



## GUK PLAYBOOK PROFILE

### Senior Events: GEAR UP Go Day

#### what

GEAR UP Go Day (GU Go Day/GUGD) is the annual culminating event during which Priority Student Cohort 12<sup>th</sup> grade students have an opportunity to celebrate achievements and next steps after high school graduation. GU Go Day events recognize students for their progress on necessary criteria required to successfully transition after high school. This event will celebrate students committed to entering the military or postsecondary education after high school graduation (postsecondary education-bound students are "GEAR UP Scholars").

This event will kick off GEAR UP Scholar's transition to postsecondary education, and connect them with GUK and institutional staff at postsecondary partner institutions who will support students to and through their first year. GUK will collaborate with our high school partners, Kentucky colleges and military recruiters to recognize students and celebrate their accomplishments and commitment to success.

The desire to recognize and celebrate postsecondary education-committed high school seniors has gained momentum on the national level in recent years due to former First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher initiative. Supported by organizations like Better Make Room and American College Application Campaign, "College Decision Day" events are designed to mimic events like the NCAA's National Signing Day and the NFL draft, and reinforce the notion that excellence in the classroom is an achievement worth as much, if not more, recognition than athletic achievement. Most events involve public recognition for seniors from school and community leaders and a crowning moment when the students sign certificates indicating where they plan to attend college after high school. In 2019, College Decision Day programs were held at 100 high schools across Kentucky to celebrate and recognize seniors for making educational plans beyond high school graduation. GEAR UP Go Day is GUK's version of a College Decision Day in which students are recognized for the places they will go.

This event will require standards-based implementation across all GUK high schools with extreme flexibility in customizing delivery methods to meet these standards and the unique school environment. This event will combine GEAR UP 4 Advising, GEAR UP 4 Families, and GEAR UP Scholars to recognize and support students and their

#### research basis

Low-income families often consider college beyond their reach, contributing to lower rates of college enrollment (Thompson & Cuseo, 2012; Manning, 2018).

*A college education provides a life of options, rather than of limitations. Provide your students with these opportunities by making your high school a place where college is the next step for everyone. When students have school, parental and community support, college becomes the norm: **higher education is the expectation rather than the exception.** A college-going culture helps all students set and achieve high goals and generates other important values such as appreciation of academic success, desire to succeed, and ambition to be a lifelong learner.*  
(collegeboard.org 2020)

families as they transition into their postsecondary path. It is at this event that GEAR UP Scholars accepted into a postsecondary institution are recognized.

**GEAR UP Kentucky's GEAR UP Go Day delivery standards:**

1. GEAR UP Scholars (all postsecondary education-bound students) will sign a "Commit Not to Quit" certificate for the event.
  - a. All GEAR UP Scholars eligible to participate in GUGD will receive a GEAR UP Go pin; pinning ceremony at the GUGD event is required for GEAR UP Scholars who qualify.
  - b. Students who do not attend will get their PIN after the event in a way determined by the District Program Manager (DPM).
2. Military path students will receive a Military completion certificate during the event.
3. DPMs will create and implement a required registration process to determine food and materials needs.
4. DPMs will enter all confirmation data into the appropriate excel file or GUSS to confirm where the students has applied, been accepted and will attend orientation.
5. GEAR UP district staff must collaborate on a family engagement component that engages families and allows them to celebrate their students' successes.
6. To ensure an intentional connection is made to GEAR UP staff who will serve GEAR UP Scholar students after high school graduation, Regional Program Coordinators (RPCs) will attend one or more events; video introductions of RPCs will occur at every event statewide if the RPC is not present. DPMs will need to share all pertinent information about the event with RPCs via the school site team planning document.
7. Each district must invite new partners or engage existing partners to help facilitate the event. They can be a part of the student component, the family component, or all components.
8. Every event is advertised in the appropriate timeframe and students will be recognized for their acceptance prior to the event inside of their school. This is the "oh the places they will go" campaign.

## who

All students – and their families - participating in APPS who have committed to entering the military or postsecondary education after high school graduation (postsecondary education-bound students are "GEAR UP Scholars") and have met the criteria below are eligible to be recognized at GEAR UP Go Day.

In order to participate, students must be a senior GU Scholar or military path student who have completed at least one documented APPS sessions and:

- GEAR UP Scholars – have applied and been accepted to a postsecondary institution; DPMs will confirm accepted/orientation institution in GUSS or data collection tool.
- Military path students - have met with a recruiter and committed to a MEPS date or have completed MEPS; DPMs will confirm MEPS in military task list of note data scheduled.

Maximum participation is every Military or GU Scholar path senior who have solidified a plan to follow through as a GU Scholar or committed to enlist in the military. DPMs will need to confirm each student is "transition ready" before they invite them to participate.

- If the GEAR UP Scholar path student or Military Path student is not "transition" ready then the DPM will follow up with them to assist in completing the necessary tasks to have them "transition" ready. These students are still GEAR UP Scholar path or "undeclared" GU Scholars if they have been accepted, but not confirmed orientation.

- GUK DPMs, in collaboration with their GUK College and Career Coach (CCC), RPCs, school counselor, college admissions and financial aid representatives, school principal, coaches, recruiters, community organization, local government officials, and hiring agent(s) will collaborate to make GUGD a success.
- Several partners may be included in this event:
  - Schools – provide space, time, and resources
  - KHEAA – provide expertise of financial aid and FAFSA
  - GUK – provide and coordinate resources, materials, food, expertise, and staff
  - Postsecondary institutions – provide financial aid and admissions representatives information and recruiting materials.
  - Other GUK staff and anyone else who has a stake in GUK or student success are potential partners.

## when

- A standard timeframe for annual implementation is April 15 through May 31. May 1 is the national College Signing Day. If an event is scheduled outside of the recommended date range, this must be approved by GUK and signed off on by the GUK Director for Project Services and Evaluation.
- Scheduling the event ideally occurs in your site team meetings at the end of the previous academic year; if not, work with your site team to select a date prior to or at beginning of the school year.
- Preparation and planning begins in January. GUK recommends that each DPM recognize all the places the students will go starting early in the spring semester of the senior year and use the GUGD recognition as a driving force to get GU Scholars to commit to a postsecondary education institution/destination.

## how

GUK staff will receive access to a multi-faceted GUGD toolkit to communicate and promote the event and a registration process must be coordinated by GUK to confirm attendance. Recognition for branch of military and postsecondary education institution should be included. The Advising Channel on MS Teams houses the toolkit provided by GEAR UP Kentucky, which includes:

- Family and student sign-in sheets for event(s) – this is a required component and all participants must sign in for data entry and accuracy purposes.
- Posters and customizable flyers
- Folders colored by path with RPCs/PSE contact information, military transition quick guide, and any other materials deemed appropriate by the DPM or partner school.
  - GEAR UP Scholars - Red
  - Military - Gold
- A military completion certificate
- A four-page information quick guide to college transition success with introduction information for their GEAR UP Scholar Coach (Regional Program Manager).
- A military transition guide
- Recommended usage of a backdrop for taking pics with families/students/staff.
- GU Scholars "Commit Not to Quit" certificate signed by the CPE President and GUK Executive Director
  - Signature lines can be added/removed to customize by school; add principals/counselor, DPM and/or family members) if deemed appropriate, depending upon the student's supports.
  - Students will be told of the pin during their "commit not to quit" signing. DPM will invite students and families at time of student signing.

- The signing can occur at a time most convenient and feasible with senior student schedules; it is recommended that students sign the certificate prior to the event to encourage participation/attendance at the event.
  - If you cannot add the signing event to a scheduled curriculum lesson or rotate students through advising sessions to sign, determine if there is a pre-existing event or assembly during which the signing could occur.
  - If that is not feasible and participation registration is going well, signing can occur during the event (though this will make the event longer in duration).
- GU Scholars PIN for pinning ceremony during event.
- RPC video introduction (shown at every event for every RPC not present).
- GUGD standard announcement/invites - email, One Call, news release, announcement and social media narratives/content.
- GUK staff can use the GUK-provided bulletin board or other school displays provided to recognize "Oh the places they will go."

GEAR UP staff must have family members register in a way that will allow estimating food and material cost, venue size, and potential event participation. Registration tools and processes may vary by school and are at the discretion of the DPM.

### Budget

Funds for the GU Go Day event are outlined in annual GUK district budget and should be included in the QAEP for Q3. The Q3 QAEP must reference the cost allocations for the event. A use of funds form is required. The form must be submitted and approved before purchasing food; food is allowable for evening events only. The budget allocations to support this event include items such as:

- Food for family/evening event
- Materials and supplies for creating bulletin board highlighting "oh the places they will go" or any other creative idea to build interest in the event.
- Materials and supplies for the event
- Materials and supplies for the family component

### Communication Timeline and Materials

All standard communication materials and toolkit supplies will be available through the Senior Events MS Teams folder in the MS Teams Advising Channel > files > Senior Events > GEAR UP Go Day > GUGD Toolkit. GUK staff should contact the Director of Operations and Partnership to receive posters printed in color if color printing is not available at their school.

### Documents to support implementation

- Sign-in sheets
- Registration forms or tools/platforms (Survey Monkey, etc.)
  - Keep documentation of registration
- Event invitations
- Customized flyer sent home in advance and posted around campus

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- Customized posters as advertisements
- Receipts and invoices for food if evening event
- Invoices and/or receipt for materials purchased

#### Data Needs

- Student participants
- Family participants
- Partners participating
- Number GU Scholars confirmed
- Number of GU Scholar path students remaining after event
- Number of GU Scholar undeclared (can be recognized, but still need a confirmation of institution attending for PSE follow up).
- Number of students per PSE partner institution
- Students self-identified orientation institution
- Number of military-bound students by MEPS completion/date scheduled
- Number of student still exploratory

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## partners

- **RPCs:** Attend at least one event in person as deemed appropriate– either the event held at the high school that sends the most students to the RPC's institution(s) or one in their region, depending upon scheduling and logistics. Best practice is an RPC attends each event.
  - GU Scholars' introduction to RPCs is required at the event, either virtually or in person; introduction videos for each RPC is included in the toolkit on Teams.
  - To coordinate RPC participation, DPMs will add information regarding GUGD event date, time, and location, as well as, number of GU Scholars, recognized, per institution to the GUGD Tab in the school site team planning tool, tab senior events.

- **GUK schools partners:** Assist with any necessary logistics and planning. Some schools may already have an event they conduct annually. If this is the case, DPMs should discuss how they can assist and how the event could be expanded or enhanced to align existing event(s) with GUK GUGD delivery standards. Schools may be encouraged to provide matching funds or materials. The more support students have from teachers and counselors, the more likely they are to succeed. DPMs should engage/recruit teachers/school staff identified by students as being supportive to be involved in the event, in some capacity. Additionally, the principal/counselor, or FRYSC coordinator may want to assist with the pinning ceremony for the GU scholars. School staff should be utilized as a resource in advertising and making students and families aware of the event.

In the event the school is reluctant to include any of the GUGD standards, DPMs will create an event outside of the school utilizing the four pillars( community/family) to have students both “commit not to quit” and take part in the pinning and celebratory presentation of certificates. This can be implemented at a local KCTCS partner institution, local library or involved community partner location such as UK Cooperative Ag extension office.

- **DPMs:** Collaborate to identify strategies/actions to engage family members in celebrating their student's successes through the GUGD event virtually and/or in-person.

- **College and Career Coaches** are not required to be physically present for this event. However, if there is a need and the DPM outlines a role or the CCC already has a role with these students, then they should proceed in collaborating on the event. It is recommended that CCCs be used to support the GUGD family component.
- **GUK partners:** GUGD is about building relationships and partnerships within your school and GUK to celebrate our students' success. External and local partners need to be identified early and may include postsecondary admission reps and/or financial aid advisors, school counselors, human resources generalist, military recruiters, principals, FRYSC staff, local employers, representatives from community organizations, etc..

DPMs may need support in soliciting postsecondary partners to attend and in getting high school partners to align existing activities to GUK standards. DPMs should work with their high school site team, high school counselors, and RPC if they are meeting resistance or need help getting partners to commit to participation in the event. At a minimum, DPMs should request a postsecondary institution/program send a representative to recognize students for their success in starting their postsecondary paths as their student. Additional possible ways these partners may be asked to support GUGD include:

- Provide financial aid, admissions, enrollment or other transition-related information to students and families.
- Provide university 'swag' and promotion items to their future students
- Recognize their future students during the ceremony.
- Deliver a presentation agreed upon by the school site team

## implementation timeline

when	what	GUK staff responsibilities
April/May prior academic year	Set date on Master Calendar/discuss with GUK School Site Team (SST)	GUK DPMs will communicate to administrators in school site team to schedule the event on the school's master calendar. If this cannot be done at this time, ask for the date to have a discussion to schedule. Follow up through summer if needed.
December/January	SST meeting overview of event	GUK DPMs will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide the standards documents to the SST and review what plans the school may already have in place for a signing day-type event.</li> <li>- If school already hosts a similar event, the SST should explore ways GUK can collaborate to expand or enhance the event.</li> <li>- Confirm what registration process that should be used with the school and in SST planning tool.</li> </ul>
January	1. Solicit partners/communicate needs	GUK DPMs will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Begin outreach to all the potential partners to request their participation; request the</li> </ul>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Schedule 'commit not to quit' signing period with students</li> <li>3. Plan the event with school and external partners</li> <li>4. Begin building registration process and how to document</li> <li>5. Begin "oh the places they will go" research/confirmation &amp; marketing/recognition in the school</li> </ol>	<p>event be placed on their calendar even if the number of students who will attend their institution/organization is unknown at this early point.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List event date/time on SST planning document senior events &gt;FAFSA Frenzy in the SST folder in MS Team &gt; General Channel.</li> <li>- Facilitate RPC attendance/participation based on numbers of students attending RPCs institution.</li> </ul>
<b>February</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin communication with students and families</li> <li>2. Begin registration process</li> <li>3. Begin commit not to quit signing and invitations to participants</li> <li>4. Begin recognition of "oh the places they will go"</li> <li>5. Order materials for event and advertising</li> </ol>	<p>GUK DPMs will utilize the GUGD toolkit to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work to identify a family engagement strategy for inviting/engaging family members in the planned event.</li> <li>- Coordinate dissemination of flyers, emails, news releases, One Calls, with school staff and partners.</li> <li>- Brainstorm ideas for displaying "All the Places You (<i>your students</i>) will go" and begin displaying this in the schools (create a bulletin board or decorate hallway).</li> <li>- Have GEAR UP Scholar student's sign Commit Not to Quit certificate and discuss/invite them to attend event (if applicable). This can be done through classroom delivery and each class will sign if student is a GU Scholar. If not, provide invitations for the students who meet the military-bound criteria to participate.</li> <li>- Implement creative ways to drive participation.</li> <li>- For schools with alternate methods of implementation, GU staff will ensure all standards of delivery are met. If there is an alternative plan, it must be communicated directly to and approved by GEAR UP Director of Project Services and Evaluation.</li> <li>- Update SST planning tool tab Senior Events &gt; FAFSA frenzy with all pertinent details as they event-planning progresses.</li> </ul>
<b>March</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finalize partners, participants and</li> </ol>	<p>GUK DPMs will:</p>

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	<p>confirm students who have not signed or been invited.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Confirm location and access, time of day and directions.</li> <li>3. Send out email and One Call.</li> <li>4. Confirm any expenses and submit food orders.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Determine food estimate based on registration and event time of day</li> <li>- Build event allocation into QAEP and complete necessary Use of Funds form if providing food.</li> <li>- Plan all logistics, confirm Internet and technology needs, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>April- May</b>	GEAR UP Go Day	Coordinate and host GUGD event within recommended timeframe of April 15 - May 31.

## how we will measure success

GUK will measure success of GUGD through:

- Students and family participation rates; service delivery target of 10% or more for family participation.
- College-going rates increase 3 ppt. annually with 65% of GUK students immediately enrolling in postsecondary education by Program year 7.
- Partner engagement in event

In 2020, GUK will not use a formal participant evaluation of GUGD; in future years, students and families complete a survey at the conclusion of the event. Standard survey provided by Director for Student Services and Evaluation.

**Commented [BTA(4):** Cody, I need this survey to add to the toolkit.