Campus Transition Program Best Practices

The Purple Star Campus Designation (PSCD) includes the requirement of a Campus Transition Program (CTP), including a peer-led student transition team. Schools can effectively support incoming military-connected students and promote a positive, inclusive school culture by clearly defining campus transition programs and implementing peer-led student transition teams. This element of PSCD is crucial for helping new military-connected students develop a sense of belonging and connectedness in their new school. This document outlines the requirements and best practice strategies for implementing a CTP. This document aligns and should be used in conjunction with the **PSCD Self-Assessment Application Rubric** to identify opportunities to strengthen campus transition programs and for continuous improvement.

This resource accompanies module 4 of the *Purple Star Rise* course.

Campus Transition Program Requirements:

- Introduction to the school environment and school processes by the campus-based military liaison or by peer-led student leaders or ambassadors, if determined appropriate by the campus-based military liaison, must be provided to new military-connected students.
- Peer-led student leaders or ambassadors should be supported or sponsored by a campus-based staff member, such as:
  - » The campus-based military liaison.
  - » A campus counselor.
  - » A teacher.
  - » A campus administrator, such as a principal or an assistant principal.
  - » Another staff member who supports highly mobile students.
- Peer-led student leaders or ambassadors should participate in the following activities:
  - » Organizing and hosting newcomer social events throughout the school year that give military-connected students and families an opportunity to learn about campus culture, processes, and the community.

What is the Campus Transition Program (CTP)?

The CTP is an organized group that hosts newcomer social events throughout the school year designed to support military-connected students and families by providing an opportunity to learn about the campus culture, processes, and community. The CTP is led by the campus-based military liaison, a campus counselor, teacher, administrator, or other staff member who actively supports highly mobile military-connected students.

- » Facilitating guided tours of the campus, including the library, nurse's office, counseling office, gym, and cafeteria; and
- » Accompanying the new student to lunch the first week of school.

To see the Purple Star Campus Designation rule in its entirety visit: **Commissioner's Rules Concerning Veteran and Military Dependents, Division 2. Military-Connected Students, 19 TAC §61.1063**

The CTP can be supported through partnerships with external organizations that come to the campus to facilitate programs or be implemented directly by the campus-based military liaison.

Who are Peer-Led Student Leaders and/or Ambassadors?

Peer-led student leaders and/or ambassadors refer to a coordinated group of student leaders or ambassadors who receive training on how to create and foster a welcoming atmosphere for new military-connected students.

These student leaders are supported by a campus-based staff member or the campus-based military liaison, as a part of the Campus Transition Program (CTP).

An example of a peer-led campus transition programs facilitated by an external organization is the Student 2 Student® (S2S™) program hosted by the Military Child Education Coalition®.

Additionally, other installation and community student ambassador or peer-to-peer programs may be used. The type of CTP program implemented will vary by campus and community needs.

Benefits of the Campus Transition Program

The CTP is foundational in easing military-connected students' transition into the new school environment. The CTP includes a peer-led student transition team to engage students and parents, honor and increase awareness of miliary connections, cultivate school and community partnerships, and collaboration networks to support military-connected families in your school, district, and with community stakeholders.

Transition support should include a combination of:

- Campus-based military liaison.
- Peer-led student leaders or ambassadors.
- Other dedicated campus staff members.

The Center for Public Research and Leadership and the Military Child Education Coalition 2022 Report (CPRL and MCEC report) confirms supportive and engaged school staff positively impact incoming military-connected students to establish a "coalition of the willing" among campus staff to further support military-connected students and families. The CPRL and MCEC report recommends the following items for the campus transition program, campus-based military liaison, and peer-led student transition team:

- Use the Military Student Identifier upon enrollment and ensure proper coding in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).
- Ensure campus staff awareness and professional development regarding the transition process.
- Include parents in the welcome process to increase parental engagement.
- Empower peer-led student leaders or ambassadors to drive support for the campus transition program.
- Support the overall well-being and mental health needs of students experiencing transition.
- Provide a military family feedback form submission on the campus webpage for military families to gauge needs and preferences of military-connected families.
- Leverage social media regarding military initiative community events.
- Promote the campus transition program on the webpage for military families and link all resources for staff professional development, parents, and community stakeholders.

Gold Star Standards for Campus Transition Programs and Peer-led Student Transition Programs

- Ensure all school staff receive professional development regarding the unique needs of military-connected students.
- Organize welcome orientation tailored to new military-connected students and their parents.
- Pair with a peer-to-peer student sponsor for the first day or week of school.
- Ensure a "lunch buddy" for the first day or week of school coordinated by the lunch period teacher.
- Introduce them to the campus peer-led student transition team sponsor and recruit them to join the *Student 2 Student*® or other campus-based transition program.
- Connect new students with coaches or club sponsors based on their interests.
- Invite new students to participate in school service project(s), which allows them to contribute to the school community while fostering connections with their peers.
- Inform them of upcoming military initiatives, special recognition, or celebration events.
- Promote the campus transition program on the campus webpage for military families and link all resources for staff professional development, parents, and community stakeholders.

Campus Transition Program Best Practices (cont'd)

There are several community and installation peer-led student program resources that can be used to support the requirement of CTP. These vary by region, installation, and community.

Other programs include, but are not limited to, Anchored 4 Life, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, United States Army Child & Youth Services, Navy Child and Youth Programs, and the Air Force Child & Youth Education Services.

Campuses have discretion regarding what type of CTP that is implemented as long as it meets the requirements listed above (also see, 19 TAC §61.1063).

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