cluster and network approaches enable:

- Sharing of resources, procedures and approaches
- Exchange of ideas, knowledge and learnings
- Understanding other teaching and learning environments particularly in numeracy
- Establishment of shared programs
- Recognition of shared responsibility for transition by all participating schools
- Facilitation of shared professional learning
- Initiation of shared student and family support
- Establishment of shared policies

Regular meetings through a well developed governance structure allow the opportunity for:

- Exchange of information and data to support the transition of groups as well as individual students and their families
- Discussion of curriculum, assessment and instructional practice between primary and what needs to be done to help students to prepare for and adjust to the different arrangements in secondary school
- Feedback to schools about the preparation and induction phases of transition



### Dimension 2

[http://inllen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/JTD\\_TG\\_Dimension02.pdf](http://inllen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/JTD_TG_Dimension02.pdf)



## Developing a Transition Cluster

A strong relationship between a secondary school and its feeder primary schools can facilitate smooth transitions. A partnering or cluster approach can also help address any professional barriers between primary and secondary schools that may impact on the continuity of learning and the achievement of students. (DET, <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/transitions/Pages/planning.aspx>)



DET has developed a Toolkit to assist schools to develop cluster approaches.

See [Toolkit Transition Clusters \(docx - 858.91kb\)](#). The steps and resources below provide an overview of the Toolkit.

Step 1: [Identify current process at your school](#)

Step 2: [Identify cluster group](#)

Step 3: [Identify personnel to attend cluster meetings](#)

Step 4: [Hold regular cluster meetings](#)

Step 5: [Create a cluster collaboration strategy](#)

Step 6: [Document cluster transition plan](#)

## The Role of the Cluster Coordinator

The main role of a transition cluster coordinator is to both organise and facilitate all cluster meetings. The role can also include the following support to participating schools:

- Providing strategic advice to individual principals and school teams on the implementation of the schools' action plans as well as advice on individual student and family cases
- Meeting with individual staff members to provide support and advice on the implementation of school strategies
- Modelling collaborative, supportive and effective approaches
- Providing a connection between the cluster groups and schools, facilitating and supporting the flow of information and the sharing of knowledge, learnings and resources
- Connect individual staff and programs in cluster schools with schools and community agencies outside of the cluster
- Documenting all aspects of the work of the cluster
- Implementing ongoing evaluation processes using action research approaches. This can also involve working with an external evaluator
- Informing the wider educational community through sharing the identified learnings of the cluster



## Case Study

### **Annual Bus Tour – cross-sectoral exploration of teaching and learning environments**

As part of the Yarra Joining the Dots Project, schools who had undertaken the Transition Review Process and subsequently came together as the Yarra Shared Learning Community (Transition Cluster) identified that there is a general lack of knowledge about the curriculum, pedagogy and structure in other educational settings. To address this, a program of annual bus tours was established. The aim of the activity was to:

- To provide a relaxed opportunity for school transition coordinators, wellbeing leaders and teachers to join local community agency workers in building their professional networks and gaining a better understanding of the teaching and learning environments in primary and secondary settings
- To provide primary students and teachers with an opportunity to meet secondary staff and local community agency workers, to ask any burning questions they may have about transitioning to secondary, and for students to potentially meet their new transition coordinator.



## Case Study

### **Grade 5 Transition Day – An opportunity for students and staff to learn**

At William Ruthven Secondary College a Grade 5 Transition Day was implemented to enable students and families to gain an insight into the environment and expectations of a secondary school, and to have conversations around their experience at a secondary school. As part of these conversations, students and parents are able to identify any concerns they may have around transition from primary school to secondary school. This is also a great opportunity for the middle school students to enhance their leadership capacity to assist in running specific programs and offer the Year 5 students support and advice on their transition experience. Students from the primary school also get to understand how the secondary sector works and help eradicate any concerns about what secondary school looks and feels like now. From a staff perspective, it is a great opportunity for visiting staff to observe different pedagogical practices within a secondary context. It is just as important for the primary teachers to share their practice with the secondary teachers so that the students can find a balance between the two pedagogical approaches. Building a strong rapport with the primary school is essential in developing a strong transition program in and between both settings.



## **CONSIDERATIONS**

When establishing a transition cluster or network it is essential to formalise the relationships between participating organisations by establishing Strategic Plans and Terms of Reference.

Click here for a sample [Cluster Strategic Plan](#)

Click here for sample Cluster [Terms of Reference](#)

## The Joining the Dots Transition Network

The Joining the Dots Transition Network (Network) is for educators and wellbeing staff, community agency workers and others who wish to improve their primary secondary school transition and engagement practice. Through interactive sharing of practice, quality professional learning and networking, members come together once per term to improve their capability to prepare and support students and their families during transition. This collaborative and early intervention approach is key to supporting all young people and their families during transition, but is essential in supporting those more vulnerable to disengagement.



### Background

The Joining the Dots project (2012-2019) has affirmed previous research that an effective transition to secondary school is a key factor in determining whether young people remain engaged in education, complete secondary school and transition into positive career pathways. The development of this network has been driven by feedback from project participants, and it is one of the key recommendations from the 2018 Project evaluation.

For further information see <http://inllen.org.au/joining-the-dots/>

### Aim

The Network aims to build the capability of educators and agency workers to improve transition and engagement practice from Year 4 to Year 9. This includes:

- Practice and knowledge sharing between members
- Targeted professional learning
- Networking opportunities to promote conversations, relationships, trust and collaboration
- Linking school members with appropriate local community agency workers who can provide additional support for school, students & families
- Raising awareness of the need for an effective whole school transition process and practice that is embedded in curriculum

### Membership

Organisational membership is open to:

- Primary and Secondary School Transition Coordinators (or equivalent roles), teachers and wellbeing leaders from all schools in Moreland, Darebin and Yarra
- Local community agency workers with resources and capacity to support schools, students and families
- Key representatives from the Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Melbourne and Independent Schools Victoria
- Other appropriate educators / leaders



For further strategies and activities to support sharing practice and knowledge in the transition Years 4-9 refer to the [Transition Review Process Session 2 Grid and Model](#)