

Guiding Principles for Addressing the Issues of Transitioning Military Students

Memorandum of Agreement

I. Purpose

This agreement is designed to facilitate the mutual development of reciprocal practices, conduits for information between systems about requirements, and accelerate the exchange of emerging opportunities. The fundamental architecture of this agreement is to sustain partnerships that serve as extraordinary models. The anticipated outcome will be institutionalized systems for transition predictability of the high school experience for the military connected student. The intent of this Memorandum of Agreement is to immediately address transition problems identified in the United States Army's Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) data. For the sake of the child, this Memorandum of Agreement is adopted by the signers in a way that models and exemplifies partnership, flexibility, inclusiveness, and information sharing for all schools that serve high school age military students.

II. Scope and Memorandum of Agreement Time Table:

Designed to address transition challenges that are primarily high school connected, the scope of this document and process is to agree on issues that can be immediately solved and to begin implementing those solutions as soon as possible.

III. Guiding Principles

Whereas, Military students are faced with numerous transitions during their formative years, and..

Whereas, Moves during the High School Years provide special challenges to learning and future achievement, and...

Whereas, There are some 175,000 secondary school-aged students of military personnel, and...

Whereas, The Army's Secondary Education Transition Study revealed that the average military-connected student transitions more than two times during their high school years...

Whereas, The participants of the Secondary Education Transition Study understand that there are many students in schools that face transition challenges...

Therefore, be it resolved that in the best interest of all students in transition, we the undersigned agree to:

Improve the Timely Transfer of Records.

Practices may include:

1. Developing consistent systems that allow for hand carried or temporary records to be used for placement.
2. Cooperating and monitoring jointly with the supported military installation the effectiveness and efficiency of in/out-processing (school clearance).
3. Evaluating the processes through a determination of local critical effectiveness measures.

Develop Systems to Ease Student Transition during the First Two Weeks of Enrollment.

Practices may include:

1. Collaboratively developing "virtual" orientation (school and installation Web sites).
2. Creating and implementing combined awareness training of school and appropriate installation staff on the challenges a student faces as the "new kid."
3. Highlighting and monitoring the support systems and practices that increase the likelihood that a quick assimilation will be made.
4. Communicating information about specialized high school programs (e.g.: magnet or special schools admission requirements, timelines and pre-requisites).

Promote Practices Which Foster Access to Extracurricular Programs.

Practices may include:

1. Reviewing local try-out timelines and systems with an eye to the opportunity to increase access and encourage inclusiveness.
2. Encouraging counselors, school coaches, and Youth programs staff to routinely write letters of referral and/or recommendations for students transitioning out of the system.
3. Posting current and accurate information (including calendars of events) on school system and installation Web sites.

Establish Procedures to Lessen the Adverse Impact of Moves from the End of Junior Year, as We ll as Before, and During the Senior Year.

Practices may include:

1. Using counselors and school transition specialists as outreach to students and resources to parents and staff.
2. Encouraging and supporting student networking and sponsorship groups.
3. Giving senior students and their parents additional assistance and support as needed for graduation completion and post-secondary application.

Communicate Variations in the School Calendars and Schedules .

Practices may include:

1. Collaborating and posting current/accurate calendars and school year events in a manner that is easy for parents to access.
2. Sharing calendar and school year information
3. Defining, explaining, and illustrating the type(s) of high school schedule(s) in-place at each high school.

Create and Implement Professional Development Systems.

Practices may include:

1. Emphasizing strategies that support attention to individual student needs.
2. Developing, encouraging, and fully supporting joint installation and school professional development communities that share strategies, resources, and effectiveness indicators.
3. Discovering, recognizing, and consider replicating proven practices in sponsorship and peer mentor programs.
4. Ensuring that all professional school staff has the basic information about military life and culture. For example Army Family Team Building (AFTB) or other service modules could be used as a resource for professional development.
5. Developing joint training modules for schools and installation personnel.
6. Teaming school counselors with appropriate installation personnel/resources (chaplains, child and youth services, installation counselors) on the unique social/emotional needs of military students.

Continue Strong, Child-Centered Partnerships between the Installation and the Supporting School

Practices may include:

1. Connecting Installation School Liaison Officers and the school district counterparts in a working group in order to share ideas about partnership systems.
2. Including senior level military representation from the supported military installation as an ex-officio member or an advisor to the district school board / advisory council.
3. Encouraging site leaders to include an active duty member(s) and/or military spouse(s) as a member of the site based management team (or equivalent organization) of each high school that serves military students.
4. Collaborating with the installation to provide a community orientation program for military families.

Provide Information Concerning Graduation Requirements.

Practices may include:

1. Communicating high school requirements (enhanced or alternative diplomas).
2. Communicating options and opportunities for earning graduation credit
3. Communicating information about state testing
4. Communicating opportunities available to senior students in transition to graduate from the sending high school through reciprocity.

Provide Specialized Services for Transitioning Students When Applying to and Finding Funding for Post Secondary Study.

Practices may include:

1. Developing processes to inform parents and students of the best methods for completing college/ vocational-technical application. Specifically highlight resident eligibility requirements and the opportunities and the other challenges for the mobile student.
2. Modeling what should be in a student portfolio.
3. Training counselors and teachers on how to best assist a transitioning student on preparing for college/vocational-technical application.
4. Supporting preparation programs for success on the SAT and ACT.
5. Publicizing scholarships and grants available to all students and those uniquely designed for military connected students.

IV. Commitment

The signatory leaders commit to continue developing and implementing best and promising practices that will assist the transitioning military-connected student, as defined and articulated above.

Be it resolved, therefore, that the following school system signatories enter into this agreement on behalf of their organizations.

Superintendent Signature: Jerrold Wheeler
School System: West Platte School District
Date: 9-18-2013
Superintendent Name: Jerrold Wheeler