

Title: Helping students who transfer to new schools: An annotated bibliography

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Question: Is there research on reducing the negative impact of student mobility on learning and could you provide information on how school staff can help mobile students progress academically?

Response:

Student mobility, defined as students making non-promotional school changes, is widespread in many schools and districts throughout the United States. According to Rumberger's (2003) analysis of the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress data, one-third of fourth graders, 21 percent of eighth graders, and 10 percent of twelfth graders changed schools at least once in the previous two years. In addition, data from a national longitudinal study of a cohort of eighth graders in the United States showed that more students made non-promotional school changes during their elementary and secondary school careers than demonstrated a stable pattern of school attendance (Rumberger, Larson, Ream, & Palardy, 1999).

Students make non-promotional school transfers due to a variety of factors, often related to residential moves. Census data indicate that in 2008 ten percent of families with school-aged children relocated households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Due to the recent economic recession and mortgage crisis, more homeowners will likely face foreclosure and increase the rate of residential mobility in the U.S. In fact, the Center for Responsible Lending estimated that a total of 2.2 million subprime foreclosures on single-family homes will occur throughout 2009 (Center for Responsible Lending, 2008). This crisis is expected to affect 2 million children and youth (Lovell and Isaacs, 2008).

Non-promotional school transfers may be detrimental to student learning. For example, the General Accounting Office's (1994) national study of mobility found that of third grade students who changed schools frequently, 41 percent were below grade level in reading and 33 percent were below grade level in math. In comparison, of the students who never changed schools, 26 percent were below grade level in reading and 17 percent were below grade level in math. The National Educational Longitudinal Survey showed that secondary students with a greater number of school changes were significantly more likely to drop out of school than nonmobile students (Swanson & Schneider, 1999). Finally, Kerbow (1996) studied a fifth-grade cohort of Chicago public school students and found a cumulative relationship between school changes and math achievement over time for

multiple movers: students who moved frequently fell further behind their nonmobile peers in their math achievement.

Non-promotional school changes may create unstable learning environments for students. School transfers can disrupt the continuity of instruction for movers and non-movers alike (Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1994) and break social ties with close friends, teachers and the community (Coleman, 1988; Pribesh & Downey, 1999). Given the critical issue of student mobility, the focus of this annotated bibliography is research on ways to reduce the negative impact student mobility may have on learning, and more specifically, how school staff can help mobile students progress academically. The annotated bibliography is a compilation of descriptions of what educators and researchers have tried in order to ameliorate the negative effects of student mobility as well as policy recommendations for what schools can do to mitigate these negative effects.

Annotated Bibliography on Student Mobility

Bridglall, B. L., & Gordon, E. W. (2003). Raising minority academic achievement: The Department of Defense Model. *Pedagogical Inquiry and Praxis*, 5, 1-4.

The authors summarize the findings of a study on the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools titled, *March Toward Excellence* (Smrekar, Guthrie, Owens, & Sims, 2001). The authors begin by describing how DoDEA schools share similar demographics with urban public schools. DoDEA schools have high minority student populations (40%), a high percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch (50%), a high student mobility rate (35%), and a high percentage of students whose parents have no more than a high school education (80%). Then they outline the factors found in DoDEA schools that promote student achievement: 1) Dept. of Defense commitment and expectations – the culture of order, discipline, education, and training in the military community creates schools with high expectations, the military expects and holds parents responsible for active involvement in their children’s education; 2) establishment of goals – DoDEA uses a Community Strategic Planning Process to develop educational, administrative, and financial goals and the process encourages active involvement from parents, faculty, administrators, support personnel, community leaders, and military personnel; 3) effective resource development – DoDEA schools spend approximately \$8900 (in 2003) per pupil and pays teachers well; 4) culture of high expectations – is shaped by high academic standards, teachers’ view of themselves as personally accountable for student achievement, and a minimal reliance on tracking; 5) small school size; 6) flexibility of organization – DoDEA sets curriculum standards for each subject area and grade level but allows schools to modify class schedules and teaching approaches to best fit the needs of their students; 7) data driven decision making – student performance data is disaggregated by grade level, gender, and race, and student assessment results affect the coordination of curriculum and professional development; 8) commitment to teacher quality and professional development – DoDEA recruits and retains highly qualified teachers and provides teachers with continuous professional development; 8) high quality preschool and after-school programs; 9) community involvement – the military community engenders a sense of shared responsibility for children’s safety and well-being and a commitment to common goals is the norm; 10) alignment between central

direction and local decisions – DoDEA’s centrally determined goals and objectives are able to be adapted by local agents which enables the building of local and professional capacity; 11) organizational supports – DoDEA schools provide common planning time for teachers, reduce the number of specialized programs by replacing them with heterogeneous groups, use targeted student groupings to meet individual needs, use modified schedules, and create new role groups and responsibilities for staff to meet their goals. This descriptive article summarizes the work of Smrekar et al. (2001) and does not present original research. The demographic similarities between DoDEA schools and urban public schools is striking and it is noteworthy how successful DoDEA schools have been in raising the academic achievement of underrepresented minorities. However, it is important to note the context in which DoDEA schools function. They function within a tight military community where most families have jobs and housing (although one could argue that the pay of enlisted service men and women is low and the housing can be of poor quality) and this differs greatly from the neighborhood contexts of most urban areas.

Capps, W. R., & Maxwell, M. E. (2002). Mobility. *American School Board Journal*, 189(5), 26-29.

The authors present a brief review of the student mobility literature. They make the case that mobility is an issue affecting both students and schools by citing newspaper articles and research studies. For example, the U.S. General Accounting Office (1994) study showed that 41 percent of highly mobile students scored below grade level in reading and 33 percent in math. They cite a 2001 survey conducted by the Washington Post that found that students who have moved more than four times by eighth grade were four times more likely to drop out of high school. The authors list strategies that have been tried by schools to reduce mobility and mitigate its consequences: 1) inform parents of the negative effects of student mobility; 2) create transition classrooms for new students to help them adapt to the new school culture; 3) create partnerships with community service agencies; 4) create welcome packets for students that include classroom essentials like supplies and information about the classroom rules and procedures; 4) institute a formal orientation process such as assigning the new student a buddy or assessing the student’s academic needs or scheduling parent conferences; 5) create a greeter program (e.g., coupon books) that allows new students to get to know and interact with key adults to foster familiarity and a sense of caring. This article is written for an administrative audience and provides a global picture of mobility, but lacks depth. Many of the recommended strategies are ideas that are echoed by other researchers and authors.

Demie, F., Lewis, K., & Taplin, A. (2005). Pupil mobility in schools and implications for raising achievement. *Educational Studies*, 31(2), 131-147.

The authors examine the causes of pupil mobility and what schools do to address mobility issues in the UK. The study draws on survey data administered to 54 head teachers of nursery schools (4), primary schools (43), secondary schools (5), and special schools (2) about the nature and causes of mobility as well as what schools do to lessen the impact of mobility on teachers, pupils, and families. A case study of a Church of England primary school is employed to highlight and expand upon school practices used to address mobility identified in the survey. The researchers found that pupil mobility is a major factor on the local education agency and its schools. The majority of head teachers expressed that

mobility was very or fairly important for schools to address and that mobility affects school performance and the deployment of scarce resources. The head teachers reported that the most significant factors contributing to mobility were parents moving in and out of the area, the influx of refugees or asylum seekers and overseas migrants, homeless families, and children moving to join relatives. The strategies schools adopted to address mobility issues are providing language support for bilingual mobile students, analyzing and tracking student performance, target setting, creating induction programs for new students, using learning mentors, and encouraging and eliciting parent involvement. This descriptive study demonstrates that the causes and consequences of student mobility is a global issue. The recommendations provided in this article focus on supporting induction, assessment and progress monitoring of new students' learning. Although, the veracity of the educators' reports was not confirmed, I appreciate the fact that the recommendations are derived from what educators express they are implementing in schools.

Evans, D. A. (1996). The effect of student mobility on academic achievement. Retrieved April 30, 2009 from http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/14/b9/5c.pdf

The author provides a literature review of the impact of mobility on academic achievement. Most of the literature reviewed suggests that mobility lowers student achievement, particularly for students who are from low-income, less educated families. Next the author presents the methods for her study. Thirty students were randomly selected from a pool of 103 sixth grade students in a public school in Chicago. Two groups were formed: mobile students – students who attended the school for 1-5 years and stable students – students who attended the school for 6 years. The researcher employed a posttest only control group design. The outcome measures were reading and math scores on the spring test of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. The study found that mean posttest scores of the ITBS were not significantly different between stable and mobile students. When the mobile students' scores were disaggregated by the number of years they had attended the school (1-2 years, 3-4 years, and 5-6 years), students exhibited greater gains commensurate to the length of time in the school. The author includes six recommendations to assist transfer students and teachers: 1) allow students who move to stay at the same school provided parents provide transportation; 2) create orientation programs for new students; 3) provide transfer students with tutoring services; 4) have teachers be knowledgeable about various curricula that teachers in other schools use at the same grade level; 5) maintain portfolios of student work; 6) provide parent education programs to inform parents about the effects of moving on their children. The study's findings were not consistent with previous research on the effects of student mobility on student learning. Perhaps it is because it did not control for various extraneous variables such as attendance, SES, and pretest scores and because it had such a small sample size. The recommendations are similar to what other researchers recommend, but I take issue with the fourth recommendation that suggests teachers should be aware of what other teachers in other schools are doing in their classrooms. Teachers are short on time and are typically overworked. Without organizational structures and supports that would allow teachers from different schools to collaborate and network together, it is an unreasonable expectation to expect teachers to know what is going on outside of their own schools.

Fisher, T. A., Matthews, L., Stafford, M. E., Nakagawa, K., & Durante, K. (2002). School personnel's perceptions of effective programs for working with mobile students and families. *The Elementary School Journal*, 102(4), 317-333.

This descriptive study employs qualitative methods to illustrate the types of programs and services schools with high student mobility offer. The authors interviewed 18 participants (5 principals, 10 counselors, 3 social workers) from 18 schools representing seven urban school districts in the southwestern region of the U.S to examine school staffs' perceptions of the nature and effects of student mobility as well as the effectiveness of school programs and interventions addressing the problems associated with mobility. Data collection also consisted of reviews of school documents and observations of programs in operation. The researchers identified five themes described by the school personnel as effective programs: 1) programs geared towards addressing basic family needs such as providing before and after school programs, personal/family counseling, food and clothing banks; 2) programs addressing students' educational and academic development such as providing intensive school-wide academic programs like Success for All, tutoring services, before and after school clubs; 3) programs focusing on the personal development of students such as school-wide social skills activities or after school clubs; 4) programs geared towards strengthening family bonds such as providing personal and family counseling, family support teams, parent education; 5) programs focusing on community building such as providing health and resource centers, cultural activities, family camps, and welcome centers. Respondents agreed that effective program components consisted of providing comprehensive services to families, making families feel welcome at school, and creating caring educational environments for students. In addition, two contextual factors were found to be essential for sustaining interventions: internal support structures such as high mutual support from administrators, teachers, and staff, and external support structures such as support from community agencies like local businesses, organizations, and universities. This paper promotes the development of comprehensive schools that bridge services to meet families' basic needs is echoed by the recommendations offered by Titus (2007) and Kerbow et al. (2003). Although this research is based on school personnel's perceptions of effectiveness and thus does not make any claims about program effectiveness, it illustrates the ways in which schools and districts can try to address student mobility issues.

Hinz, E., Kapp, L., & Snapp, S. (2003). Student attendance and mobility in Minneapolis Public Schools. *Journal of Negro Education*, 72(1), 141-149.

This article describes the efforts to institute a district-wide policy to address the high absenteeism rate of highly mobile students in Minneapolis. The district developed the Comprehensive Attendance Plan (CAP), which outlined the goal of reaching 95% student attendance, in response to this issue. The CAP was implemented in 2001 and outlined changes in six areas: 1) district attendance policies and procedures; 2) use of data and technology to track student attendance; 3) clarity of staff roles and responsibilities; 4) student engagement in learning; 5) family engagement; 6) community engagement and support. The article describes the implementation of the CAP in the district. For example, the authors highlight the importance of clarity, equity, and communication in the development of the attendance policy because the lack of specific procedures and rules to

guide the day-to-day decisions at the school level led to inconsistencies, confusion, and frustration among key stakeholders (educators and families). In addition, the district revised the reporting of attendance data to effectively identify the scope, patterns and intensity of mobility among students with low attendance. The authors describe the other four areas of change in the CAP and the rationale for each area, but they do not elaborate on how the district experienced changes in these areas or what the district found particularly challenging or effective. The actions described in this article to reduce the negative impact of mobility converge with some of the suggestions outlined in the Kerbow et al. (2003) article such as collecting and tracking data on mobile students so that extent of the issue may be revealed and properly addressed and engaging families and communities in this endeavor.

Kariuki, P., & Nash, J. (1999, November). The relationship between multiple school transfers during elementary years and student achievement. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Mid-South Educational Research Association: Point Clear, AL.

The authors examined the relationship between multiple school transfers during elementary school and student academic achievement using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and One-way ANOVA. The participants were 105 sixth grade students enrolled in a northeast Tennessee school district. School records were examined to estimate mobility rates and achievement profiles on the Terra Nova Achievement Test. The findings revealed a significant negative association between multiple school transfers and student achievement. Also, significant differences in test scores were found between students who had transferred one time or less and students who had move two times, three times, and more than three times. However, significant differences were not found between students who had move two times, three times, and more than three times. The authors concluded that students who move one time or less have better academic achievement than more mobile students. In addition, after two moves, additional moves do not lead to further academic harm. The authors do not present recommendations for how to reduce the negative effects of mobility on student learning.

Kerbow, D. (1996). Patterns of urban student mobility and local school reform. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 1(2), 147-169.

The author uses data from Chicago Public Schools to describe the extent of student mobility, explore the causes of mobility, reveal mobility patterns within clusters of schools, and examine the impact of mobility on student learning and the instructional and organizational aspects of schools. The research showed that within a four-year period, for the majority of Chicago elementary schools, only 46% of the students who began in the school were still present. More new students were enrolled than continuing students from the first year. The causes of mobility were found to be related to residential changes as well as school-related reasons such as student and family initiated moves due to safety concerns or dissatisfaction with the school. Mobility patterns revealed that highly mobile students tend to move between a small cluster of schools, typically within 3 miles of each other. And the impact of mobility on schools and classroom instruction demonstrated that teachers become more review-oriented in their lesson plans and slow down the pace of introducing new topics to accommodate new students. The author discusses policy implications focused on two levels: reducing student mobility between schools and mediating the

negative impact of student mobility on learning and school improvement. The policy recommendations are: 1) develop open and personal connections with families that will provide incentives to families to remain at a particular school and resolve conflicts that may arise; 2) develop policies between schools that will allow students to remain in the school even if they change residences; 3) districts should identify clusters of schools that exchange students so that those schools can form collaborative responses to mobile students; 4) devise ways to facilitate information available on transferring students so that new schools have the information they need to provide needed services such as portfolio assessments; 5) create a school-wide approach to receive and integrate mobile students so as not to overburden teachers; 6) a standardized curriculum is *not* advocated, instead the author recommends supporting schools to make flexible decisions and locally coordinate curriculum to capitalize on commonalities in approaches to instruction. This article precedes the Kerbow et al. (2003) article and much of the recommendations offered in this paper mirror the ones listed in later paper. The strength of this research lies in the identification of the mobility patterns, that certain clusters of schools often “share” students as they move between schools. It is rare that students leave low performing schools to higher performing schools. More prevalent is the scenario where students leave low performing schools to move to another low performing school in close proximity.

Kerbow, D., Azcoitia, C., & Buell, B. (2003). Student mobility and local school improvement in Chicago. *Journal of Negro Education*, 72(1), 158-164.

This article reviews the research on the consequences of student mobility. The authors draw on data from the Chicago Public Schools. The article details the potential disruptions of curricular pace and instruction, the circularity of mobility (i.e., students are shifting within the system, moving from school to school within a district or within a specific cluster of schools), and the negative effects of student mobility on students’ learning. Six recommendations are presented to reduce levels of mobility or mediate its potentially negative effects on student and schools: 1) districts should examine and understand the patterns of mobility in order to better support families such as allowing students to remain in the school, at least for the school year, even if they change residences; 2) develop open and personal connections with families that will provide incentives to families to remain at a particular school and resolve conflicts that may arise; 3) devise ways to facilitate information available on transferring students so that new schools have the information they need to provide needed services such as portfolio assessments; 4) create a school-wide approach to receive and integrate mobile students so as not to overburden teachers; 5) districts should identify clusters of schools that exchange students so that those schools can form collaborative responses to mobile students; 6) a standardized curriculum is *not* advocated, instead the authors recommend supporting schools to make flexible decisions about the needs of mobile students. The article closes by highlighting two specific initiatives in Chicago that responds to the issue of student mobility. The first is the Staying Put initiative. This multi-level campaign is designed to increase the awareness of the negative effects of mobility on student achievement. The second initiative, creating comprehensive community schools, involves combining the best educational practices with a wide-range of in-house medical and social services for students and their families. The article summarizes previous research and does not present empirical research. What was appreciated, in particular, is the authors’ signal to reduce the overburden of teachers by

advocating a school-wide approach to reduce student mobility. It is also interesting that the authors do not advocate for a standardized curriculum. Acknowledging the influence of local contexts, they argue that a standardized curriculum may be too difficult to put into practice in a reliable manner. In addition, a standardized curriculum may be too restrictive in that local autonomy to respond to the community's needs may be at risk. Finally, they point out that mobile students tend to be behind their stable peers academically and instituting a standardized curriculum may not meet the disparate needs of mobile students.

Mehana, M., & Reynolds, A. J. (1995, April). The effects of school mobility on scholastic achievement. Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development: Indianapolis, IN.

The study authors examined the predictors of school mobility and the effects of mobility on grade 6 math and reading achievement. The sample included 988 urban, low-income black children participating in a longitudinal study of the effects of preschool intervention. The researchers conducted regression analyses for the study. Socioeconomic status was found to be the only predictor of mobility; preschool intervention was not. And mobility predicted grade 6 reading achievement and frequent mobility predicted a three-month decline in reading scores. The authors include recommendations for intervention strategies to mitigate the effects of poverty and mobility based on what other researchers have recommended or tried. They suggest that schools should develop children's problem solving and coping skills as well as enhance teachers' conflict resolution skills to ease the child's transition to a new school; develop strong parent-school relationships to facilitate the transfer of records; develop orientation programs for new students, families, and teachers, a buddy system, home monitoring programs to help with the transition to a new school; and build partnerships with social service agencies and landlords to decrease mobility in their communities. This paper focuses solely on the effects of school mobility on academic performance and does not address how mobility alters the work of schools and teachers.

Nelson, P. S., Simoni, J. M., Adelman, H. S. (1996). Mobility and school functioning in the early grades. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 89(6), 365-369.

The authors conducted a longitudinal study that examined the relationship between initial academic and social functioning in school and subsequent student mobility patterns for 2524 elementary school students from low-income families. For three years, kindergarten and first grade students from 25 schools in a large urban school district were tracked and data was collected on the frequency of students' leaving and entering a district. The researchers found significant correlations between demographic variables (ethnicity, EL proficiency, household composition) and mobility. For one, Caucasian students made significantly more multiple moves than Latinos did and students who were native or proficient English speakers had significantly more multiple moves than Spanish speaking students. In addition, students from two-parent households were less mobile than students from single parent homes were. Moreover, school level factors were found to be associated with mobility. The researchers found that the six schools with the highest proportion of students from low-income families (more than 90% of the student population qualified for free lunch) had significantly higher rates of student mobility and schools with student populations over 1,000 had significantly higher rates of mobility than did schools with

smaller populations. The researchers also investigated the relation of academic and behavior performance at the start of the study with mobility over the subsequent three years. They found significantly more students who did not move or moved only once were rated as above average in their behavior when compared with students moving two or more times. No differences were found between the groups on academic performance. While mobility was not related to tardiness, students who did not move or who had moved only once were significantly absent less than once a month in comparison to students who moved two or more times. Finally, among the students in the first grade sample only, those identified as having poor school adjustment were found to be more mobile than the rest of the sample. The authors conclude with recommendations for reducing the negative effects of student mobility on performance. They recommend developing programs that assist single parents by providing before and after school care to allow parents to maintain stable employment. They also suggest eliminating school policies that mandate school changes when a student moves to another residence within the district. Another recommendation involves developing social supports for new students and families such as welcome centers. These recommendations mirror the suggestions offered by other researchers such as developing community based schools, promoting collaboration between districts and schools, and creating structures to support the transition for new students.

Paik, S., & Phillips, R. (2002). Student mobility in rural communities: What are the implications for student achievement? Naperville, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

The authors provide a review of the research on the negative effects of mobility on students' academic achievement as well as on school functioning and teachers' work. The paper highlights state, district or school level initiatives that have been implemented throughout the country to address student mobility concerns. For example, the Indiana State General Assembly adopted legislation that requires schools to track and report mobility rates as part of the school's annual performance report. And in Dallas, TX, schools with high mobility rates have instituted a program for children of migrant workers that tracks children, provides counseling to families, provides tutoring services, and puts families in contact with charities and social service programs. In addition, the schools are connected to the New Generation System, a national network that stores academic information on migrant students and provides educators with the child's educational history. The paper concludes with recommendations for strategies to reduce the negative effects of student mobility such as providing professional development for school staff on the needs and circumstances of highly mobile students and their families; identifying and providing mobile students and their families to social service agencies; developing newcomer programs to facilitate a smooth transition for the student; creating a process whereby educational records are efficiently transferred; developing supportive attendance and disciplinary policies; and instituting outreach programs such as home visitation, to help parents and families understand school programs and policies as well as available community services. Although this paper's title suggests that the focus of paper will be on student mobility in rural communities, the focus is on highly mobile students not necessarily in rural areas. The paper does not present original research.

Perritt, D. C. (1997). Can technology increase course opportunities for migrant students? *National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAESP) Bulletin*, 81, 15-18.

The author describes three innovative programs that have been designed to address the educational needs of migratory secondary students who are often highly mobile. The first program, Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS), provides portable units of study that supplements regular instruction for migrant students at the secondary level. Students taking the PASS courses can receive credits toward graduation. The program began in 1978 and is available in 31 states. The second program, Project SMART (Summer Migrants Access Resources through Technology), was designed to bring the PASS program into the era of technology. Students who remain in their home states for the summer are taught in their homes via television with additional instructional support from locally-employed teachers and facilitators. Students who are living out of state temporarily also are able to receive instruction via Project SMART. Project SMART is telecast to 21 states. The final program, Algebra Across the Wire, was developed at the University of Texas at Austin and involves providing algebra course content via two-way audio conferencing to migrant students during the summer. The course is approved by the Texas Education Agency and counts toward graduation. These innovative programs demonstrate how institutions can change and adapt to fit students' needs rather than expecting students to change to fit the needs of the institution. This article is written for a practitioner audience and does not present original research.

Popp, P. A. (2004). Reading on the go! Students who are highly mobile and reading instruction. Greensboro, NC: National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE.

The author begins by providing an overview of the mobile student subpopulations (e.g., high poverty, migratory, homeless, immigrant, foster care) and the historical and legislative perspectives on serving highly mobile students. Special attention is given to explaining NCLB and the Reading First Initiative. The goal of this document is to provide practitioners who work with highly mobile students resources and information regarding promising practices for teaching reading. The author summarizes key findings from the reading research and studies that examine characteristics of effective schools and classrooms in the teaching of reading. In addition, the author describes the components of language and reading instruction based on the work of the National Reading Panel. Recommendations for creating general educational support systems for highly mobile students are offered. At the district level, the author recommends establishing procedures that ensure efficient transmittal of school records; creating a parent booklet with transfer suggestions; allocating additional resources to increase the academic achievement for mobile students; providing guidance to parents about the effects of school transfers; becoming involved with interagency efforts to provide families with resources to reduce mobility. At the school level, the author suggests preparing in advance for incoming and departing transfers such as procedures, routines, and training opportunities; having counselors meet with parents and students during enrollment; arranging a follow-up meeting with parents several weeks after enrollment; creating an orientation video or CD or brochure for your school; train student volunteer coaches to orient new students; conduct schoolwide acquaintanceship activities. At the classroom level, the author recommends maintaining a list of classroom rules and procedures and class schedule for new students; having classroom supplies handy like pencils and paper; developing short assessments for reading, math, and writing; creating learning packets of background information and activities to catch up students; providing a warm welcome for new students by assigning a buddy, making time to chat

with the student, providing tutoring to provide one-on-one support, and closely monitoring the student's progress; and maintaining a portfolio of the student's work that the student can take to the new school. This document is a designed for the practitioner who is concerned about teaching highly mobile students how to read. It is full of useful information about the reading process and how to understand the characteristics of mobile students. The recommendations on what schools and teachers can do to ease the transfer of mobile students mirrors the Popp et al. (2003) recommendations.

Popp, P. A., Stronge, J. H., & Hindman, J. L. (2003). *Students on the move: Reaching and teaching highly mobile children and youth*. Greensboro, NC: National Center for Homeless Education.

This document is a handbook that synthesizes research on the education of various subpopulations of students who then to be highly mobile (e.g., children living in poverty, migratory children, children experiencing homelessness, children of military families, children experiencing mobility on a global scale). A chapter is devoted to each subgroup where the subgroup is defined and common characteristics are described. The second part of the handbook is devoted to reaching highly mobile students in schools. The authors provide a framework for effecting change in schools to support mobile students by using data-driven decision-making. Next, the authors suggest that school personnel use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to think about how best to support the transition of new students into a school. Finally, they list recommendations for mitigating the negative effects of mobility on student learning. They suggest the following: 1) prepare school staff in advance about the procedures involved in student transfers, provide training opportunities, and involve staff in the development and revision of transfer procedures; 2) welcome the student and family upon enrollment and setting an initial tone of positive social interactions; 3) monitor and support student's social adjustment and academic learning not just initially but continually; 4) prepare for departures by establishing procedures that streamline student records transfer and provide students with opportunities to say goodbye. The authors include in the appendix a PowerPoint presentation on the issues of student mobility, case study examples of mobile students, and a table that lists potential interventions and strategies to support highly mobile students, broken out by various delivery levels – federal and state, local school district, school, and classroom. The handbook is practitioner oriented. It has a lot of useful information that is free of jargon and is highly accessible. There are several tables such as the summary of subpopulations of students who may be highly mobile and the checklist of intervention and support strategies for mobile students that school personnel and policymakers would find very useful.

Rhodes, V. L. (2007). Student mobility: The elephant in NCLB's living room. *ERS Spectrum*, 25(1), 1-10.

The author gives a brief review of the literature on student mobility and argues that there is a lot schools and districts can do to reduce school transfers. The author states that 58% of school transfers are due to factors not within the control of school staff such as residential moves, poverty, divorce, and other family issues. However, the author suggests that the remaining 42% of school transfers may be a result of school or district policies, which are within school staff control. The author lists 20 policy recommendations for reducing student mobility: district level solutions: 1) establish a task force to examine

mobility; 2) collect and analyze the district's mobility patterns; 3) reevaluate pupil assignment and transportation processes; 4) establish an awareness campaign of the negative effects of mobility on students for parents and school staff; 5) enable principals to restrict school transfers during the quarter or semester within reason; 6) discontinue disciplinary transfers; 7) encourage principals to hold face-to-face entrance and exit interviews for transfers; 8) adopt an electronic student records process; 9) consider a common curriculum; 10) build local alliances and promote state and regional discussions of mobility; school level solutions: 11) establish a mobility committee to gather and analyze data on mobility and brainstorm solutions; 12) hold exit conferences with every parent who requests a transfer out; 13) require a pre-enrollment interview to enroll after school begins; 14) lose the fantasy that the school would improve without Problem Child X; 15) keep an evolving orientation packet for new enrollees during the year; 16) start a welcome committee or buddy system; 17) provide new enrollees on an individual tour and orientation – particular attention should be given to high school students, where they meet with counselors to discuss credit issues or differences, transcript interpretation and review the new schedule; 18) alert teachers the day before the child arrives whenever possible; 19) create a protocol sheet for new enrollees and for those transferring out [article doesn't really explain what this means or looks like]; 20) review and monitor grading process for incoming students. This article is written for a practitioner audience. Its strength lies in the practical recommendations that are offered to reduce the number of school transfers and to help new enrollees adjust to the new school. However, the recommendations are good ideas that have yet to be empirically tested.

Rumberger, R. W. (2003). The causes and consequences of student mobility. *Journal of Negro Education*, 72(1), 6-21.

This article examines the issue of student mobility. The author reviews the data on the incidence of student mobility in the US as well as the research literature on the social and academic consequences of mobility for students and schools. In addition, the research literature on the causes of mobility is examined. The reasons students change schools were primarily due to residential relocation. The author also identifies the role that schools play (e.g., policies and practices) in influencing students to voluntarily or involuntarily withdraw from school. Students may voluntarily transfer schools to seek a higher quality education (strategic school change) or to leave an intolerable school environment (reactive school change). Students also may involuntarily leave a school due to disciplinary actions or expulsions. Recommendations for reducing unnecessary mobility are discussed: 1) counsel students to remain in the school; 2) prepare in advance for incoming transfer students by developing a short tests to quickly assess the new student's skills and abilities or create information packets about the school and extra curricular activities; 3) facilitate the transition of the new student as soon as he arrives by assigning a student who arrives very late to an independent study course where credit can be earned until the new semester begins or by encouraging the student to join extracurricular activities; 4) establish ongoing activities and procedures to address the needs of the new student such as forming a new student group at lunch or creating referral procedures for new students having difficulties adjusting; 5) assess the past enrollment history of incoming students and closely monitor their educational progress; 6) prepare in advance learning activities to accommodate incoming students such as developing learning packets with important

background information and activities of key units so that students can quickly catch up or creating and administering subject matter skills tests; 7) facilitate the transition of new students as soon as they arrive by assessing the student, pairing the student up with another student for extra help; 8) establish ongoing activities and procedures to address the needs of new students such as contacting the parent, providing extra help with academics, or being aware of signs that the student is struggling socially, psychologically, or academically with the adjustment; 9) establish procedures to recover textbooks or other school materials from withdrawing students. The article summarizes previously published work and does not present original research. The recommendations seem sound, but the majority of the responsibility for helping and integrating mobile students seem to fall on the teachers who are often overworked and short on extra time.

Schafft, K. A. (2005, May). Poverty, residential mobility, and student transiency within a rural New York school district. Paper presented at the Northeastern US Rural Poverty Conference: University Park, PA.

The author employs a case study design to examine the student mobility patterns and the causes and precipitating factors that lead to residential and school change among low-income families in a rural school district in New York. The author analyzes mobility, academic, and demographic data collected by the school district during the 2003-2004 school year. In addition, the author analyzes interview data from 22 mobile parents used to document 5-year histories of household residence and child school attendance. The mobility patterns indicated that the majority of school transfers (over 50%) constituted inter-district movement within county boundaries. The median distance of inter-district moves both in and out of the district was only 11 miles. The parent interviews demonstrated that the 22 families had moved residences 109 times within the previous 5 years and made 166 school changes. Ninety-two percent of the school changes were due to a household residence change. Ninety-one of the 109 residential moves were made within NY state; 28 were made within the same municipality and 40 were to a different municipality but within the same county. This suggests the highly localized nature of most movement. The parents noted the non-volitional character of the residential moves: eviction, leaving a temporary situation such as housing provided by the Department of Social Services or sharing a residence with a friend or family member. Economic factors accounted for the smallest percentage of family moves as identified by the parents. Instead, most moves were due to social factors such as relationship breakups, domestic violence, or family care responsibilities. The parent interviews indicated that parents were aware of the negative effects of school change on their children, but they often did not have the flexibility to remain within the school district. Finally, the researcher found that parents felt that schools were unresponsive to their needs and made little effort to reach out to them. The study suggests that the root causes of student mobility in this rural school district does not originate within schools, but is linked to larger societal problems such as poverty and lack of jobs and affordable housing. The author concludes with five recommendations that schools can implement to better work with mobile students and their families: 1) create an inclusive school environment that welcomes and orients new students and their families; 2) professional development and training for staff on issues of poverty, transiency, and homelessness to better communicate with mobile families and to identify families in need of services; 3) collect and analyze student mobility data to identify

patterns and better allocate district resources and target student populations most at risk; 4) strategically coordinate with other school districts that share mobile students in order to efficiently transfer student records and provide academic and social support services as well as build and maintain partnerships with local, county, and regional social service agencies. This study's finding of the localized nature of residential and school moves mirrors Kerbow's (1996) finding in urban schools. Certain districts and schools tend to share mobile students. Thus, tracking mobility patterns and establishing ways to coordinate between those institutions seems like worthwhile endeavors. However, in contrast to Kerbow's (1996) work of urban student mobility, this study demonstrated that rural students and families were less likely to initiate school changes due to school safety or disciplinary issues. In addition, I appreciated the inclusion of parent voices in this study to understand from the parents' perspectives the reasons for residence or school moves. It brought to light the fact that parents often already aware of the negative effects that home and school moves can have on their children. This calls into question the efficacy of policies that recommend "educating" parents on the negative effects of mobility on children's learning and development.

Smith, J. M., Fien, H., & Paine, S. C. (2008). When mobility disrupts learning. *Educational Leadership, 65*(7), 59-63.

The authors give a brief overview of how mobility affects student learning negatively. Then they present five strategies that Bethel School District in Eugene, OR has found to be effective in reducing the harmful effects of mobility on students' reading achievement. First, implement an enrollment plan that consists of assigning a specific staff member to call the new student's previous school to gather information about the student's academic experiences and using screening measures to quickly assess the student's current skills and instructional needs. Second, implement a school-wide instructional support plan, which is multi-tiered and geared towards systematically differentiating instruction for students based on their learning needs. Third, implement a coordinated assessment plan that screens students as well as monitors progress toward identified outcomes and allows educators to make data-based decisions. Fourth, develop consistent district-wide curricula and finally, build ties with families such as organizing a family resource center at the school or identifying a parent liaison to keep in close contact with the family. This article is geared toward a practitioner audience and does not present original research.

Smith, J. B., Smith, B., & Bryk, A. S. (1998). Setting the pace: Opportunities to learn in Chicago's elementary schools. Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

This mixed methods study examined the quality of instruction in Chicago Public Schools. The researchers conducted surveys of 2,036 elementary and secondary teachers, more than 800 classroom observations in 8 elementary schools and 7 high schools, and in-depth interviews with nearly 250 teachers whose classrooms were observed. The researchers found that the instructional opportunities to learn, as measured by the pace by which new and more complex topics are introduced at each grade-level, begins to slow down as of the third grade. In addition, the pace of instruction was influenced by a variety of school and community characteristics such as the prior achievement levels of the school, racial composition, the percentage of low-income students, and student mobility rates. Specifically, significantly stronger pacing was found in schools with lower levels of student

mobility. The authors present recommendations for supporting teachers to keep the curriculum and pace of instruction moving. For one, they recommend providing opportunities for teachers to collaborate and engage in professional interaction and reflection. Second, they encourage instituting small schools that can facilitate social familiarity and shared knowledge among the members of the school community. The researchers stress that these issues are not ones that teachers can solve alone; it requires coordinated school- and system-level action. The main focus of the study was not to examine the negative effects of student mobility on learning. However, the researchers showed that opportunities to learn are minimized in schools with higher mobility rates. I appreciate the researchers' recommendations in that they focus on creating professional learning communities and coordinated organizational changes to address student mobility rather than simply mandating professional development for teachers on the awareness of the mobility issue.

Smrekar, C. E., & Owens, D. E. (2003). "It's a way of life for us": High mobility and high achievement in Department of Defense Schools. *Journal of Negro Education*, 72(1), 165-177.

The authors conducted a qualitative study of the ways in which the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) school system addresses the needs of its highly mobile student population (typically students and their families move every three years). The study focused on 15 middle schools located in 10 school districts in the U.S., Germany, and Japan. It draws on interviews with school and military personnel, reviews of school and district documents such as curriculum guides and standards and accountability reports, and multiple school and classroom observations. The findings showed that the DoDEA schools' strategic use of standardized tests (to inform teachers about students' strengths and weaknesses to affect instructional planning and practice, to inform parents about their child's academic progress, to provide accountability for DoDEA schools) had a positive effect on student achievement. The DoDEA assessment systems purposefully link instructional goals with accountability systems and are supported by professional development programs. Notable features of the DoDEA school system are discussed. For one, teachers in DoDEA schools are highly qualified. That is, the majority of teachers have many years of teaching experience, advanced degrees, and disciplinary content knowledge of the subjects they teach. In addition, the teachers represent a stable workforce with a low teacher turnover rate. Another feature is the norm of teachers' high expectations for student learning in DoDEA schools. Teachers implement rigorous standards and feel a strong sense of accountability for their students' progress. A third feature is how DoDEA schools provide individualized attention to new students. If the student arrives without school records, informal assessments (e.g., interviewing the student using a standard protocol) are conducted to quickly assess the students' skills and abilities in conjunction with a computer-based assessment. A fourth feature is sufficient staffing to meet the challenges of a highly mobile student population. Full-time registration and records clerks manage the delivery and arrival of student academic records and guidance counselors are responsible for the initial contact with new students. The guidance counselor orients the new student to the school and assigns the new student with a buddy, a grade level peer. The fifth feature emphasizes the small size of DoDEA schools to facilitate more productive relationships between students and teachers. Finally, the unique contribution of the tightly

knit military community is acknowledged. This article provides an illustration of the ways in which schools and districts can provide a high quality education for mobile students.

Swanson, C. B., & Schneider, B. (1999). Students on the move: Residential and educational mobility in America's schools. *Sociology of Education*, 72(1), 54-67.

The authors used the data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88-94) to examine the independent effects of residential and educational mobility for students. They distinguish between students who move to a new home but do not change schools (movers), students who change schools but do not move homes (changers), students who move residences and change schools (leavers), and nonmobile students those who neither move nor change schools (stayers). The researchers modeled the effects of mobility on three educational outcomes (math achievement, change in number of behavioral problems, and the likelihood of dropping out of high school) during the first two years of high school and the last two years of high school. They found that the three types of student mobility can have differential effects on educational outcomes. The educational consequences of mobility depended on the time of the residential or school change. Mobility during the late years of high school was associated with negative student outcomes such as higher incidences of behavioral problems and lower gains in math achievement. Moreover, educational mobility was found to have short- and long-term effects on dropping out of high school. Students who changed schools early in high school were more likely than nonmobile students to drop out of high school. However, the students who changed schools in the early years were significantly less likely to drop out of high school during the last two years of high school than the nonmobile students. These findings suggest that the transition time after a school change, early in high school, is a critical period because students who are supported and can weather the difficult period of adjustment may reap important benefits in the long-term. The researchers do not provide policy recommendations for what schools and districts can do to mitigate the negative effects of student mobility. But the strength of this paper lies in the finding that the timing of residential and educational mobility matters and consequently, mobile students must be supported during the critical adjustment period that follows a change in schools.

The Kids Mobility Project (1998). A report from the Kids Mobility Project. Minneapolis, MN.

The Kids Mobility Project is a collaborative effort between community organizations, local planners, and researchers who wanted to learn more about the effects of changing residence on student achievement and adjustment in Minneapolis, MN. The report includes two studies on student mobility. The first report is a quantitative analysis of Minneapolis public school student data from November 1994 to June 1995. The study examined the effects of changing residences on student achievement. The researchers found that low-income students, students of color (African American and Latino), and students who are not living with two parents are more likely to move. Students who move residences tend to stay within a fairly confined area within Minneapolis, a low-income area within a 2 miles of the original residence. Students with the greater number of moves had lower average reading scores. Attendance proved to be a predictor of performance for students in the study; students with nearly perfect attendance outperformed students with less than 80% attendance. The qualitative study drew on questionnaire and in-depth interviews with 100 parents from the Minneapolis public schools to examine the impact of moving on children.

Parents reported that they knew that moving had a negative impact on their children; their children tended to have more behavioral, emotional, psychological, and social problems. Families reported that they moved because of lack of adequate housing or to get away from abuse (59%), because they were forced to move due to eviction or chemical dependency (21%), because they were trying to establish a better life for their children (11%), and because they felt moving was a part of their lifestyle (9%). The report concludes with a few policy recommendations: 1) monitor and improve school attendance, 2) provide convenient support services for low-income, highly mobile families, 3) increase the supply of safe, quality, affordable housing throughout the metropolitan area. The findings from this report seem to be the impetus for the Minneapolis school district's Comprehensive Attendance Plan initiative that was detailed by Hinz, Kapp, & Snapp (2003). It is difficult to critically examine the two studies that are described in the report as the study methods are not included. While all three recommendations are worthy goals, only one of the recommendations seems feasible (provide convenient support services for mobile families).

Titus, D. N. (2007). Strategies and resources for enhancing the achievement of mobile students. *NASSP Bulletin*, 91(1), 81-97.

The article reviews the research on the educational challenges related to student mobility. Specifically, the author addresses the characteristics of mobile students and the effects of mobility on student achievement. The author highlights specific institutions and programs that have demonstrated to be effective with mobile students, the Department of Defense schools and the International Baccalaureate program. The article concludes with recommendations for addressing the academic needs of mobile students. The recommendations include developing welcoming strategies for new students, networking or partnering with community organizations and local governments and agencies to bridge social services for mobile students and their families, and developing electronic portfolios that can be accessed, updated, and transferred with students from school to school. The article summarizes other published work and does not present original research. The intended audience for this article is school administrators and educators.

Urban Schools Initiative, Ohio Department of Education. (1998). *Student mobility and academic achievement: A report of the urban schools initiative mobility work/study group*. Columbus, OH.

The authors of this report give a brief overview of the negative effects associated with student mobility. Based on the brief review of the literature, the Urban Schools Initiative of the Ohio Department of Education provides recommendations for mitigating the harmful effects of mobility. They work group suggests that school districts collect data on mobility rates and the collection should be standardized across the state. The authors provide formulas for calculating a mobility index in order to ascertain the exact level of student movement within and between districts. It is recommended that school districts collect longitudinal data (at least 4 years) on student mobility in order to reveal patterns of mobility and to better allocate resources and initiate interventions. Specific action steps are provided such as: 1) districts should require the use of mobility data to assign resources; 2) provide districts with fax machines to facilitate the transfer of student records; 3) "red flag" students who have 3 or more transfers; 4) create a welcome committee for new students;

5) each school should structure the organization and allocation of resources based on student needs; 6) districts should review local decisions that impact mobility such as special education placement, bilingual programs, disciplinary transfers; 7) districts should explore the use of year-round schooling; 8) include mobility data on reports of school performance data; 9) districts should build collaborative partnerships with social service agencies; 10) districts should provide information on mobility and possible action steps as inservice training; 11) districts should encourage the development of community schools; 12) districts should inform parents about the effects of mobility on student learning and development. The authors also include recommendations by age/grade level (elementary, middle, high school). At the elementary level, they recommend standardizing the curriculum, including pacing guides, creating a centralized entry point for schools like welcome center, having teachers loop with students to increase the time with one teacher. At the middle school, they recommend looping and providing tutoring services for transfer students. At the high school level, it is recommended that schools guarantee transportation services to a school that is chosen by the student and family and to provide tutoring services for transfer students. Finally, the work group suggests that \$3 million in funding over two years is needed to create and maintain student mobility data gathering systems and subsequent action plans. This report is written for a practitioner audience. Very little research is provided to support the recommendations that are made. I agree with the recommendation of creating longitudinal data systems to examine the mobility phenomenon and using the data to make resource allocation, instructional and professional development decisions.

Wasserman, D. (2001, April). Moving targets: Student mobility and school and student achievement. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association: Seattle, WA.

The study examined the extent of student mobility in Alberta, Canada, its relation between individual student achievement, and its effect on school performance on achievement tests. The study's findings indicate that students who changed schools more often had lower average scores in direct proportion to the number of school changes. A mobility index was used to examine the relation at the school level between student mobility the percentage of students meeting standards on achievement tests. Schools with higher mobility rates had lower percentages of students meeting standards. This relationship only existed for schools with more than 20 students and was strongest for schools with mobility indices above the median. A relation was found between key socioeconomic variables and school mobility index values: schools with a higher percentage of students from single parent homes have higher index values, whereas schools with higher average family incomes and parents with post-secondary education have lower index values. The author concludes by recommending that organizational structures need to be created to allow greater centralization and access to key academic information of students who change schools to ensure accurate placement and student achievement test results for schools need to be cautiously interpreted taking student mobility into account. The author does not provide enough information on data analysis for the study to allow critical evaluation of the study. This study does not add much to our understanding of how mobility alters the work of schools and teachers.

Williams, D. (1996). Kids, schools suffer from revolving door. *American Educator*, 20(1), 36-39.

The author describes the problem of student mobility and its negative effects on learning. Williams illustrates mobility as a vicious cycle where students are dropped into lessons that their previous schools did not prepare them for and they start to act out making learning more difficult. In addition, the author suggests that transfer students have a ripple effect on their classmates because even if they are not disruptive, they consume extra teacher time. The author then describes various programs and strategies that have been tried to mitigate the negative effects of student mobility. In the Chicago area, the school board is initiating a publicity campaign to inform parents about the harmful effects of mobility and to ensure that parents understand the transfer and open enrollment policies. Some activists in the Chicago area are advocating for a change in leasing dates for them to coincide with the start and end of the school year. Others are advocating for school boards to build partnerships with government agencies and apartment owners associations similar to what has been done in Rochester, NY. Individual schools have taken on the initiative to educate parents about mobility and to inform them about the school's boundaries. Other schools are working towards becoming a community center for families and serving as a liaison with community agencies. Finally, schools in the Chicago Orr School Network and the Uptown Schools Network, clusters of schools that see the same children circulating among them, are aligning their curricula. From K to 9th grade, the curriculum will be broken into weeklong units of study so that schools in the networks will be teaching the same content at relatively the same pace. This article is written for a practitioner or policy maker audience and does not present original research. The strategies recommended echo ideas shared by other researchers and authors. I question the futility or efficacy of media campaigns intended to educate parents on the harmful effects of student mobility as the Kids Mobility Project (1998) and the Schafft (2005) reports have shown, parents are already aware of the negative effects but often times the residential move or school change is outside of their control. Finally, I agree with Kerbow's (1996) and Kerbow et al.'s (2003) suggestion of not standardizing curricula. Instituting the use of curriculum pacing guides limits teacher judgment, creativity, and autonomy and can make a difficult job much more difficult.

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Methods

To identify relevant literature, the ERIC and Wilson Web Education and Social Sciences databases were searched using the terms “student mobility and instruction,” “student mobility and student achievement,” and “student mobility and academic achievement.” The search identified 216 references. Based on a review of abstracts, articles were identified for this review that met four criteria:

- 1) publication date was in the period of 1995–2009;
- 2) study population was mobile students;
- 3) mobility references referred to students moving residences or schools rather than a physical disability that restricted body movements; and
- 4) focus of the article or policy document was on how schools and teachers can mitigate the negative effects of mobility and did not simply report mobility rates.

The review identified 27 unduplicated references for the annotated bibliography.

This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by educators and policymakers in the Western region (Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) at WestEd. This memorandum was prepared by REL West under a contract with the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Contract ED-06-CO-0014, administered by WestEd. Its content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.