

## Annotated Bibliography & Peer Mentorship Research

**Wit, D. J. D., Karioja, K., Rye, B. J., & Shain, M. (2011). Perceptions of declining classmate and teacher support following the transition to high school: Potential correlates of increasing student mental health difficulties. *Psychology in the Schools, 48(6)*, 556–572. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.southern.edu/10.1002/pits.20576>**

Emotional support from classmates and teachers is a crucial factor in reducing student mental health problems. Evidence shows that there is a decrease in support for students as they advance into the later years, especially into high school. This study followed 2,616 students from 23 high schools to test the hypothesis that **perceptions of declining classmate and teacher support are associated with declining mental health**. Data revealed that as there was a lowered amount of support and self-esteem, there was a **high rate of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety**. The study found that the declining in classmate support was associated with increases in social anxiety. The study further discusses the need and importance of school-based practices targeting social support.

**Roybal, V., Thornton, B., & Usinger, J. (2014). Effective Ninth-Grade Transition Programs Can Promote Student Success. *Education, 134(4)*, 475–487.**

Several studies reveal that high school freshmen fail at high rates. High schools setting differ from middle school atmospheres in many ways, including: the environment, expectations, structure, and culture. Schools have the ability to address the needs of high school freshmen as they undergo these changes. Middle school and high school leaders can team up to help aid students in this transition. Research has found that attendance increases significantly toward the end of the eighth-grade year and the beginning of the ninth-grade school year, but attendance oftentimes drops after that. **Additionally, there is a relationship between academic achievement of ninth graders and the tendency to drop out of high school**. Also, studies have found that as school stressors increase, class attendance will also decrease. However, support systems in the form of parents and friends can increase school membership as it also increases. **Research has found the topic of belongingness and connectedness to a school can have a relationship with school retention**. “When students do not have positive relationships with other students and staff members, they experience a lack of social capital, which is not only inversely linked to academic achievement but is directly related to dropout rates”. Furthermore, studies find that **a sense of community has been linked with achievement motivation**. All of these factors support the notion that school and peer connectedness has a positive impact on academic success.

**Langenkamp, A. G. (2010). Academic Vulnerability and Resilience during the Transition to High School: The Role of Social Relationships and District Context. *Sociology of Education, 83(1)*, 1–19.**

The transition to high school is a crucial step in a person's life, and it can be an especially challenging one for middle school students. Starting high school on a low academic track and with low academic performance often leads to dropping out of high school. This study investigated what things might be helpful for students who are vulnerable as they transition into high school. During these months, individuals' social worlds are transformed. Research finds that **while lower academic levels might provide sufficient support for students, there is a tendency for this support to decrease as students climb the academic ladder towards high school.** Further research suggests that based on how a school district organizes itself, in a way that either fosters or does nothing to support transitional years, will determine how well-adjusted a student can be during the changes. Results from this study suggest implications for the way districts organize students and how contexts of school transitions have the potential to provide resilience.

**Ganeson, K., & Ehrich, L. C. (2009). Transition into High School: A Phenomenological Study. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 41(1), 60–78.**

This study asked sixteen students from one government school in New South Wales to keep a journal for their first ten weeks in high school as a way of recording their experiences. Using a phenomenological psychological approach, the journals were analyzed for major themes. This research approach aims primarily to grasp a specific human experience in an investigative manner. The study highlighted seven themes about the high school transition after analysis of the journal entries: the pivotal role of peers in helping or hindering settling into high school; the place of school support through programs and activities; the challenges of new procedures; different types of learning activities; feelings of confidence and success that can enhance transitional experiences; the place of homework in the academic curriculum; and the role of teachers in affecting student integration into high school. The study concludes in emphasizing the role which schools should play in supporting students as they tackle these seven major themes.

**Clark, N. C., Heilmann, S. G., Johnson, A., & Taylor, R. (2016). Impact of Formal Mentoring on Freshmen Expectations, Graduation Rates, and GPAs. *Leadership and Research in Education*, 3(1), 52–76.**

This quantitative study examines the expectations, graduation rates, and GPAs of participants (n = 113) in a formal mentorship program, "Freshmen Focus," at a small, rural Midwestern high school through the framework of organizational socialization theory. Findings reveal that freshmen students formed expectations of the program and their mentors relative to homework help, acclimation assistance, and emotional support. Furthermore, this study also demonstrates that **participation in the "Freshmen Focus" mentorship program improved grade point averages and graduation rates.**

**Barton-Arwood, S., Jolivette, K., & Massey, N. G. (2000). Mentoring with elementary-age students. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 36*(1), 36-39.**

This research provides support to the notion that mentoring has benefits for both mentors and mentees, as both develop emotional support and friendships, improve self-esteem and confidence, and increase in their set of knowledge and skills. **As mentees, students are growing by learning and practicing new skills with a trusted friend.** They can also see mentors as role models through modeled appropriate behaviors and experiencing multiple interactions with individuals of different backgrounds. Mentors themselves further benefit by improving their self-esteem by modelling these behaviors to others. Within the Iowa High School Athletic Association (1996) survey titled “*Utilizing high school student leaders to positively impact elementary students,*” principals and teachers in the school districts were surveyed to compile a list of characteristics for high school mentors. This list was compiled into the following characteristics: (a) caring students who are responsible and have the desire to make a commitment; (b) good communication skills, including listening skills; (c) patience to work with students who may not grasp ideas quickly; (d) positive attitude, enthusiasm, and a willingness to share part of themselves with younger students; and (e) students who exhibit good citizenship and moral character, in and out of school.