



# MAKING MOVES—TRANSITIONS

K-5 Learning Communities Newsletter

April 2017

## What transitions will happen as we move into K-5 Learning Communities?

Parents, Staff, and Community Members,

I appreciate your patience and support as we transition from ten elementary schools to five schools. It will be an exciting few years in Quincy. There are a lot of adjustments, staff transfers, and moving parts. We will do our best to make this another great opportunity for our students.

Next school year, our elementary boundaries, schools, staff, grades, and students' transitions will remain as they have for the last twenty years. We will have seven K-3 elementary schools and Baldwin will have two sections of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>—housed in Baldwin West and South. Baldwin North is scheduled for demolition this summer. In August of 2018 we will have three new elementary schools: our current Monroe Site, 48<sup>th</sup> & Columbus Road Site, and our 12<sup>th</sup> Street Site. For the start of that academic year (2018-2019) we will implement the new boundaries as approved by the Quincy Public Schools Board at the March 22, 2017 meeting. Students assigned to the Harrison Street Site will go to Adams or Berrian. Those going to the Baldwin Site will go to Ellington and Madison. In August of 2019, we will have all five schools operational.

We developed our plan to be simple while continuing to meet the needs of all students. We will work hard to do that. We will have world class buildings in two years. It is our goal to place a world class education in those schools. If you have any questions, please reach out to me or your building principals.

Respectfully,  
Roy Webb

## How do these changes impact our children?

Smoothly transitioning our children has been and remains a priority for Quincy Public Schools as we move our District forward to K-5 Learning Communities. We asked Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Sharon Bearden, to share some insight for our families:

The district's long term goal of building all new K-5 schools is exciting! Along the way, a series of short term changes will be required and some of our children will be impacted more than others. The district is doing its best to simplify the process. Children and staff may be experiencing a variety of feelings that come with any life change, and these are to be expected: apprehension, worry, excitement, stress, fear of the unknown. **Children learn how to manage life changes from the adults around them.** Educating ourselves and teaching children in anticipation of these transitions will foster resiliency.

All adults have experienced change by moving, starting new schools, new jobs, maybe even moving to a new community. Adults have learned what to expect and how to manage the range of emotions. You can help your child by giving them the valuable skills necessary in managing change throughout their lifetimes:

- sharing your experiences with your children
- supporting them through this process
- focusing on the positive, long-term goal
- leading by example



Another important message regarding the school transition is that we are all in this together and we are the leaders in this change for Quincy. We will be able to look back in pride that we were the first students to be taught in these classrooms.

At school, we teach the social emotional learning standards through our *Second Step* lessons. By the initial transition in 2018, our students will have had multiple years of learning about feelings, how to manage our emotions in different situations, and how to problem solve. These lessons will help to prepare our students for the building transitions. Our PBIS systems of support are available for students who may need some extra help in this process. You and your children are not alone and we are here for you. Please always contact your teacher, principal, or anyone you're comfortable talking with at your school for anything you need. Your QPS family is here to help!

# Helping Your Child Cope with School Transitions:

The following tips for parents come from our QPS Mental Health Staff:

- Visit the school: take the opportunity to meet with teachers, administrators, and other school staff such as the nurse.
- Write a brief statement of things you would like the teacher or school to know about your child.
- Be enthusiastic about going to school. Remind your child of all the “new and exciting” things they will do.
- New routines and environments can be exhausting for many children. It’s important to try to make sure that your child gets enough sleep, especially during the first week of school. Setting a consistent bedtime can help ease any strain.
- Prepare a healthy breakfast to help get the first days off to a good start. Feeling hungry can be distracting, especially for very young children. They will be better able to focus on what is going in the classroom with a full stomach.
- Time to say goodbye: try to keep it brief. Parting ways at the start of the school day can be difficult for both parents and children. Remember that your child can sense how you’re feeling, so **KEEP A POSITIVE AND ENTHUSIASTIC ATTITUDE**. Also, establish some sort of special goodbye routine: a hug, a high-five — they can help make the separation less stressful.
- Develop an order to getting ready and leaving for school. **CONSISTENCY HELPS A CHILD ADJUST** by increasing their sense of security.
- Stay proactive by attending parent-teacher conferences and other important meetings. Also, make an effort to attend school activities that are open to parents when possible. Your involvement can make your child happy and lets the teacher know by your actions that your child’s education is important to you.
- Stay in contact with the teacher throughout the year to help your child prepare for major changes or transitions that occur at school. If possible, try to avoid presenting any major changes at home while the child simultaneously experiences transitions at school.



The following are helpful hints from Leah Davies, M.Ed.—Early Education Consultant, Teacher, Counselor, Author, Past Instructor, Family and Child Development at Auburn University.

- Encourage your child to discuss the future transition by asking questions such as, “What have you been thinking about your new school?” Make a list of your child’s concerns and together try to find answers to the questions.
- Help your child get to know the environment beforehand. When possible, visit the school together. Even viewing it from a car or seeing a photograph of the building is better than leaving the first day to the child’s imagination.
- Let your child know it is natural to feel apprehensive. He or she may be fearful of not being accepted by peers or about mastering the logistics or academics of a new grade or school. Share childhood memories of times when you were worried about a new situation. Relate the good things that happened; perhaps how you met your best friend or how your new teacher became one of your favorites.
- Keep the days leading up to the transition as **POSITIVE AS POSSIBLE**. Share that his or her class will offer new experiences. The night before the first day, have your child lay out everything needed for school. Allow ample time the next morning to get ready in a calm manner.
- Expect the transition to be ultimately successful. Yet, remember that adjustments take time and the first days in a new school are often challenging. **YOUR ATTITUDE CAN HELP YOUR CHILD**; let him or her know that you are confident in his or her ability to adjust well.
- Attend the school’s orientation, open house, and/or tour the school with your child. Be involved by asking for a copy of the school’s calendar and handbook. Join the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), get to know other parents, especially those of your child’s friends.

