Military Students on the Move

A Toolkit for School Leaders

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About this Toolkit

School satisfaction is a major Quality of Life issue for military families. Schools are often heavily impacted by large-scale military moves. School Leaders, in partnership with installation commanders, are key players in ensuring school satisfaction and a smooth transition for the children of mobile military families.

The School Leader's Toolkit is one of three toolkits prepared by the Department of Defense to assist installation commanders, educators, and families involved in large-scale military relocations. This Toolkit is for School Leaders who will experience a large gain in school population due to the movement of military members and their families. This Toolkit is designed to help School Leaders—school superintendents and their designees—develop and implement school transition strategies.

The accompanying CD offers hyperlinks for quick access to information, forms and resources. The Toolkits can be found in their entirety at www.militarystudent.org and are constantly updated on this site. They may be shared with School Leaders at every level, other school districts, and with parents.

Contents

The School Leader's Toolkit provides concise information and links to other resources. The Toolkit contains four sections:

1. **Annotated School Leader's Checklist** for pre-, during, and post-relocation activities that includes:
   - Promising practices for developing **partnerships** with installation commanders
   - Suggestions for ongoing **communication** with various stakeholders involved in relocation
2. **Major Challenges of Student Relocation** identifies challenges and provides:
   - **Recommendations** for ways School Leaders can address the challenges
   - **Promising practices** and **links** related to each challenge
3. **Background Information** includes:
   - **Understanding the Military Student**
   - **Funding Sources**
   - **Impact Aid**
   - **Board Policy**
4. The **Tools Section** provides:
   - Suggestions for information to be included on school and district **websites**
   - Strategies to develop and assess **local action plans**
   - A PowerPoint template with talking points for presentations to Installation commanders and other community groups
   - Glossary of **military and educational terms**
   - **Links** and descriptions of organizations and websites for additional information

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Comments from DoD State Round Table Discussions

"…we can solve this now. The problem is complex and systematic so we must work at multiple levels—local, state, and national."

Dr. David Splitek, Superintendent, Lackland ISD, Texas

"Transferability is an issue. We need to find a way to standardize that for military or any mobile society."

Parent, Texas

"We need to make sure we create a smooth playing field for these children as the move from installation to installation."

Superintendent, Texas

"Don't accept 'no' as an answer. Seek waivers if necessary."

LTG (Ret.) Joseph Redden
Former Superintendent, Cobb County School, Georgia

"I think something that students need, especially in a school that has military children, are people you can talk to…."

Student, California

"I decided to make the most of my moves—not to let school get in the way of my education."

Student, California

School Leader's Checklist

This School Leader's Checklist for gaining schools and districts provides suggestions for a step-by-step approach to accommodate a large influx of students. A one-page summary checklist is available in the Tools Section. Details of particular checklist items and suggested links follow the checklist.

The School Leader's Checklist is divided into three phases:

1. **Pre-Relocation**
2. **During Relocation**
3. **Post-Relocation**

Phase 1: Pre-Relocation

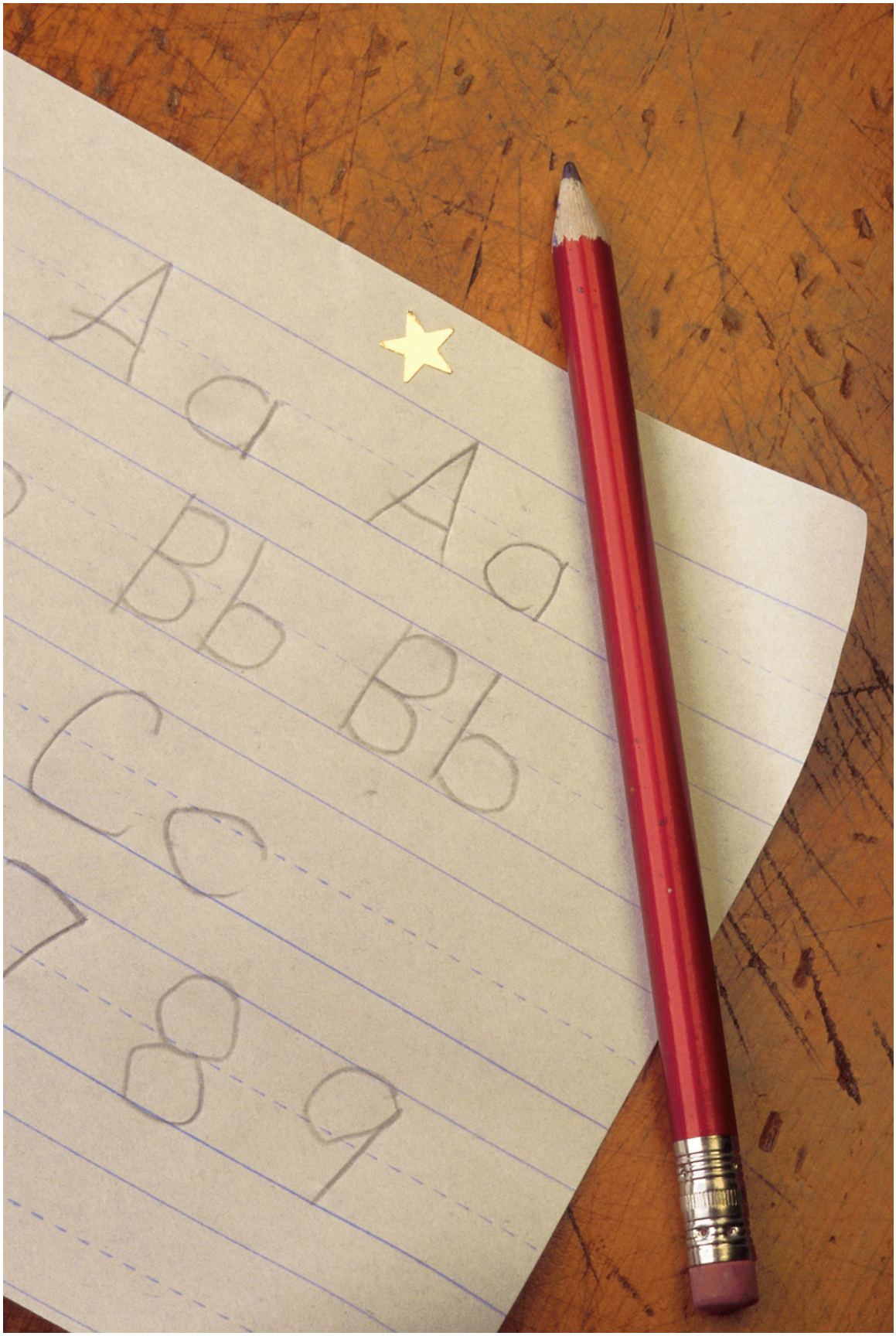
- ❑ 1.1. Identify and designate an installation or military liaison in your school system.
- ❑ 1.2. Identify and contact key players for military child education, both on and off the installation.
- ❑ 1.3. Determine as much information as possible about arriving students.
- ❑ 1.4. Determine funding needs and identify potential sources of funding.
- ❑ 1.5. Hold informal discussions and meetings with installation and local community leaders, parents, and other stakeholders regarding the potential impact.
- ❑ 1.6. Develop a proactive plan.
- ❑ 1.7. Develop an assessment plan to promote continuous improvement based on best practices and lessons learned.
- ❑ 1.8. Develop communication strategies, including media comments, town hall meetings, etc.
- ❑ 1.9. Establish benchmarks.

Phase 2: During Relocation

- ❑ 2.1. Work with the installation to create a seamless transition for students, the schools and the community.
- ❑ 2.2. Contact the transferring schools to discuss a plan for transferring records and information.
- ❑ 2.3. Coordinate military student education issues with the appropriate military offices and provide families with necessary information and resources (e.g. school calendar, enrollment requirements, website, etc.).
- ❑ 2.4. Work with other school districts, state, congressional, and local officials to discuss funding issues related to relocation and for technical assistance, lessons learned, and promising practices.
- ❑ 2.5. Identify needs that cannot be met with current resources and determine the appropriate next step.
- ❑ 2.6. Conduct or attend regular meetings with installation leaders, local community leaders, parents, and other stakeholders to implement the plan.
- ❑ 2.7. Routinely release information to keep key leaders, stakeholders and communities informed.
- ❑ 2.8. Establish benchmarks.

Phase 3: Post-Relocation

- ❑ 3.1. Implement an assessment plan.
- ❑ 3.2. Set up data collection and other administrative procedures for feedback throughout the rebasing project to identify shortfalls and successes.
- ❑ 3.3. Apply feedback from constituents to improve the process during future military student transitions.
- ❑ 3.4. Document and share lessons learned and best practices.
- ❑ 3.5. Publish an After Action Report.
- ❑ 3.6. Establish benchmarks.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Phase 1: Pre-Relocation

This phase of the relocation process includes establishing the foundation and structure necessary to address problems and issues that may arise from the movement of military students. Phase I is the most critical because planning at this stage will inform all other phases and determine their success. In addition, the relationships established in Phase I are critical for all future actions.

Goals

- Establish partnerships with installation commander(s) and other military leaders.
- Provide accurate and timely information to all stakeholders.
- Become informed about the challenges to smooth relocation and integration into gaining schools for school-age children of military families.
- Establish one or more school district points-of-contact to deal with transition issues.
- Identify funding sources and other services to accommodate transitioning students.

School Leader's Pre-Relocation Checklist

- ❑ 1.1. Identify and designate an installation or military liaison in your school system.
- ❑ 1.2. Identify and contact key players for military child education, both on and off the installation. Meet with the installation commander.
- ❑ 1.3. Determine as much information as possible about arriving students.
- ❑ 1.4. Determine funding needs and identify potential sources of funding.
- ❑ 1.5. Hold informal discussions and meetings with installation and local community leaders, parents, and other stakeholders regarding the potential impact.
- ❑ 1.6. Develop a proactive plan.
- ❑ 1.7. Develop an assessment plan to promote continuous improvement based on best practices and lessons learned.
- ❑ 1.8. Develop communication strategies, including media comments, town hall meetings, etc.
- ❑ 1.9. Establish benchmarks.
    - ○ Become a member of the commander's Student Transition Response Team (STRT).
    - ○ Communication and Assessment Plans have been developed.
    - ○ Contact has been made with the installation commander.
    - ○ The installation commander and key installation personnel have been briefed on timelines, processes, and finances needed to accommodate incoming students.
    - ○ Information on incoming students has been gathered.

Phase 1: Pre-Relocation (Annotated)

There are a variety of actions that a school district or an individual school can and should take to prepare for a large increase in its student population. The steps below are suggested as a way to establish relationships with local installations and other school districts, to develop a Plan of Action, and to assess the plan.

1.1. Identify and designate an installation or military liaison in your school system.

The Military Impacted Schools Association, MISA, suggests that school systems designate an official to work with the installation or installations in the area. Liaison responsibilities may be part of larger responsibilities, such as administration, policy, or communications. A liaison's responsibilities could include:

- Enhanced communication lines with the military installation
- Working with Military Advisory Board member to keep current on issues such as:
  - Impact Aid
  - Housing plans (short term and long range)
  - Personnel mission plans (short term and long range)
  - Privatization of military housing
  - Cost competitive initiatives
  - Serve as primary contact for installation representatives when questions or problems arise

1.2. Identify and contact key players for military child education, both on and off the installation.

- **Installation Commander.** Establish and maintain this all-important relationship.
- **School Liaisons.** Each of the Services has a different manner of determining and delegating responsibilities for school liaisons. While the Army has specific school liaison officers, in the other Services, such responsibilities are generally handled by someone in the installation family centers. Please refer to the "Installation Contacts" section for more information on how to find a school liaison at an installation or to the military school liaison information in the Educators section of the MilitaryStudent.org website.

- **Exceptional Family Member Program representatives.** For special education needs, the installations have Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) representatives. The **Army** and the **Marine Corps** staff their family centers with individuals who are responsible for providing support to families with exceptional family members. They are called the EFMP Managers (Army) or EFMP Coordinators (Marine Corps). In the Navy, the EFMP staff may provide family support services, but the Navy does not staff their family centers with EFMP Coordinators. In the Air Force, the Special Needs staff is located in the Military Treatment Facility (MTF). The EFMP Re-Assignments Branch is a personnel function. Family Support Center staff provides Family Life

For more information, go to the Special Needs section of the MilitaryStudent.org website and the Tools Section of this Toolkit.

Education, Information and Referral and Personal Finance Management services but does not have a designated Coordinator.

- **Other suggested key installation contacts**. The Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) has a series of recommendations for establishing partnerships between military installations and schools. MISA, in its "Partnerships Between Military Installations and Schools" recommends that schools or school districts maintain communication with each of the following to promote productive relations:
  - The Military Advisory Board Member
  - The Installation commander, especially when a new commander arrives
  - Education Liaison Officer
  - Public Affairs Officer
  - Family Advocacy Officer
  - Officers' and Enlisted Spouses Club

- **Additional suggested contacts <u>on</u> the installation.** This may include representatives from national nonprofits that serve the military such as:
  - National Military Family Association
  - Military Officers Association of America
  - Service-specific organizations such as:
    - The Association of the United States Army
    - The Air Force Association
    - The Navy League
    - The Marine Corps League

- **Additional suggested contacts <u>off</u> the installation:**
  - Other local officials, such as municipal or county officials
  - State elected officials, including legislators and state Board of Education members
  - Congressional officials, especially members of the Impact Aid Coalition (see the Funding Section of the Supporting Information for a list of coalition members)
    - Service-specific members of The Military Coalition
    - Military Impacted Schools Association/National Association of Federally Impacted Schools
    - Military Child Education Coalition

1.3. Determine as much information as possible about arriving students.

- **How many students are coming?** Not only the total number of students, but the number in each grade, gifted and talented students, English as a Second Language students, and Special Education students.

- **When do they arrive?** It is important to determine when families may be leaving their current station and when they are expected to arrive, especially if their arrival is expected after the beginning of the school year.

- **Where are they coming from?** Many students may be coming from the same schools. If they are coming from overseas, students most likely have been educated by a school operated by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). Information about DoDEA schools and policies is available at their website www.dodea.edu.

- **Where will they be housed?** Families may be required to take temporary housing in one attendance zone or school district while waiting for permanent housing in another zone or district. Districts and installations may be able to make arrangements to reduce the number of transfers students are required to make by enrolling students in schools they will permanently be attending instead of temporary schools.

- **What about special education students?** There are particular issues that military and other highly mobile families of children with exceptional needs face. Additionally, there are medical and social services provided by each Service for exceptional family members. Please refer to "Special Education Students" in the Tools Section of this Toolkit for more information.

1.4. Determine funding needs and identify potential sources of funding. Federal Impact Aid is available annually to public school districts to offset tax revenues the school districts might otherwise receive from federal properties, including military installations. The per pupil rate varies from state to state and not all school districts qualify. In FY 2004, average per pupil funding was $2,200 for a military student living on base and $ 450 for a military student living off base.

Refer to the "Funding Issues" section of this Toolkit for more information on Impact Aid.

1.5. Hold informal discussions and meetings with installation and local community leaders, parents, and other stakeholders regarding the potential impact. Regular communication between all parties involved will ensure that everyone is informed of changes as they occur. Installation and community leaders may be unaware of the capacity of the school district to accommodate new students without direct communication with School Leaders. This Toolkit contains a PowerPoint Template for School Districts which may be used to present information to the local installations and other constituencies. This is intended only as a guideline. However, there are some general issues that you may wish to address when working with an installation, including:

- What is the management and decision-making structure of a school system?
- What is the reported per pupil cost to educate each student?
- How much does Impact Aid contribute to these costs?
- How long does it take to renovate, build a school addition or build a new facility?
- What information or assistance do you need from the installation to prepare for expansion?
- What services do you provide for military families in transition?
- How do you spend Impact Aid funds?

This Toolkit contains a PowerPoint Template for School Leaders to present to the local installation and other constituencies.

For additional information, this Toolkit includes the Tool: "Developing a Local Action Plan."

1.6. Develop a proactive plan. School systems should try to work with the local installations to develop and implement a Plan of Action. The installation is working on an overall plan to accommodate incoming military families. School districts can work with the installation on the education component of this plan, working to anticipate and accommodate student needs.

- **Address the impact of incoming students on the existing student population and infrastructure.** What is the current capacity of the schools and school district? Is there enough physical space? Are there enough teachers? Is there appropriate funding?

- **Ensure the smooth transition of incoming students.** There are many ways to ease the difficulties faced by the military student in transition. The section on "Major Challenges of Student Relocation" outlines some of the issues that have been identified as problematic to the mobile military child and provides some suggested solutions. The Tool called "Promising Practices" outlines some of the approaches different schools have taken to accommodate new students.

- **Complement other local school districts' efforts to meet the educational needs of incoming students.** A school district may want to join other school districts in the area in developing a Local Action Plan or serve on a School Transition Response Team (STRT).

- **Communicate with transferring schools to facilitate the exchange of records and other pertinent information.** Many of the students coming to installations through large-scale relocations will be coming from the same school system. Students coming from overseas are likely to have been educated in a school system operated by the Department of Defense Education Activity—DoDEA.

- **Develop an assessment plan to promote continuous improvement based on best practices and lessons learned**.

1.7. Develop communication strategies, including media comments, town hall meetings, etc. School districts may be able to work with the installation to provide joint press statements or jointly conduct meetings to discuss family arrivals and the efforts of the school district/installations to accommodate current and incoming families.

More information on Action Plan Development is available in the Toolkit for Installation Commanders.

1.8. Establish benchmarks such as:

- Contact has been made with installation commander.
- The installation commander and key installation personnel have been briefed on timelines, processes, and finances needed to accommodate incoming students.
- A Student Transition Response Team has been established by the installation commander. School Leaders should be members of this team.
- Communication and Assessment Plans have been developed.

Phase 2: During Relocation

This phase of the Relocation process requires continued focus on providing accurate and timely information. Open communication between the school districts and the military is the key to quickly resolving issues that may arise.

Goals

- Implement a plan of action to assure the smooth transition of school-age children of military families.
- Strengthen partnerships with installation commanders and other military leaders.
- Promote two-way communication with all stakeholders.

School Leader's Relocation Checklist

- ❑ 2.1. Work with the installation to create a seamless transition for students, the schools and the community.
- ❑ 2.2. Contact the sending schools to discuss a plan for transferring records and information.
- ❑ 2.3. Coordinate military student education issues with the appropriate military offices and provide families with necessary information and resources (e.g. school calendar, enrollment requirements, website, etc.).
- ❑ 2.4. Work with other school districts, state, congressional, and local officials to discuss funding issues related to relocation and for technical assistance, lessons learned, and promising practices.
- ❑ 2.5. Identify needs that cannot be met with current resources and determine the appropriate next step.
- ❑ 2.6. Conduct or attend regular meetings with installation leaders, local community leaders, parents, and other stakeholders to implement the plan.
- ❑ 2.7. Routinely release information to keep key leaders, stakeholders and communities informed.
- ❑ 2.8. Establish benchmarks such as:
    - Information necessary to prepare facilities and teaching staff in a timely manner has been received.
    - Agreements with sending schools on transferring records and information have been implemented.
    - Information packets for incoming families have been prepared and distributed.
    - Information for incoming military families has been incorporated on district and school websites.

Phase 2: During Relocation (Annotated)

2.1. Work with the installation to create a seamless transition for students, the schools, and the community. This can be done through the relationships established in Phase 1 and through a Plan of Action with the installation.

2.2. Contact the sending schools to discuss a plan for transferring records and information. Gaining school systems may be able to work with losing schools to facilitate the large-scale transfer of records. More information is available in the Tool "Lessons from the Schools" and "Major Challenges of Student Relocation" under Challenge #1.

See "Major Challenges of Student Relocation" and "Lessons from the Schools" for successful ideas and practices to address student relocations.

2.3. Coordinate military student education issues with the appropriate military offices and provide families with necessary information and resources (e.g. school calendar, enrollment requirements, website, etc.). Under "Major Challenges of Student Relocation" and "Lessons from the Schools," there are several ideas for developing and disseminating useful information. The "Recommendations for a Military Family-Friendly Website

2.4. " in the Tool Section provides suggestions of items to include on a school district website. Some other suggested information to provide to families includes:

- Tips for parents on how to assist children transitioning from one school to another, including the DoD Toolkit for Military Students on the Move, are available on the www.militarystudent.org website in the Parents Section.
- Points of contact at the school or school district level.

"Recommendations for a Military Family-Friendly Website

- Information on enrollment, courses, testing requirements, and extracurricular activities.
- A Welcome packet that includes:
  - letter from principal
  - school handbook
  - school newsletter
  - school newspaper
  - activity opportunities
  - description of athletic and extracurricular programs
  - one-day complimentary lunch pass
  - complimentary family pass to an activity

" in the Tools Section provides suggestions of items to include on a school district website and links to some informative school websites.

2.5. Work with other school districts, state, congressional, and local officials to discuss funding issues related to relocation and for technical assistance, lessons learned, and promising practices. More information about funding issues, various groups which advocate for Impact Aid, and a description of the House and Senate Impact Aid Coalition is available under the "Funding" section of the Toolkit.

2.6. Identify needs that cannot be met with current resources and determine the appropriate next step. If there are needs that cannot be met, school districts should try to work with the installation to see if other agencies and organizations can assist. Districts may want to contact groups such as the National Military Family Association (NMFA), the Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA), and the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) for guidance.

2.7. Conduct or attend regular meetings with installation leaders, local community leaders, parents, and other stakeholders to implement the plan. This may be part of the Local Action Plan.

2.8. Routinely release information to keep key leaders, stakeholders and communities informed. The overall Action Plan should include a communications component. Press releases, newsletters and periodic e-mailings are ways of keeping leaders, stakeholders, and communities informed. School districts can work with installation officials to help communicate with Service members and their families.

2.9. Establish benchmarks such as :

- Information necessary to prepare facilities and teaching staff in a timely manner has been received.
- Agreements with sending schools on transferring records and information have been implemented.
- Information packet for incoming families has been prepared and distributed.
- Information for incoming military families has been incorporated on district, school and installation websites.

Phase 3: Post-Relocation Assessment

The Post-Relocation Phase is the time to evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to provide a smooth transition for school-age children. Collecting data will help assess the plan and provide guidance for future relocations.

Goals

- Collect data and information to evaluate established Action Plan(s) and make any changes to the plan(s).
- Write an After-Action Report to include Lessons Learned and Promising Practices.
- Develop a calendar for ongoing meetings with installation commander and other military leaders to resolve any new or unresolved issues.

School Leader's Post-Relocation Checklist

- ❑ 3.1. Implement an assessment plan.
- ❑ 3.2. Set up data collection and other administrative procedures for feedback throughout the rebasing project to identify shortfalls and successes.
- ❑ 3.3. Apply feedback from constituents to improve the impact of transition on military children.
- ❑ 3.4. Document and share lessons learned and best practices.
- ❑ 3.5. Publish an After Action Report.
- ❑ 3.6 Establish benchmarks such as:
    - Feedback has been solicited from parents, schools and community.
    - Constituents' concerns have been addressed in a constructive, timely manner.
    - Students and parents report minimal emotional, social and academic impact due to transition.

Phase 3: Post-Relocation Assessment (Annotated)

The large-scale relocations currently being planned will occur over several years at some installations. Assessment of these relocations can assist other school districts facing large increases. This should be a joint effort with the installation and the commanders' School Transition Response Team (STRT)

3.1 Implement an assessment plan (as part of the overall Action Plan.)

3.2 Set up data collection and other administrative procedures for feedback throughout the rebasing project to identify shortfalls and successes.

3.3 Apply feedback from constituents to improve the impact of transition on military children. Feedback from constituents may not only lessen the relocation's impact to the school district, but can provide guidance for other school districts as they prepare to implement their plans.

3.4 Capture lessons learned and best practices. www.militarystudent.org will gather the lessons learned and best practices and put them in the "Educators" section of the website for other school districts. The online version of the Toolkit will be revised to incorporate these lessons.

As the large-scale relocations take place, www.militarystudent.org will gather information and feedback and incorporate Lessons Learned and Promising Practices in the online versions of all three Toolkits.

3.5 Publish and share an After Action Report.

3.6 Establish benchmarks such as:

- Feedback is solicited from parents, schools and community.
- Constituents' concerns are addressed in a constructive, timely manner.
- Students and parents report minimal emotional, social and academic impact due to transition.

Major Challenges of Student Relocation

The average military child is three times more likely to move than a non-military child. The average military family moves 9 times over a 20-year career. When military children move, they are faced with a variety of school-related challenges which are outlined below. Practices from national organizations, research studies, the Services and school districts across the country which address transition issues are included in this section.

While there are many steps that school districts and parents can take to ease the transition challenges, the following practices address ways that School Leaders, in conjunction with the installation commander, can make an impact, support mobile military students, and resolve issues facing families.

The practices are divided into three sections:

1. **School Leader/Installation Commander's Actions,** including steps leaders can take to address the challenges
2. **Promising Practices,** sharing what other installations or school districts are trying which may be effective in other school districts
3. **Links,** offering more information on the challenges of student relocation

MAJOR CHALLENGES

1. **Partnerships with School Districts**
2. **Financial Issues**
3. **Housing Issues**
4. **School Choice**
5. **Transfer of Records**
6. **Immunization and Age Requirements**
7. **Students in Special Programs**
8. **Students with Special Education Needs**
9. **Calendars and Schedules**
10. **Connectedness**
11. **Graduation Requirements**
12. **Extracurricular Activities**
13. **Senior Year Moves**
14. **Professional Development**
15. **Post-Secondary Issues**

Challenge #1 – PARTNERSHIP WITH THE INSTALLATION

School Leaders must forge strong partnerships with installation commanders in order to seek ways to ease the challenges of students in transition.

School Leader's Actions

- Become an active member of the installation commander's Student Transition Response Team to help address challenges in student mobility.
- Ask the Installation commander for input regarding timelines and student data (numbers of school-age children, ages, and special needs) for incoming families.
- Develop a Local Action Plan with the installation commander to address the challenges. Sample Local Action Plans may be found at the websites listed below. These Local Action Plans include many "Promising Practices" to help address the challenges faced by school-age children in transition.
    - Fort Lewis and Clover Park School District [http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2610/05-053a1.pdf]
    - Lawton Public Schools [http://www.lawtonps.org/departments/military_child/LAP.htm]
    - Fort Bragg/Pope AFB and Cumberland County Schools [http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2611/05-053a2.pdf]
    - Fort Jackson and Richland School District [http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2612/05-053a3.pdf]
- Obtain contact information for installation commander and other significant military leaders who are directly involved with the transition of military students and communicate regularly.
- Become familiar with the chain of command on the military installation in your area.
- Designate a district point of contact to meet with the installation School Liaison representative.
- Participate in regular meetings between the installation commander and superintendents of the surrounding school districts in order to develop a common understanding of the challenges faced by students and schools during transition.
- Welcome military members and spouses as volunteers and members of school board committees.
- Encourage opportunities for parents and military "adopt-a-school units" to be invited to visit and participate in the local schools. These collaborative partnerships are value-added for both military and school organizations (e.g., Personnel and Excellence Program, Fleet Week, Partnerships in Education).

Promising Practices

- Support the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) from the Army Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) and the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) [http://www.militarychild.org] and support it with a Local Action Plan.
- Work with the Installation commander to establish an ex-officio school board member or military advisor to the school board. The Bellevue School district has a military advisory member on their school board [http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil/portal/page?_pageid=115,107776&_dad=portal9x&_schema=PORTAL9X&pgm=64].

- Invite the installation commander or installation representative to join the School Leader in attending the annual Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) Conference, Military Impacted Schools Association Annual Conference, and Department of Defense conferences on the military child.

Links

- MCEC developed the *Show and Tell Workbook* for creating a Local Action Plan. The workbook is available at [http://www.militarychild.org/pdfs/MOAwrkbk.pdf].
- MISA lists some additional ways for military installations and schools to partner on its website [http://www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org/partnerships_milschools.html].

Challenge #2 – FINANCIAL ISSUES

A large influx of students can create a financial challenge for schools.

School Leader's Actions

- Become familiar with all aspects of Impact Aid.
- Consult Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) for further information.
- Explore unique funding methods and sources to finance construction and other expansion costs. See the Funding Section of this Toolkit for examples.
- Explain programs such as Title I funding and free and reduced lunch programs and their impact on military families and schools to the installation commander.
- Encourage families to sign up for free and reduced lunch programs when they qualify. Ensure that the installation commander is aware that registration will make additional funds available to schools.
- Ask for assistance, as needed, in obtaining Impact Aid Funds.

Promising Practices

- Impact Aid is not a military program. However, the installation commander and School Leaders can work together to obtain their entitled amount of Impact Aid by getting100% of the families to complete the Impact Aid Survey each year. Some installations have taken on this challenge and have maximized the aid the school district receives.
- Explore additional types of funding. See Alternative Funding Sources in the Toolkit section.

Links

- The Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) [http://www.sso.org/nafis/2005_blue_book.htm] has a "Funding" section with information about Impact Aid with sections such as What is Impact Aid?, Impact Aid Appropriations, History of Impact Aid Appropriations, First Count, DoD Impact Aid Funding, and Military Child Education Support.
- National Military Family Association (NMFA) has Impact Aid Information [http://www.nmfa.org]
- Refer to the Background Information section in this Toolkit for further resources on Impact Aid.

Challenge #3 – HOUSING ISSUES

Where a student lives often determines where he/she goes to school. Placement in school based on temporary living quarters can delay getting settled into a permanent school.

School Leader's Actions

- Ask where new families are likely to find permanent housing to determine which schools they may attend.
- Request information regarding percentages of students who will be living on and off the installation to determine the impact on specific schools/districts.
- Discuss with installation commanders how long families are likely to remain in temporary housing and which schools they will attend while in temporary housing.
- Examine school policy on enrolling students temporarily. Search for possibilities that are less disruptive to the students' education and do not involve multiple transfers.
- Request data from installation commanders concerning any new military housing construction or renovation that is planned, including any plans to privatize military housing.

Promising Practices

- Work with installation commanders to allow students in temporary quarters to attend their permanent school, when it is known. Some districts and installations provide transportation to the permanent school so students do not have to experience an additional change in their educational and social life.

Challenge #4 – SCHOOL CHOICE

All parents want the best possible education for their children. The search for schools that meet the needs of each child is one of the first tasks of military parents during relocation.

School Leader's Actions

- Find proactive ways to answer questions from parents and installation commanders about school district policies and practices (ex.: websites, welcome packets, newsletters, welcome letters…).
- Offer school handbooks, procedures, and calendars in advance of the arrival of military families when requested.
- Inform parents and commanders about the policies and regulations for your state regarding alternative schooling options such as magnet, charter, and home-schooling.
- Notify parents of deadlines for magnet and charter school application.

Promising Practices

- School choice is important to military families. Some of the information below may be helpful to school districts as well. The Aloha, Military Families & Students website is a good example of an installation site that provides parents with information about school choice [http://militaryfamily.k12.hi.us].

Links

- Standard & Poors has a website [http://www.schoolmatters.com] that shares data on schools and helps parents make decisions about school choices.
- The U.S. Department of Education has a publication for parents called *Choosing a School for your Child* [http://www.ed.gov/parents/schools/find/choose/index.html] that offers a series of checklists and pertinent questions to assist parents in making the right schooling choice for their child.
- The National School Boards Association website lists state policies and regulations concerning schooling for each state [http://www.nsba.org/site/index.asp].
- DoD is currently compiling a list of all possible school choices around heavily impacted military installations. When they become available, the results of this study will be posted on the MilitaryStudent.org website [http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil].

Challenge #5 – TRANSFER OF RECORDS

Timely transfer of academic records ensures appropriate placement of students. Parents must be clear about what documents are needed to enroll their students.

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School Leader's Actions

- Ensure that the school district website has information about or links to the military installation website. See the Tools Section of this Toolkit for recommendations for a Military Family-Friendly Website.
- Improve communication procedures to ensure that parents know which records to hand carry (see *Toolkit for Parents on the Move*) and which records the enrolling school requires these should be listed on school websites, included in the installation website, and included in "new student" packets or orientation materials.
- Ask the installation commander to incorporate school record clearance as part of the installation out-processing (Army Regulation 600-8-101).
- Establish clear lines of communication with the installation commander to identify and resolve any records issues.
- Work with the installation commander to ensure that military medical personnel provide necessary school physicals and immunizations.

Promising Practices

- Accept hand-carried records for initial placement.
- When a large number of families are coming from one location, work with the command to take school personnel (superintendent, principals, registrars, school liaison officers) to the losing installation to meet with families and begin the enrollment process or send representatives from the losing installation to the gaining installation to gather information.
- Participate in training for school personnel in courses such as "The Transition Counselors Institute" and "The Special Education Leaders Institute" offered by MCEC [http://www.militarychild.org] and superintendent and principal training offered by MISA [http://militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org]. Coordinate with installation commander to see if funding is available to attend these trainings.

- MCEC has developed a web-based video conferencing system called the *Interactive Counseling Center* (ICC) [http://www.militarychild.org/ICC.asp] that will allow participating sending and receiving schools to make real-time contact and electronically exchange record and vital information.
- Randolph Field Independent School District [http://www.randolph-field.k12.tx.us] provides a link to a registration form on its homepage, allowing you to download a file that contains the applicable policy, the procedure, the instructions for completing the form, the form and the agreement, grade level course listings, and a submission checklist.
- Fountain-Fort Carson School District Eight [http://www.ffc8.org/ffc8/studentreg/home.htm] near Fort Carson, CO, strongly encourages early online registration.
- Encourage parents to bring official course descriptions from the sending school to expedite placement.

Links

- The Toolkit for Military Students on the Move has a checklist for parents and students that outlines which records may be needed [www.militarystudent.org].
- MISA [http://www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org] and MCEC [http://www.militarychild.org/Checklist.asp] provide a checklist for records needed for school registration.

Challenge #6 – IMMUNIZATION AND AGE REQUIREMENTS

Immunization requirements and Kindergarten and first grade entrance age vary by state and district.

School Leader's Actions

- Ensure that parents are fully aware of state and local policies by linking to the installation website and providing necessary information on the school district website.
- Many states or districts require their own form for immunization records. Ensure that these forms are available to parents and the military medical facilities. Check with installation commander to ensure that medical personnel are familiar with how to translate existing records to the new forms. Post forms on the district website.
- Work with the installation commander to ease access to the military medical facility for school physicals and immunizations, especially during peak arrival times for families.

Links

- Immunization and age requirements for each state can be found on www.militarystudent.dod.mil in the Parent Section.
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides information for parents on immunization [http://www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/Parents-Guide/default.htm].

Challenge #7 – STUDENTS IN SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Qualification requirements vary from location to location for students in programs like Gifted and Talented and English Language Learners.

School Leader's Actions

- Ensure that the school district website informs parents with students in special programs of program availability, contact information for the program, and lists of what parents need to bring.

Promising Practices

- Accept hand-carried records for placement while awaiting official documentation.

Challenge #8 – STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

Students with special needs often have difficulty acquiring appropriate services and experiencing continuity of program.

School Leader's Actions

- Meet with the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Representative on the installation. They will be a member of the commander's School Transition Response Team.
- Ensure that the school district website outlines programs available, contact information for specialists, and lists of what parents need to bring.
- Confer with the installation commander or the EFMP representative to become aware of resources the Services provide to military children with special needs.
- Confer with the installation commander or the EFMP representative to determine if there are special needs students who have handicap access needs.
- Encourage military families who have special needs children to enroll in EFMP on their military installation if they have not already done so.

Promising Practices

- Accept hand-carried special education records for placement while awaiting official documentation.

Links

- Become familiar with information provided on the Militarystudent.org/Families with Special Needs Children website [http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil/portal/page?_pageid=115,107391&_dad=portal9x&_schema=PORTAL9X&COHE_ID=156201] or the Military HOMEFRONT's Special Needs/EFMP portal [http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page?_pageid=73,44033&_dad=itc&_schema=PORTAL&section_id=20.40.500.570.0.0.0.0.0]. Both of these sites include extensive information for families with special needs children.

- The Specialized Training of Military Parents (STOMP) website [http://www.stompproject.org/] shares information concerning the increased difficulties parents of individuals with disabilities face during transition.
- Military OneSource [www.militaryonesource.com] supplies information for families with special needs children.
- MCEC has designed the Special Education Leaders Institute (SELI) [http://www.militarychild.org/SpecialEdu.asp] to promote awareness and increase the availability of professional educators who understand the challenges associated with transitioning mobile military connected students with special needs.

Challenge #9 – CALENDARS AND SCHEDULES

School districts have many variations in school calendars, schedules, and grade reporting periods.

School Leader's Actions

- Link the school website to the installation website. Include calendar information, dates and schedules in "new student" packets or orientation materials. Update this information frequently so the information is accurate and timely.
- Encourage installation commanders to relocate families during the summer break when possible.
- Encourage parents to enroll their students so they can start school at the beginning of the school year.
- Work with the installation commander to encourage parents to keep their students in school through the end of the school year. Encourage the command to schedule deployment and relocation leave during school holidays when possible.
- Coordinate with the installation commander to avoid conflicts in calendars during critical times (state and district testing, graduation, etc.).
- Help service members on deployment leave become integrated into their child's school and school routines.

Promising Practices

- Many school districts include calendar and event information on the school district website.
- Many school districts post their course descriptions on their website so they are easily accessible by the receiving school to determine if courses are comparable.
- Some school districts provide "transition labs" [www.militarystudent.org] or "academic support centers" to overcome problems resulting from scheduling differences or mid-year moves. Other schools have given "Credit-by-exam" opportunities when scheduling or course description conflicts arise. Reciprocity of course credit can sometimes be arranged when course requirements or curriculum differ slightly.

Challenge #10 – CONNECTEDNESS

It is difficult for children to adjust and be accepted in a new school. Leaving the previous school, community and friends can be difficult. Learning to fit in and feel connected is a priority for students. The first two weeks of school are especially challenging for transitioning students. New students need clear communication, support systems, and understanding adults to make the transition easier.

School Leader's Actions

- Attend student and family orientation on the military installation prior to the start of school to answer questions, welcome families and become a familiar face to new students and parents.
- Ensure that new student transition information is on the school and installation websites.
- Provide extensive school information to new students in a welcome packet. New student orientation packets could be made available on the school website. They might include a school calendar, map of the school, curriculum requirements, graduation requirements, available clubs and organizations, extracurricular policies, school supply list, dress code requirements, and student handbook.
- Implement networking and sponsorship programs for students.
- Provide students and their families with current information about the schools on school websites. Consider including a Chat Room on the website so students can meet other students and share experiences and information before they arrive and after they have settled in.
- Review the S.I.T.E.S. information on schools to ensure that it is current and comprehensive [www.dmdc.osd.mil/sites]. The SITES website contains information about programs and resources on and around installations. The installation commander can assist you with access to this site.
- Provide an orientation in district schools before opening day so that new students can meet other new students, teachers and administrators, and learn where their classes are located.

Promising Practices

- The Department of Defense has developed the Military Child Initiative – a center for the education of the military student at Johns Hopkins University. The initiative is dedicated to increasing the quality of education for military children in schools across the nation based on improving connectedness for students and parent involvement. The university works closely with interested military impacted schools to improve the academic, social, and emotional success of children of military families. Information regarding this program may be found at http://militarystudent.dod.mil, http://www.jhsph.edu/mci or email mci@shsph.edu.
- Some schools have provided a New Buddy Email service so newcomers can feel more connected to other students and familiar with the school before they arrive at the installation.
- Support a "New Student Sponsorship" program at the school. Several installations and schools have developed effective programs to help military students become more connected to their new school. First day activities include school tour, locating classes,

introductions to teachers and school personnel, cafeteria or lunch partner, and escort to the bus. Other schools have much more extensive sponsor programs:

- The 'Malama I Na Haunama Program [http://www.k12.hi.us/~tc/] from Radford High School in Hawaii, provides a student-led curriculum to promote both academic achievement and successful adjustment to the new learning environment.
- MCEC has developed student transition/sponsorship program led by students called the Student2Student Initiative [http://www.militarychild.org/S2S.asp]. The program includes training and support.

- Train superintendents and principals in the social and emotional needs of military students. See MISA's "Tools for Schools" training sessions [http://www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org].
- Consult the Department of Defense's on-line Educators Course, "Educating the Military Child" for inservice modules. Available June 2006 on www.militarystudent.org.

Links

- Find out more about school connectedness and the military child by requesting a free copy of the Johns Hopkins University Military Child Initiative monograph "School Connectedness: Improving Students Lives" and "School Connectedness: Extending Connectedness to Military Children" by emailing mci@jhsph.edu.
- The MilitaryStudent.org website [http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil/portal/page?_pageid=115,107748&_dad=portal9x&_schema=PORTAL9X&COHE_ID=163580&LOCATION=SCHOOLS] provides some suggestions for successful student orientation programs.
- "Military Teens On the Move" [http://www.dod.mil/mtom] is an interactive site for teenagers, providing information on sponsorship programs, military bases, and schools.

Challenge #11 – GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

States and school districts differ in their requirements for high school graduation. Without access to courses and reliable information, some students will not be able to acquire their high school diploma on schedule.

School Leader's Actions

- Educate parents on the importance of enrolling their students in rigorous coursework that includes a college preparatory curriculum to ensure they meet graduation requirements in their new state.
- Link district and installation websites to state sites that outline graduation requirements such as course requirements and exit exams.
- Encourage parents to bring course descriptions from previous schools to help determine transferability of credits.

Promising Practices

- Many school districts give seniors priority access to required courses, especially when they differ from the last school the student attended.
- Encourage reciprocity for state graduation requirements.

- Many school districts post their district course descriptions on their website so the gaining school can check to see if courses are comparable and make necessary adjustments or further inquiries.
- When a student cannot meet graduation requirements in the new school, but does qualify in the previous school system, some school districts transfer course and test credits back to the previous school for issuance of the diploma.

Links

- Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) and MCEC have developed a compact disk called *Preparing for Your Future Now* that includes tools to develop an individualized academic plan for each military student beginning in 7th grade. The disk includes planning template, portfolio guidelines, and support for parents and students as they plan for college. For inquiries, email EdWebPOC@hq.dodea.edu from the DoDEA website.
- The National Governors' Organization has a matrix that lists exit exam requirements for all states that was current as of October 2000. Many states have changed their requirements since that date [http://www.nga.org/cda/files/EXITEXAMMATRIX.pdf
- The Parent Section of www.MilitaryStudent.org features State Education Legislation. Click on your state for graduation requirements.

Challenge #12 – EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular activities are important for making new friends and having a quality high school experience. Many military students do not have access to certain activities because they miss deadlines for tryouts.

School Leader's Actions

- Establish policies for accepting reference letters in lieu of tryouts for entering students.
- Encourage parents to have their child submit a video in lieu of a tryout and accept them as an alternative when the student cannot be physically present to participate.
- Consider the possibility of having schools hold tryouts and elections in the fall or saving slots on teams for students who arrive too late in the school year.
- Find out what installation clubs, sports and student sponsorships/mentors are available to supplement those conducted by the schools or not provided by the schools.
- Post accurate and timely extracurricular requirements, dates, and contact information on the school and installation websites.

Promising Practices

- Work with the installation commander or designee to develop an interest survey for new students to link them to extracurricular activities on and off the installation.

Links

- MilitaryStudent.org has several promising practices related to the challenges of making extracurricular activities accessible to military students. [http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil/portal/page?_pageid=115,107776&_dad=portal9x&_schema=PORTAL9X&pgm=0&cat=5].

Challenge #13 – SENIOR YEAR MOVES

When students move during their senior year, the challenges of transition are amplified to the point that some students are not able to graduate on schedule. They may be unable to enroll in the necessary classes. Sometimes the credits they have earned may not be recognized by the new school.

School Leader's Actions

- Promote a district philosophy that gives the message that all district personnel – counselors, administrators, registrars and teachers – are dedicated to working with students to make them successful in your schools. This includes seeking alternatives when students are involved in circumstances created by untimely moves and incompatible requirements.
- Work with the installation commander to address the heightened educational needs of students in the junior and senior years of high school.

Promising Practices

- Encourage schools to provide priority placement into courses essential for completion of graduation requirements.
- Support the adoption of Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) for reciprocity for graduating seniors [http://www.militarychild.org/MOACopy.asp] promoted in the Army Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) and MCEC.
- Work with the installation commander to develop a tutoring program to help incoming students "catch-up" when necessary.
- When a student cannot meet graduation requirements in the new school, but does qualify in the previous school system, some school districts transfer course and test credits back to the previous school for issuance of the diploma.
- Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) and MCEC have developed a compact disk called *Preparing for Your Future Now* that includes tools to develop an individualized academic plan for each military student beginning in 7th grade. The disk includes planning template, portfolio guidelines, and support for parents and students as they plan for college.
- Send school counselors to MCEC's Transition Counselor Institute for training in transition issues, research and solutions [http://www.militarychild.org/MajorInitiatives.asp].

Challenge #14 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Many educators do not have experience with military culture. When educators are aware of transition and deployment issues, they can be more deliberate in addressing the needs of the military family and student.

School Leader's Actions

- Coordinate with the installation commander to provide Military 101 courses for teachers, counselors, and administrators in schools serving military families. The Army uses its modules "Army Family Team-Building" to train staff on Army culture. The Marines Corps

has "Links." Workshops should address the transition and deployment issues that impact military students and their school experience.

- Invite the installation to participate in school partnerships and "Adopt-A-School" programs.
- Invite the installation commander to speak at a district inservice, faculty meetings or board meetings regarding "Understanding the Military Family" and inform them about services available to military students on the military installation.
- Coordinate with the installation commander to provide teachers with installation tours to share resources and expertise that are available to students and teachers through installation agencies.
- Coordinate with the installation commander to provide beginning and/or end of school year receptions for teachers. Ask the commander to recognize educators who have been particularly supportive of military children.
- Encourage the installation commander to hold an open house for school staff to share information about military agencies that support school-age children (FAP, EFMP, Counseling and Medical Resources for example).

Promising Practices

- Whenever possible, consider hiring military spouses who bring understanding of the military experience to the classroom. Schools might want to explore the Spouses-to-Teachers programs [http://www.spousestoteachers.com/pages/8/index.htm] as well as the Troops-to-Teachers Program [http://www.dantes.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/index.htm?Flag=True].
- Encourage teachers to participate in the on-line course on "Educating the Military Child" which is sponsored by DoD and written by Johns Hopkins University. It will be featured on the MilitaryStudent.Org website [http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil/] by the summer of 2006. The course is developed in modules and each module can be used as a faculty inservice.
- Participate in training for school personnel in courses such as "The Transition Counselors Institute" and "The Special Education Leaders Institute" offered by MCEC [http://www.militarychild.org]. Coordinate with installation commander to see if funding is available to attend these trainings.
- Contact the Military Impacted Schools Association [http://www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org] and participate in their "Tools for Schools" training for superintendents and principals who serve military children.

Links

- "Working with Military Children: A Primer for School Personnel" is a guidebook written by the Hampton Roads Joint Military Services and is available at www.militarystudent.org. The guide shares information on four aspects of military lifestyle: separations or deployments, homecomings, relocations, and crises.
- The DoD book, "Educators Guide to the Military Child During Deployment" can be printed from the home page of www.militarystudent.org and used for teacher inservice.

Challenge #15 – POST-SECONDARY ISSUES

State tuition and financial aid systems may not be available to the mobile military child.

School Leader's Actions

- Encourage state legislators to grant in-state tuition support for military students.
- Advertise testing and application deadlines to colleges and vocational/technical schools.
- Help provide assistance on requesting and preparing applications for schools, applications for grants and financial aid, and letters of recommendation through the youth activities center.

Promising Practices

- Train counselors and teachers on how to best assist a mobile student on preparing for college and vocational/technical schools.
- One way for highly mobile students to keep track of their accomplishments is to create a "Student Profile." The document contains academic information; personal accomplishments; work experience; and special skills, interests and talents beginning in 9th grade. A template is available on MilitaryStudent.org in the Teens section under College Information. [http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil/portal/page?_pageid=115,108428&_dad=portal9x&_schema=PORTAL9X&COHE_ID=162381&LOCATION=TEENS].

Links

- For a list of states and their in-state tuition requirements, go to [https://www.armyeducation.army.mil/InState/StateSummary.HTM].
- For a list of Scholarships available to military students, see DoD's MilitaryStudent.org website [http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil/portal/page?_pageid=115,108428&_dad=portal9x&_schema=PORTAL9X&COHE_ID=149252&LOCATION=TEENS].
- Send school counselors to MCEC's Transition Counselor Institute for training in transition issues, research and solutions [http://www.militarychild.org/MajorInitiatives.asp].

"Moving let me open up and break down a lot of my stereotypes that I had about other people, and that's one positive thing I can say about moving."

Student, DoD Round Table, California

Background Information

Understanding the Military Student

Some school age military dependents attend schools operated by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA), others are home schooled, and still others attend private schools. However, the vast majority of school-age military dependents attend local public schools. Most children attend schools in four to five different districts, if not more, prior to graduation. Differences in administration, curriculum, and standards greatly affect children's ability to learn. Gaps in education are not uncommon. Due to a variety of factors, including variations in curriculum, the timing of tests, and changes in school calendars, students may be either ahead or behind when they arrive at a new school.

About one third of spouses and families are relocated every year. The average military family moves 9 times over a 20-year career. Some jobs will require families to move more often, while some may move less.

Demographic information is available in the Resources section of this Toolkit and on the MilitaryStudent.org website. The Total Force: A Snapshot is a good statistical overview of the military, family demographics, and the number of military children served by schools operated by the Department of Defense. Specific information on Military Life is available for each branch of the Armed Services on the website.

Attributes of the Military Child

Educators working with military children should become aware of the issues that surround transition and deployment since they may impact classroom performance. In addition, there are many positive qualities that the military student can bring into any classroom. Educators in schools with large numbers of military students have identified the following as qualities of the military child:

- Strong family bonds
- Parents who are involved in their children's education
- Parents whose employer encourages parental support of schools
- Experiences from many different cultures and geographic areas
- Ability to relate to others with diverse backgrounds
- Adaptability
- Flexibility
- Cooperative spirit
- Maturity
- Independence

Many military children, especially those who will relocate to the United States through global rebasing, have been educated in schools operated by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). Since DoDEA students come primarily from military families, performance of DoDEA students may be indicative of the capabilities of the military student. In 2003, DoDEA reported the following:

- A 97% graduation rate.
- The 3,102 graduating seniors in the Class of 2002 earned more than $35 million in scholarships and grants.
- Students in the Department of Defense Education Activity outranked students in most states on reading scores at the 4th and 8th grade levels.
- African American students in DoDEA schools scored in either first or second place in the nation, respectively, when compared to their counterparts in other states.
- Hispanic eighth graders in DoDEA schools scored in first and second place in reading. DoD Hispanic students matched or surpassed the national average score for all students on the reading assessment.

Working with Military Children

The Virginia Military Family Services Board prepared a primer for school personnel, and guidance counselors in particular, to "educate, support, and affirm their future efforts." The primer, entitled Working with Military Children: A Primer for School Personnel, looks at the four major aspects of military lifestyle: separations or deployments, homecomings, relocation, and crises. The primer includes an activities section designed to help children cope with the adjustments that a military lifestyle can demand.

Transition Issues

The frequency of military family moves can have an impact on a child's well being. While some of the issues faced may be unique to the military child, many others are common to any children of parents whose careers require them to relocate every few years. The Department of Defense has conducted a variety of discussions and participated in studies in order to identify challenges faced by military students. They include DoD Regional Roundtables, Focus Groups, Military Impacted Schools Association Issues, and the Army Secondary Education Transition Study.

Common Transition Issues

Due to the military moves, these studies found that there were some common Related Educational, Social and Emotional Issues/Needs of Children. These included:

Educational Issues/Needs

- Immunization Requirements
- Kindergarten Entrance Age
- School Calendars
- Entrance and Exit Testing
- Course Content and Sequencing
- Attendance and Discipline Regulations
- Scheduling (block-scheduling, year-round school, 2 vs. 3 semesters…)
- Graduation Requirements
- Special Education Qualification and Services
- English as a Second Language Services
- Extracurricular Eligibility

See "Major Challenges of Student Relocation" and "Promising Practices" (Tools Section of this Toolkit) for suggestions on how to resolve common transition issues.

- National Membership Requirements (i.e. selected for National Honor Society in one school does not necessarily guarantee membership in another school)
- Mid-semester Transfer (often makes consistency of learning very difficult)
- Transfer of Records
- Appropriate Placement
- Scholarship Availability (i.e. residency requirements may disqualify students from state tuition reduction and scholarships)
- Educators unaware of implications of military lifestyle

Social Issues/Needs

- Meeting new friends
- Adjusting to a new place/culture ("fitting in")
- Missing old friends

Emotional Issues/Needs

- Sadness
- Anger
- Apprehension about breaking into established cliques or the unknown
- Vulnerability
- Loneliness
- No sense of belonging

Deployment Issues

Schools can provide an anchor of needed stability and normal routine for children during the challenges of deployment and the resulting disruptions to daily life. Alternatively, the stress that may result from family separation has the potential to affect an entire school community and may interfere with the ability of students and staff to focus on learning. The www.militarystudent.org website (homepage) contains a special publication for educators about the Military Child During Deployment to help them understand the issues and find suggestions to help the students and staff to focus on learning.

DoD's Military Child in Transition and Deployment program has identified some common Deployment-Related Educational, Social and Emotional Issues/Needs of Children. While children's individual responses may depend on a variety of factors such as age, maturity, gender, parent-child relationship, and the coping skills of the caregiver during separation, their unique developmental viewpoint and limited life experience put them at an increased risk for emotional stress during the deployment period. There are some common educational, social and emotional issues/needs as well as behaviors to monitor.

Educator's Guide to the Military Child During Deployment

Educator's Guide to the Military Child During Deployment is a DoD publication designed to meet the needs expressed by teachers and other school personnel for background information and intervention strategies to support the military child during mobilization and deployment. This document is the result of collaboration between representatives from each branch of the United States Military and the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress Network. More DoD publications are described in the Publications portion of this Toolkit.

"Educating the Military Child" On-Line Course

Sponsored by DoD and Johns Hopkins University, the on-line course for educators discusses transition and deployment issues and the Best Practices related to fostering connectedness in classrooms. Available June 2006 on www.MilitaryStudent.org.

Educational Issues/Needs

The stress that may result from family separation has the potential to affect everyone connected with the child. During periods of deployment, certain educational needs become more acute, including the needs for:

- A classroom that is focused on the students and learning environment
- A structured schedule
- An objective teacher
- A reinforcement of safety and security
- A patient teacher
- A reduction of student workload if needed
- An approachable teacher

Specific suggestions on how to meet these needs are available on the www.militarystudent.org website in the Social, Emotional, and Educational Issues section.

Social Issues/Needs

Depending on age, a child may experience significant social issues and needs during a time of deployment. While preschool and elementary aged children typically require increased attention from parents and school personnel, adolescents place an increased value on interaction with their peers. Although school and family must still play a significant role in their lives, it is important for adolescents to spend time with peers.

Emotional Issues/Needs

While individual children's emotional needs can vary drastically, all children need to maintain their daily routines at home and school to help cushion the impact of deployment. Common emotions during deployment include:

- Confusion
- Sadness
- Anger
- Fear

During periods of deployment, certain emotional needs become more acute, including:

- A teacher who is sensitive to language and cultural needs
- An acknowledgement and validation of their feelings
- A reinforcement of behavior management if/when necessary

Behaviors to Monitor During Deployment

It is important to address these emotions with children and to provide them with reassurance and comfort. A child may exhibit a change in behavior while adjusting to being separated from a parent. However, if a child is exhibiting the following behavior six weeks after separation, a referral should be made to the appropriate parent, school, community or military service:

- Continues to experience separation anxiety and does not want to leave parent/caregiver
- Continues to have high levels of emotional response such as continued crying or intense sadness
- Perseverates, in conversation and/or play, about war and other deployment issues
- Continues to appear depressed, withdrawn and non-communicative
- Expresses violent or depressed feelings in 'dark' drawings or writings
- Intentionally inflicts self-injury or injury to others
- Gains or loses a significant amount of weight in a period of weeks
- Discontinues taking care of personal appearance
- Exhibits a possible drug or alcohol abuse problem
- Has not been able to resume normal activities
- Continues to have difficulty concentrating at school

In response to the question of what schools can do to help transitioning students…
"Communication with students is everything."

Student, DoD Round Table, Georgia

Funding Sources

Impact Aid

Impact Aid is a federal program that provides funding for a portion of the costs associated with educating children of military personnel. Most school districts receive funding from state and local property taxes. When military children attend public schools, enrollment is increased but local tax revenue is not generated because families live and shop on federal property which is not taxed. Therefore, the federal government acts as the local taxpayer by funding the Impact Aid program for local school districts.

Over half a million children of military personnel are served through the federal Impact Aid program. This represents less than half of all school-age military children. The Impact Aid Program also provides funding to school districts with children residing on Indian lands, low-rent housing properties, and some civil service members.

Federal Impact Aid

The Department of Education's Impact Aid program [http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/impactaid/index.html] administers most of the Impact Aid funding. Funding is based on an annual count of federally-connected school children. Approximately forty percent of Impact Aid funds go to school districts educating military children. The average award per school district in 2004 was $804,000. Awards ranged from $200 to $35,000,000 per district.

To be eligible for assistance for Section 8003 payments, the largest component of Impact Aid, a local school district must educate at least 400 such children in average daily attendance, or the federally connected children must make up at least 3 percent of the school district's total average daily attendance. Specific information about the different Impact Aid grant programs operated by the Department of Education, including eligibility, FAQs, and Forms and Applications are available at Programs and Grants – Impact Aid [http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/impactaid/index.html].

There are three separately operated Department of Defense Impact Aid Programs [http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page?_pageid=73,44033&_dad=itc&_schema=PORTAL&section_id=20.40.500.130.0.0.0.0.0] – DoD Supplemental and DoD Impact Aid for Children with Severe Disabilities.

Department of Defense Supplemental

In 2006, the Department of Defense supplemental Impact Aid Program [http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page?_pageid=73,46033&_dad=itc&_schema=PORTAL&section_id=20.80.500.125.0.0.0.0.0&current_id=20.80.500.125.500.90.0.0.0] distributed an additional $30 million among school districts with 20% or greater average daily attendance of military dependents. This program invites districts to submit applications based on information provided by the Department of Education. In 2005, 120 qualifying school districts received $105.63 per student.

Department of Defense Impact Aid for Children with Severe Disabilities

The Department of Defense Impact Aid for Children with Severe Disabilities Program [http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page?_pageid=73,46033&_dad=itc&_schema=PORTAL&section_id=20.40.500.130.0.0.0.0.0&current_id=20.40.500.130.500.120.0.0.0] will distribute $5 million among school districts with at least two military dependent children with severe disabilities. This program invites districts to submit applications based on information provided by the Department of Education. Disabilities must be extremely severe and few special education students qualify.

Special Funding for Schools with Large Increases/Decreases in Military Population

In the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal year 2006, Congress approved $7 million to be dispensed by the Department of Defense to the school districts that are most heavily impacted to an increase or reduction in military students due to Global Rebasing, official creation or activation of one of more new military units, BRAC, or a change in the number of housing units on a military installation. Please consult Bill HR 1815 for guidelines.

In past years, some school districts have received special appropriated funds outside of Impact Aid, but these "earmarks" are rare.

The website version of this Toolkit is featured on MilitaryStudent.org [http://www.militarystudent.org]. Funding changes will be featured on the website as they occur.

Additional Information on Impact Aid

- **The Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA)**, a non-profit organization, [http://www.sso.org/nafis/2005_blue_book.htm] has a "Funding" section with information about Impact Aid, including What is Impact Aid?, Impact Aid Appropriations, History of Impact Aid Appropriations, First Count, DoD Impact Aid Funding, and Military Child Education Support.

  A video created by MISA called "Impact Aid" is an introduction to the need for Impact Aid as seen from the perspective of public schools that serve large populations of military children. 56k Bandwidth - Real Media, High Bandwidth - Real Media, 56k Bandwidth - Windows Media, and High Bandwidth - Windows Media.

- **The National Military Family Association (NMFA)**, a non-profit organization, has an Impact Aid Fact Sheet [http://www.nmfa.org/site/DocServer/Impact_Aid_June_2005.pdf?docID=2541] updated in June of 2005 that provides information on the history and current issues related to Impact Aid. NMFA prepared a June 2005 Fact Sheet on DoD Support to Civilian Schools Educating Military Children [http://www.nmfa.org/site/DocServer/DoD_Support_to_Civilian_Schools_Educating_Military_Child.pdf?docID=2542].

- **The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS)** [http://www.sso.org/nafis/], a non-profit organization, has *Your Link to Impact Aid* with the history and current laws related to Impact Aid and Construction. FY05 Impact Aid payments by school district are included in the NAFIS 2006 BLUE BOOK [http://www.ssoorg/nafis/2005_blue_book.htm].

- **The Association of the United States Army (AUSA)**, through its AUSA - Institute of Land Warfare [http://www.ausa.org/PDFdocs/DR05_3.pdf] has written three articles related to Impact Aid. The first is a Torchbearer National Security Report from April of 2001 entitled *Educating Our Military's Children . . . Are We Closing the Gaps?* [http://ausa.org/webpub/DeptILW.nsf/byid/CCRN-6CCRLG]. The report is a comprehensive examination of the educational system and issues regarding military children. The June 2003 Torchbearer Alert, *Impact Aid – Providing for the Educational Needs of Our Children* [http://www.ausa.org/pdfdocs/torchalert/3torchalert1.pdf],
- includes a description of Impact Aid, its funding level, and recommendations for future action. A June 2005 Defense Report, *The Transforming Army and Impact Aid: Remembering Military Children* [http://www.ausa.org/PDFdocs/DR05_3.pdf], describes some of the potential impact that the 2005 round of Base Realignment and Closure, the Global Rebasing Initiative, and force/structure changes may have on school systems and their funding.

Congressional Impact Aid Coalitions

The United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate each have coalitions supporting Impact Aid. These coalitions keep their members aware of the most recent changes and discussion pertaining to Impact Aid.

Names of the Impact Aid Coalition members are available through the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) at http://www.sso.org/nafis/Impact%20Aid%20Coalitions.htm

School Leaders should understand
Impact Aid Details and
be able to explain how the school district uses Impact Aid

Grant Programs

Grants.gov - Resources - Types of Grants - Education provides a link to the types of grants provided by different federal agencies for education.

Alternate Funding Sources

In an era of tight money and increased enrollment, the possibility of unique construction concepts should be explored. The following ideas are quoted from "Innovative Methods to Fund Public School Construction" by Lisa Rawlings of the University of Maryland School of Public Affairs, available in its entirety at [http://www.lisc.org/resources/assets/asset_upload_file278_6849.pdf].

Construct-Leaseback

Construct-Leaseback is a form of public-private partnership which allows counties to work with the private sector to build new schools without issuing bonds or requiring State contribution. The lease, paid through the operating budget, would cover debt service and a pre-set profit margin.

Advantages:

- Allows the school system to have the capacity available when the additional students move-in. Because of current lead times in the school construction process, the construction of additional school capacity financed by developer impact fees and excise taxes is not complete, or sometimes even begun, when the new students arrive leading to school overcrowding and the use of temporary classrooms.
- The school system can opt-out of the lease after a specified period of time.
- As the school would be built by the developer as part of the overall construction process, developers can guarantee potential home buyers that a new school in the development would be built by a specific time
- As the building and property would continue to be owned by the developer, the building and associated land could be put to the developer's best use once the lease ends.

Innovative Partnerships – Commercial Development and Shared Use

There are many ways innovative partnerships can be used to build school infrastructure or to leverage existing infrastructure in ways that free up capital for school construction. For example:

- Air-rights over existing school facilities in commercially developed areas can be leased to private entities.
- Historical tax credits associated with the renovation of older schools may be marketed to private investors if a commercial use is incorporated into the school concept.
- Shared-use facilities which can leverage scarce local capital funds to build complementary facilities. For example, in Avalon, New Jersey, local leaders are proposing to opt-out of the county library system and use the related savings to meet debt service on bonds used to expand an elementary school to include both dedicated subject space and a new community library.
- Extension of current use of performance contracting to finance construction of new facilities.
- MISA and DoD are creating a list of national best practices for funding alternatives. See www.militarystudent.org for updates

Charter School Grants

Grants are available for public charter schools from the US Department of Education. [http://www.ed.gov/programs/charter/index.html]

School Board Policy Issues

Board of Education policies often affect military families directly. MISA has provided a thorough checklist regarding school enrollment and other requirements [http://www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org], including a suggested Board of Education policy that may assist local school boards in accommodating the needs of mobile military students as they maneuver the requirements of a new school system.

The policy allows students transitioning from one school system to another to avoid being penalized due to district or state requirements beyond their control [http://www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org/board_policy.html]. A modified version is offered for local Boards of Education constrained by state statutes.

MISA Policy Recommendation

The Board of Education recognizes that we live in a mobile society and that families may be required to move at any time—including during the school year. It is the philosophy of the Board that students should progress from grade to grade and meet the District graduation requirements. However, the Board does not believe that a student's progress or graduation should be delayed because a "state specific" requirement is not met.

The Board of Education directs the Superintendent to develop procedures which will ensure that school personnel work with all students and parents in their transition from one school to another. To meet this commitment, it may be necessary to provide reciprocity within the curriculum or graduation requirements from one district to another. (Source: MISA).

Additional Suggestion

Therefore, consideration will be given to waiving any discretionary requirements which might otherwise delay or prevent any child who is transferring to our schools from enrolling in <u>or</u> graduation from them. We authorize the Superintendent to waive any graduation requirement that:

1. is not mandated by state statute;
2. is not considered so basic that its absence would seriously undermine a diploma's value;
3. does not present a realistic health threat to other students or staff;
4. does not make it extremely difficult for a child to handle work at the next level.

U.S.A.

Tools

This section of the Toolkit is designed to provide School Leaders with additional resources, information, and useful website links to facilitate the transition of military students and their families. In conjunction with the installation commander, School Leaders have the opportunity to help create a smooth transition for military families, ensure adequate communication among all constituents in the community, and establish and document promising practices throughout the school district. Reciprocal communication and shared responsibilities will enhance transition success for the mobile military family.

1. **Frequently Asked Questions**
2. **School Leader's Checklist**
3. **Installation Contacts**
4. **PowerPoint Template for Briefing the Military**
5. **Developing a Local Action Plan**
6. **Recommendations for a Military Family-Friendly Website**
7. **Examples of Helpful Websites**
8. **Promising Practices**
9. **DoD Programs and Initiatives**
10. **Special Education Students**
11. **School Safety**
12. **Glossary of Basic Military Terms**
13. **Glossary of Educational Terminology**
14. **Websites/Resources**

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can I contact on the installation?

The superintendent should establish and maintain a working relationship with the installation commander or designee. Principals, administrators, and other school officials may want to work with school liaisons on the installation. Each of the Services has a different manner of determining and delegating responsibilities for school age children. There are Exceptional Family Member Program contacts for certain types of special education students. For more information, refer to the "Installation Contacts" section of this Toolkit.

How can I find out if the installations near me will be increasing in size?

Some information is available on Department of Defense websites as well as websites for branches of the Armed Services. DoD has a website dedicated to BRAC which outlines the base closures and reductions, as well as the corresponding increases. Information about the Army Modularization indicates what installations are going to be impacted by the Army's efforts to become more responsive to modern threats.

Is there federal money available to educate military dependents?

Yes. Federal Impact Aid is available annually to public school districts to offset tax revenues the school districts might otherwise receive from federal properties, including military installations. The per pupil rate varies from state to state.

There are also separately operated Department of Defense Impact Aid Programs: DoD Supplemental Impact Aid and DoD Impact Aid for Children with Severe Disabilities.

Through the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2006, Congress appropriated $7 million to be dispensed among heavily impacted school districts. Consult Bill HR 1815 for details.

Refer to the "Funding Issues" section of the Toolkit for more information. The on-line version of this Toolkit will be updated as developments occur.

Are there programs for military children with special needs?

Each Service has programs for military children with special needs, and the Department of Defense has a program for exceptional family members as well. See the "Special Education Students" section of the Toolkit for more information.

Are there nonprofit associations or groups that are involved specifically with the education of military children?

Yes. The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC), the Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) and the National Military Family Association (NMFA) are heavily involved in education issues for military families and include schools that educate military children in their membership. More information about these organizations and some of their activities are in the "DoD Initiatives" section and in the "Resources" section of the Toolkit.

Does the military child face any particular or unique issues?

The military child is three times more likely to move than a non-military child. Military children face different issues when one or both of a child's parents are deployed. More information about transition and deployment issues as well as the efforts of school districts and military installations to help children deal with these issues may be found in the "The Military Student" section of the Toolkit. More can be found in the "Issues" section of MilitaryStudent.org [http://www.militarystudent.org].

Have there been any studies on issues military children face?

There have been several studies and roundtables, including Department of Defense Roundtables, Focus Groups, and the Army Secondary Education Transition Study. You can review the findings and recommendations of these studies on "The Military Student."

Current studies include a longitudinal study by Purdue University about the adjustment cycle of the military child and an initiative on the military child at Johns Hopkins University. The Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University examines military children and their families as they go through a Permanent Change of Station (PCS). The Purdue study, *Military Families on the Move,* includes members of all services and children from Kindergarten through 12th grade. The scope of the study focuses not just on children but also on their families and examines links between PCS experiences and outcomes of military interest such as members' job performance and retention, spouses' employment situations, and members' and spouses' commitment to the military.

The DoD and Johns Hopkins University have created The *Military Child Initiative* to help parents and public school educators improve school connectedness for military students through the implementation of best practices and parent involvement. See http://www.jhsph.edu/mci for complete information on these studies and programs.

What is the SET study?

In 1999, the U.S. Army commissioned the Military Child Education Coalition to conduct the Secondary Education Transition (SET) Study to better understand the challenges facing high school-age military children. Thirty-nine schools in nine communities participated in the study. Over 30,000 Army 13-18 year olds were involved.

Based on the findings of the original study, the nine communities signed an agreement outlining several actions the schools could take to ease transitions for the military students. The Army uses the SET study findings and recommendations as the basis for its efforts to ease the difficulties Army students face when they move from school to school. See DoD Initiatives for additional information and MCEC http://www.militarychild.org.

How can I find out about innovative practices used by schools that serve a large number of military children?

The Department of Defense and the Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) have published a book on innovative school practices entitled "United We Stand…Responding to the Mobile Military Family." The MilitaryStudent.org website [http://www.militarystudent.org] includes an online version that is regularly updated. Some of the key programs and a brief description of them are included in the "Promising Practices" Tool and under the heading "Promising Practices" in the DoD Initiatives.

Our school district expects to receive students from overseas installations. Is there any way to find out about the schools they have attended?

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is responsible for the schools operated by the Department of Defense overseas and at some domestic installations. Refer to "Department of Defense Education Activity" in this Toolkit or DoDEA's website [http://www.dodea.edu] for additional information about the schools, locations, policies and curriculum/programs.

School Leader's Checklist

Phase 1: Pre-Relocation

- ❑ 1.1. Identify and designate an installation or military liaison in your school system.
- ❑ 1.2. Identify and contact key players for military child education, both on and off the installation.
- ❑ 1.3. Determine as much information as possible about arriving students.
- ❑ 1.4. Determine funding needs and identify potential sources of funding.
- ❑ 1.5. Hold informal discussions and meetings with installation and local community leaders, parents, and other stakeholders regarding the potential impact.
- ❑ 1.6. Develop a proactive plan.
- ❑ 1.7. Develop an assessment plan to promote continuous improvement based on best practices and lessons learned.
- ❑ 1.8. Develop communication strategies, including media comments, town hall meetings, etc.
- ❑ 1.9. Establish benchmarks.

Phase 2: During Relocation

- ❑ 2.1. Work with the installation to create a seamless transition for students, the schools and the community.
- ❑ 2.2. Contact the transferring schools to discuss a plan for transferring records and information.
- ❑ 2.3. Coordinate military student education issues with the appropriate military offices and provide families with necessary information and resources (e.g. school calendar, enrollment requirements, website, etc.).
- ❑ 2.4. Work with other school districts, state, congressional, and local officials to discuss funding issues related to relocation and for technical assistance, lessons learned, and promising practices.
- ❑ 2.5. Identify needs that cannot be met with current resources and determine the appropriate next step.
- ❑ 2.6. Conduct or attend regular meetings with installation leaders, local community leaders, parents, and other stakeholders to implement the plan.
- ❑ 2.7. Routinely release information to keep key leaders, stakeholders and communities informed.
- ❑ 2.8. Establish benchmarks.

Phase 3: Post-Relocation

- ❑ 3.1. Implement an assessment plan.
- ❑ 3.2. Set up data collection and other administrative procedures for feedback throughout the rebasing project to identify shortfalls and successes.
- ❑ 3.3. Apply feedback from constituents to improve the process during future military student transitions.
- ❑ 3.4. Document and share lessons learned and best practices.
- ❑ 3.5. Publish an After Action Report.
- ❑ 3.6. Establish benchmarks.

Installation Contacts

Regular and effective communication between a school superintendent and the commanding officer of the installation (or their designees) is essential. A good working relationship between the schools and the installation will avoid duplication of effort and services and identify potential gaps and pitfalls in providing a continuum of services to military families.

This section provides descriptions of the personnel on the installation who may be helpful contacts for school districts. MISA has a webpage entitled "Partnerships Between Military Installations and Schools" with suggestions on ways school personnel and the military can work together on local issues.

Installation School Liaisons

Each of the Services delegates responsibilities for school age children in a different manner.

Army: The Army has School Liaison Officers (SLOs) at every large installation. The SLO works in conjunction with the Child and Youth Services Division and the local school community to address educational issues involving military children. Through partnering with the local and military community, the SLO uses a variety of resources to provide assistance to help resolve issues concerning student transition. The SLO acts as a communication link between the installation and the surrounding school districts. To find out about the SLO at a particular installation, check "My Installation" at the Army MWR - Child Development website.

Air Force: The Air Force Family Support Centers generally manage school liaison services. Contact information at each installation is available through the AFPC - Air Force Personnel Center website.

Navy: The Navy Fleet and Family Support Program (FFSP) handles school liaison services. Contact information and a description of programs at each installation are available through the Navy Fleet and Family Support Programs homepage.

Marine Corps: The Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) operate school liaison services. Information about MCCS programs for each installation is available through the "My Installation" link on the MCCS Marine Corps Community Services homepage.

For more information please refer to the *military school liaison information* in the Educators section of the MilitaryStudent.org website.

PowerPoint Template for Briefing the Military

This Toolkit contains an Outline PowerPoint Presentation school districts can use as a template when presenting to the local installations and other constituencies (See Toolkit Disk or online revision at http://www.militarystudent.org). This is intended only as a guideline. Below are Talking Points, used to create the PowerPoint, which cover information that the superintendent/designee should have available for installation commanders, other military leaders, and/or community groups.

The installation commander will need specific information FROM School Districts. The installation commander's School Transit Response Team (STRT) will want to gather some information from schools in order to identify possible relocation challenges.

Talking Points

Profile of District Schools

- What is the size of the school district (number of students and schools)?
- What is the percent of military children enrolled in each school?
- What is the capacity of each school and how close to capacity is each facility?

Registration

- What is the current registration process?
- What are possible modifications that could accommodate large numbers of students?
- What kind of support could the military installation provide to the schools to assist in enrollment issues?

Temporary Quarters and School Enrollment

- Is the district willing to be flexible in allowing students to attend their future school even though they are currently living in temporary housing?
- How can the installation help?

Student Sponsorship Programs

- What programs and policies does the district have in place for getting students settled in their new school? (i.e.: Student/Parent Orientations…)
- Does the district/school have a sponsorship program for students?

Reciprocity Agreements

- Does the district have a reciprocity agreement for graduation?
- Has the district signed the Memorandum of Agreement recommended in the Army Secondary Transition (SET) Study (The SET Study is explained in the Frequently Asked Questions Section).
- Does the school district have an action plan to address the issues of the MOA?

School-Installation Partnership

for Military Families
on the Move

Profile of District Schools

- Size of the school district
  - number of students
  - number of schools
- Percent of military children enrolled
- Capacity of each school and current enrollment at each facility

Registration of Students

- Current Registration Process
- Possible Modifications to Accommodate Large Numbers of Students
- On-line registration
- Help from the installation

Temporary Quarters and School Enrollment

- District ability to allow students to attend future schools while living in temporary housing
- District ability to transport students to their permanent school from temporary housing
- Suggested Installation assistance

Student Sponsorship Programs

- Successful programs and policies for getting students settled in their new school
- Student and Parent Orientations
- District-School sponsorship programs for students

Reciprocity Agreements

- District reciprocity agreements for graduation
- District participation in Memorandum of Agreement
- Installation-School District Action Plan to address military student issues

Developing a Local Action Plan

To foster a meaningful partnership, schools districts and installations are encouraged to work together to develop a Local Action Plan to address the issues facing the mobile military child. The action plan should delineate the responsibilities of the district, the installation, and shared responsibilities. This plan should supplement, not replace, any action plans developed by the school district or schools within the district.

Several school districts and military installations have worked together to develop Local Action Plans to address the needs of military students. In 2004, the Florida legislature mandated that the State Department of Education facilitate memoranda of agreement between school districts and military installations which address strategies for assisting military students in their transition to Florida schools.

The department included links to the following Local Action Plans, developed by school districts and military installations:

- Fort Lewis and Clover Park School District (PDF)
- Fort Bragg/Pope AFB and Cumberland County Schools (PDF)
- Fort Jackson and Richland School District (PDF)

Several other school districts were involved in similar processes. MCEC has noted other schools and local installations that have developed Local Action Plans including:

- Killeen Independent School District, Killeen, TX
- Lawton Public Schools, Lawton, OK
- Groton Public Schools, Groton, CT
- Lackland Public Schools, San Antonio, TX

Issue/Challenge: What are the challenges that are keeping us from achieving our goal or what is the issue(s) that must be addressed in order to meet the goal?

Key Activities: What program, activities or policies would help us achieve our goal? These are specific activities that are designed to lead to the achievement of our goal. There are often multiple activities that support our outcome.

Audience: Who specifically are we trying to reach? It is important to recognize exactly who is being addressed by this initiative.

Person(s) Responsible: Who is ultimately responsible for monitoring the activity? Designating a clear point of contact or project director from the start will help insure that the action is accomplished.

Timeline for Implementation: When will we begin and end? What are our benchmark dates for accomplishing tasks? In order to stay on top of the initiative, it is critical to set dates for accomplishing tasks.

Indicators: How will we know that the initiative worked? Indicators are the desired outcomes for each action. Consider the changes you would like to occur if your initiative is successful. There are often multiple indicators for each action.

Evaluation: What kind of data do we need in order to evaluate the targeted indicators? Is that data already available? Do we need to collect new data or information? How should we collect that data or information? It is important to determine specifically how you will measure each of the indicators generated for any given activity.

Military Student Transition Action Plan Template

Goal:

Issue/Challenge:

Key Actions	Target Audience	Person (s) Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Indicators of Success	Evaluation/ Review Procedure for this Action

Military Student Transition Action Plan - Sample

Goal: Allow for in-coming military students to participate fully in extra-curricular activities

Issue/Challenge: Students enrolling at the beginning of the year often miss tryouts for sports and extra-curricular activities.

Key Actions	Target Audience	Person (s) Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Indicators of Success	Evaluation/ Review Procedure for this Action
Publish tryout periods on the website along with requirements.	Students; families	Athletic Director Assistant Principal (AP) in charge of associated student bodies School Liaison Office	January 2006	Students will know what is required for each activity and know the tryout period. Information on the web page will be accurate and timely.	Review quarterly for timeliness. Survey enrolling students to see if they knew of the options.
Establish policies for accepting reference letters for entering students.	Students; families	Athletic Director Coaches AP in charge of associated student bodies Counselors	November 2005	Qualified students will be able to enter extra-curricular activities even if they miss tryouts.	Review annually at end of school year. Survey enrolling students to see if they knew of and used options.
Establish policies for accepting video tapes for certain extra-curricular tryouts such as cheerleader and selected sports.	Students; families	Athletic Director Coaches AP in charge of associated student bodies Counselors	November 2005	Qualified students will be able to enter extra-curricular activities even if they miss tryouts.	Review annually at end of school year. Survey enrolling students to see if they knew of and used options.

Recommendations for a Military Family-Friendly Website

Many military families have computer access and want to make transition arrangements prior to relocation. A school website can help the family with many of the questions parents and students may have and ease the transition process for both the family and the school. A website should complement the information provided by the local installations and their military school liaisons.

Studies, research, and focus groups conducted by many organizations have yielded consistent suggestions for topics to include in a military family-friendly website. Having a link on the school district homepage to a site specifically for military families and/or families moving to the area is extremely helpful. Topics on the website should include:

1. A list of information required by state or school district for enrollment such as:
    - Birth records
    - School records
    - Immunizations
        - Immunization and physical exam requirements
        - Requirements that can be met before arriving at a new school and requirements that need local approval
2. An explanation of school attendance policies
3. Guidelines and instructions for home-based instruction
4. Graduation requirements and any entrance or exit testing requirements
5. Kindergarten information such as:
    - Entrance age
    - Any exemptions to entrance age requirements
    - Whether the program is half-day of full-day
6. District calendar and/or calendars from individual schools
7. Maps of school district and attendance zones
8. Qualifications for free/reduced breakfast/lunch program
    - Information on Special Programs such as English as a Second Language, Special Education, Gifted and Talented Programs, and Advanced Placement Courses:
    - Requirements
    - Programs offered
    - Phone number/email address of contact person
    - Criteria for admission to the program(s)
    - Specific programs available only at certain schools

10. Sports/Extra Curricular Programs:
    - Programs Offered
    - Specific programs available only at certain schools
    - Criteria for participation
        - Tryouts
            - When
            - Alternatives to selection procedures (video tryouts, positions held for late tryouts) etc
11. Specific information on mid-year moves, such as:
    - What to prepare prior to leaving
    - How the school district provides credit for classes taken at the previous school
    - Transition services for incoming students
    - Information required to receive credit for classes at the end of the year
12. School Specific information, such as:
    - Name of schools, websites, addresses, phone numbers, contact person with e-mail
        - Schools serving families living on base
        - Schools serving primarily military families
    - Class sizes for elementary and secondary schools
    - Attendance areas
    - School calendars
    - School performance on tests
13. Copies of forms to be completed for registration.
14. Online registration for and notification regarding children with special needs and children in English as a Second Language programs and Gifted and Talented Programs.
15. District Email address for families that have questions or need special assistance.
16. Other local, regional, or national education links for military families.

Examples of Helpful Websites

Examples of school district websites that appear helpful to newcomers and military families:

- **Hampton City Schools** have a link on their homepage to "Everything Parents Need to Know" and links to several areas including enrollment, testing and graduation requirements, extracurricular activities, and educational programs. The site has a link for military families that takes them to the education page for military families with information and links to the various school districts that serve the installations in Hampton Roads, VA. This was prepared by the Joint Military Services School Liaison Committee (JMSSLC)—with representation from all the local area military installations, including Army and Air Force School Liaison Representatives, an Army Youth Education and Outreach Services Director, an Army Outreach Liaison Specialist, and a Navy School Outreach Educator.

- The **Virginia Beach Public Schools System** has a special page entitled VBCPS New to Virginia Beach? The link is on the school system's homepage and includes sections like How to Register Your Child, School Calendars, School Curriculum, School Locator and Kindergarten Requirements.

- **Travis Unified School District** in California has a link to the Newcomer's Guide to Travis USD. It includes registration information, school descriptions, and school performance indicators. The guide has a section for E-pals and parent contacts, where students and parents can each request email contacts for specific information.

- The **Vernon Parish School District** website has a direct link to the Fort Polk School Liaison Office website. The Fort Polk School Liaison website contains the pertinent information for families moving to the area.

- **Fairfax County Public Schools** has two sections on its homepage for families moving into the district. A pull-down menu with the option to "Register your child" links you to Fairfax County Public Schools - Attendance and Enrollment. There is a link on the homepage for Fairfax County Public Schools - Starting School with continuing links to information for parents transferring students into the district and parents enrolling children in Kindergarten.

- **Randolph Field Independent School District** provides a link to a registration form on its homepage, allowing you to download a file that contains the application policy, the procedure, the instructions for completing the form, the form and the agreement, grade level course listings, and a submission checklist.

Promising Practices

Lessons from the Schools

The Department of Defense and the Military Impacted Schools Association have put together *United We Stand….Responding to the Mobile Military Family*. Districts throughout the country submitted examples of some innovative ways that schools make the mobile military child feel welcome. Schools continue to send in examples which are regularly updated on the MilitaryStudent.org website (see Promising Practices of the Educators' section).

Below are some highlights of programs designed for the newly arriving mobile military child and family. The highlights are grouped into five areas:

- Understanding the Military Child
- Before School Begins
- Buddy and Ambassador Programs
- First Days
- Transition Labs/Catch-up Programs

In each of the five areas, there is a description of some of the challenges of student relocation noted in the "Major Challenges of Student Relocation" section of this Toolkit. If you want to know more about a particular program, just click on the link for a more detailed description. The name and information of a contact person are included in the detailed description if you want to explore the program further.

Understanding the Military Child

- Fort Campbell Schools in Kentucky have looked at **Principal Shadowing** as a way of gaining a better understanding of what issues a student faces in the transfer process. A principal shadows students through the steps involved in leaving a school and problems faced while learning new procedures at the gaining schools.

- Bellevue Public Schools, Nebraska, has developed an in-service day around the theme "Getting to Know Your Community." "**Getting to Know Your Base**" is an important part of this day. Staff members can spend the entire day visiting various areas in the community - including Offutt Air Force Base, historic areas, etc. Bellevue PSD and Offutt Air Force Base provide an orientation for all new staff, including a tour of the military installation, a welcome from the commander and lunch at the base.

> The programs described here address challenges such as professional development, partnerships, and connectedness.

Before School Begins

- Storck Barracks in Illeshiem Barracks, Germany and Fort Hood, Texas, put together a **School Orientation and Transition Weekend** to help ease the transition of over 212 families headed to Germany as part of a tour of duty. The housing director and school

principal from Illeshiem went to Fort Hood six months prior to when the families were expected to arrive in Germany as part of an orientation and transition weekend. The principal brought welcome letters so that each transitioning student had a pen pal to contact and meet upon their arrival. Counselors from the Killeen Independent School District were able to meet with the principal to discuss appropriate placement of special needs students.

- Killeen Independent School District in Texas provides unique **In-Processing Information at Fort Hood** by providing informational publications about the district that are placed in the packets for families who arrive at Fort Hood. They provide a video overview of the district to Fort Hood that is shown to in-processing families. The district also sets up the **Little Red Schoolhouse Information Center** at the local shopping mall in the summer, where they display calendars, bus information, school supplies lists, and other information needed as school begins. The district has a **Summer Enrollment Center** where parents can register their students prior to the first day of school.

> The Before School Begins programs address all of the challenges of student relocation, especially transfer of school records, connectedness, extracurricular activities, calendars and schedules, partnerships, students in special programs, and students with special needs.

- Fort Leavenworth Unified School District in Kansas conducts **New Student Open House** for all students prior to the first day of school. At the elementary schools, parents may bring students to school to explore the building, find their classrooms, and meet the new teacher and staff. Middle school students come on a half-day schedule to learn the school policies, find their way around the building, meet their teachers, and get acquainted with their peers.

> The MilitaryStudent.org website has some suggestions on some of the key characteristics of Successful Student Orientation Programs in the Educators' section of the website.

- Travis Unified School District in California provides for a **Smooth Transition** for new students and parents who contact the school prior to arrival. Parents and students can access an online **Newcomer's Guide** . The guide specifically addresses concerns of military families. Students and parents alike may request pen pals through the website. The district tries to find the student's area of interest and match the student with an email pal with similar interests. They also put incoming students in contact with club advisors or coaches so that they get to know people prior to arrival.

- Central Kitsap School District in Washington rolls out an online **Welcome Wagon** with a wide range of topics. Military families have the opportunity to e-mail their questions and special student needs to the district prior to arrival.

- **Orientation and Special Support** at Fort Huachaca District in Arizona includes an Open House for General Myer Elementary School the day before the first day of school where parents and students can meet the school staff and teachers.

- Some schools allow students to try out for extracurricular activities via videotape. Killeen Independent School District in Texas allows **Additional Cheerleading Tryouts** to be sent via videotape for students who are not going to be able to attend the traditional spring tryout for cheerleading. Killeen also has a fall tryout for students who were not residents of the district during spring tryouts.

- Bellevue High School in Bellevue, Nebraska, has specific **Guidelines for Extracurricular Activities** for students who move late in the summer or during the school year. Students may audition ahead of time or send video auditions for cheerleading, dance groups, marching band, or choral groups. Each year the schools hold a number of positions open so that those students who arrive after the audition timeframe can apply later in the year.

- Another component of Bellevue Public Schools System's **Getting to Know Your Base** allows parents to register their children on-line at any time or call an "800" number to talk specifically to teachers, counselors, etc. Schools are kept open year-round so families can register when they arrive. Even if families do not know where they will be living, schools will provide tours and briefings and even register students. The district participates in Offutt Air Force Base's "Right Start" program for all new military personnel and sets up information/registration tables at the Base Exchange in the summer.

Buddy and Ambassador Programs

- Many schools have buddy programs or ambassador programs. Some develop their own, while others may acquire proprietary programs, such as The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)'s **Student 2 Student** program, which lists more than 50 school sites that use the program.

- In most buddy systems, teachers assign new students a "Buddy" to accompany the student to classes and that all-important first day of lunch. Many times these students have undergone training and role-playing exercises prior to accompanying the new student.

> The Buddy and Ambassador Programs address the challenge of the first two weeks of school and of connectedness - allowing children to feel welcome and connected at a new school.

- Fountain-Fort Carson School District No. 8 in Colorado uses **The L.I.N.K. Program,** a national year-long program for freshmen transitioning into high school [http://www.linkcrew.com]. The program links eight to ten students to one or two junior or senior LINK leaders. Different options for the program are designed and used by each school to fit particular needs. Fountain-Fort Carson incorporates registration work, vision and hearing screening and shared lunch on the patio into the program. The same company that provided the LINK program has a similar program called WEB for middle school students.

- The Lackland Independent School District in Texas has the **H.O.S.T.S. – Helping Our Students to Succeed** - program to provide new students in first through six grades a HOST or pal for the first week of school. The HOST club meets every two weeks and students role-play ways of helping new students. They receive peer mediation training and help students solve conflicts through the "Peace Path." During the holiday season, HOSTS have a special party and invite their teachers to the party to thank them for all that they do to help new students.

- Sugarmill Elementary School in Camden County, GA, uses a **Buddy and Map System.** The school tries to match new students with current students who used to live in the same place. The school is making a large map and every time a student enrolls in the school, a marker is placed on their previous town or area.

- Two other elementary schools in Camden County, GA, not only provide peer buddies to new students, but provide welcome packages as well. Woodbine Elementary School (WES) has both the **New Found Friend Program and Newcomers Club.** Newcomers are provided a WES welcome package including a WES pencil, free ice cream pass, WES handbook and other treats. New students become members of the WES Newcomers Club and meet monthly with the school counselor at a designated time. Club activities vary according to the needs of the members.

- The name and number of a new student's special school buddy are among the contents of the Randolph Elementary **Welcome Bag**. Students in the Texas school's gifted and talented program determine the contents and assemble the bags. The bag of gifts include an eraser with a note from the school counselor, a "The Principal is My Pal" eraser, a coupon for a free cookie from the cafeteria, and a brochure from a kid's perspective put together by the gifted/talented program students.

First Days

- At the high schools of Bellevue Public Schools, **The First Day** of each school year is for new students only. This day provides students an opportunity to meet one another, visit with their teachers, and find their way around the school with fewer students and more staff assisting to ease the transition.

> The First Days programs address the challenges of the first two weeks of school and of connectedness - allowing children to feel welcome at a new school.

- Silver Valley Unified School District in California has a **First Day of School Celebration** where parents, district personnel, and community stakeholders are invited to an opening day assembly with students. Students are then released to their homerooms and parents can either go to homeroom with their students or go to the cafeteria for refreshments.

Transition Labs/Catch-up Programs

- Each spring, through the **Mobile Student and Project Catch-Up** program, Mascoutah Community High School in Illinois allows juniors and seniors who need extra credit for graduation to take courses after school. Courses are offered to help them to "catch up" with credits needed due to differences in graduation requirements and/or credits that need completion.

- High schools in Killeen ISD have established **Transition Labs** to allow students who move into or out of the district to accelerate instruction in an individualized manner. A video describing the program is available through the links below.
  - 56k Bandwidth - Real Media
  - High Bandwidth - Real Media
  - 56k Bandwidth - Windows Media
  - High Bandwidth - Windows Media

Transition Labs/Catch-up Programs address the challenges of the transfer of records, senior year moves, calendars and schedules, graduation requirements, and connectedness.

Additional Information

- The MilitaryStudent.org **Promising Practices** page includes information about other programs implemented by schools across the country. This page is updated regularly to reflect new programs, which are highlighted on a **new features** page**.** Promising Practices are divided into the following categories:

  - Deployment Programs
  - Social and Emotional Needs
  - Logistical Procedures
  - Special Programs
  - Educator In-service Training
  - Extracurricular Eligibility
  - State Legislation/Programs

Other Promising Practices or Resources

- "**Best and Promising Practices**," is available on the Military Child Education Coalition website. It is an outgrowth of the Army Secondary Education Transition Study "designed to facilitate the mutual development of reciprocal practices, conduits for information between systems about requirements, and accelerate the exchange of emerging opportunities."

- Radford High School's **Malama I Na Haunama Program** is a transition and orientation program addressing the needs of mobile students. The curriculum is designed to provide preparation and support for all transitioning students to promote academic achievement and a successful adjustment into the Radford community.

- Hawaii has a website called **Aloha, Military Families & Students** (AMFAS). The site is a joint project of the Joint Venture Education Forum, a partnership of the Military Community and Hawaii Public Schools. The site has sections related to schools, Culture of Hawaii, and Teen Focus Q&A from a Teen Focus Group held at Radford High School in June 2004.

DoD Programs and Initiatives

Available to Schools Serving Military Children

Social Compact

The Social Compact with the military is the long-term quality of life strategy for the Department of Defense. The new Social Compact reconfirms America's commitment to service members, both active and reserve, implements the President's directive to review measures for improving quality of life for military personnel, and provides recommendations for implementation. The new Social Compact is a DoD philosophical statement of the government's responsibility to underwrite military family support programs. The MilitaryHOMEFRONT.org reports contains the report and a database that identifies regulatory requirements in the areas of health care, housing, off-duty education, military child education, child care, recreation and fitness, personal financial stability, military spouse education and employment, and strengthening support to the reserve forces and employer support programs. The reports section includes updates and revisions to the social compact, including those in the 1st Quadrennial Quality of Life Review issued in May 2004.

BRAC Information and Support

"BRAC" is an acronym which stands for base realignment and closure. The Department of Defense has a **BRAC 2005** website, which explains that BRAC is the process DoD has previously used to reorganize its installation infrastructure to more efficiently and effectively support its forces, increase operational readiness and facilitate new ways of doing business. DoD has a separate agency that works with local areas to provide support and information for communities that are gaining or losing base population. DoD's **Office of Economic Adjustment** (OEA) generally works with one state or local governmental entity, such as a local or regional planning district or the state economic development agency, so the school district should contact OEA or the local planning agencies for more information. For contact information regarding the state economic development agency, The U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Agency maintains a list of **links to state economic development agencies**.

Department of Defense Education Activity

DoDEA is the agency of the Department of Defense that operates public schools for military students in the United States and overseas. According to its 2003 Fact Sheet, DoDEA operates public schools in 15 districts located in 13 foreign countries, seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. All schools within DoDEA are fully accredited by U.S. accreditation agencies.

DoDEA's PK-12 Standards and Curriculum and **DoDEA's graduation requirements** are available on their website.

DoD Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS)

The Department of Defense (DoD) Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) is one of two distinct educational systems operated by DoDEA. DDESS provides comprehensive educational programs on military installations located in seven states, Puerto Rico,

and Guam that are competitive with school systems in the United States. DDESS operates 65 schools on 17 installations. Schools are organized into 6 districts with a total of just over 2,600 teachers serving about 29,500 students.

In order to attend a school operated by DDESS, a student must live on the installation. In the DDESS system, the parents/guardians of the majority of the students (60 percent) are affiliated with the Army.

Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS)

DoDDS is the other educational system in DoDEA operating in 13 foreign countries. Approximately 35 percent of DoDDS students have parents/guardians in the Army, and 29 percent have parents/guardians in the Air Force. Due to Global Rebasing, as many as 30,000 DoDDS students will be returning to the United States to attend local schools in the coming years.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Between 5-7% of DoDEA students are enrolled in the ESL program. This proportion is fairly distributed among grades. The DoDEA ESL Manual 2440.2, "English as a Second Language Program Manual," revises the administrative procedures and associated information for every DoDEA school ESL program. The manual includes procedures in place in DoDEA schools as required by DoDEA Regulation 2440.1, "Programs for Language Minority Students," August 7, 1998. Copies are available from school principals or ESL teachers.

Gifted and Talented Program

DoDEA's Gifted and Talented Program requires schools to:

- Identify students who may evidence giftedness in intellectual ability, academic performance, or the arts.
- Provide differentiated learning experiences for identified students.

DoDEA provides an Educator's Tutorial for identifying gifted and talented students. The Gifted and Talented Program Manual, revised in 2001, includes more detail regarding guidelines for identification and policies regarding gifted and talented students.

Department of Defense State Liaison Office

The State Liaison Office seeks to engage and educate state policymakers, not-for-profit associations, concerned business interests, and other state leaders about the needs of Military members and their families, particularly as those needs intersect with state public policy. Through state/military partnerships, DoD seeks to develop relationships with states, work with them to remove unnecessary barriers, and significantly improve the quality of life for military families.

DoD Military Child in Transition and Deployment

As part of the State Liaison Office, Military Child in Transition and Deployment works on the local, state and national level to address the challenges of school age children of military families in all services that move frequently and/or have deployed family members who attend schools other than DoD schools. They are responsible for operating the **militarystudent.org** website and for other DoD initiatives for students of military families.

Social Compact Committee

The Social Compact Committee for Military Child in Transition and Deployment meets monthly to discuss the challenges faced by the children of military families. The committee consists of representatives of the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, National Guard and Reserve along with DoD representatives from Children and Youth, Exceptional Family Member, Department of Defense Education State Liaison Office. Over the past 4 years, this committee has developed numerous programs, policies and procedures to enhance the education of the military child. Some examples follow:

Website for Military Children and Educators

MilitaryStudent.org is a DoD website designed for children 6-12, teenagers, their parents, special needs families, teachers and installation commanders. The website is designed to empower children and parents to move from school to school successfully. It contains numerous resources, including Department of Education publications, to help parents and students make appropriate choices to promote social, emotional and academic success. In addition, the site is created to address the challenges of deployment by offering suggestions and resources to students, parents and educators.

Publications

MilitaryStudent.org features the following downloadable publications to help schools address deployment issues for military children. These DoD publications have been written in concert with all four Services and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network of UCLA and Duke University:

- The Educators Guide to the Military Child During Deployment booklet is designed to meet the needs expressed by teachers and other school personnel for background information and intervention strategies to support the military child during mobilization and deployment.
- Educators Guide to the Military Child During Post Deployment: Challenges of Family Reunion
- Parents Guide to the Military Child During Deployment and Reunion
- Caring for Kids After Trauma and Death: A Guide for Parents and Professionals by Dr. Robin Goodman, Child Study Center of NY University School of Medicine.

State Legislative Database

Laws and regulations regarding education can vary widely from state to state on a variety of issues. DoD has prepared an interactive database that provides a summary of links, laws, and regulations by state on different issues and potential impediments to the military child in transition, including:

- Kindergarten Age Requirements
- Entrance and Exit Exam requirements
- Immunization requirements
- Graduation requirements
- In-state tuition considerations

Check http://www.militarystudent.org in the Parent Section for updates.

DoD Military Child Initiative: The National Center for Education of the Military Child

The Military Child Initiative, located at Johns Hopkins University, is the collection and distribution center for transition information for parents and educators of military children. The University researches and prepares resources and best practices on such topics as parent involvement in the schools, student belonging (connectedness) and quality education. The Johns Hopkins Center works, upon request, with school districts on site to address the educational challenges of children of military families.

The Military Child Initiative helps educators:

- Improve the quality of education in schools serving military families.
- Identify effective programs/practices that address academic, social, and emotional challenges of military children.
- Enable schools to establish and sustain programs that promote connectedness, parent involvement, and quality education.

The Military Child Initiative helps parents:

- Learn effective strategies for integrating children into a new school and community.
- Know their parental rights and authorities under the No Child Left Behind Act.
- Learn how to advocate for quality education and alternative educational opportunities
- Become actively involved in their child's education.

On-Line Educators Course and School Inservice: "Educating the Military Child"

An on-line teacher course, "Educating the Military Child," sponsored by DoD and written by Johns Hopkins University will be featured on the MilitaryStudent.org website. The course is designed to promote awareness among teachers and school administrators regarding issues of military children who move frequently due to the relocation of their military parent. The course discusses district-wide, school-wide and classroom strategies designed to give students a feeling of connectedness with their new surroundings, and increase academic achievement and parent involvement. The course will be available in the summer of 2006 to teachers worldwide on www.MilitaryStudent.org.

Military Child Awareness Kit for Public Schools: "Tools for Schools"

Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) and the DoD have created a resource to help administrators in heavily impacted schools learn about the military child, their transition challenges, and suggested ways to address these needs. The Awareness Kit is designed for teacher and community orientation and in-service training. MISA is offering training sessions for principals in the use of "Tools for Schools" in their districts.

Longitudinal Study: The Adjustment Cycle of Mobile Children

Conducted for DoD by the Military Family Research Institute of Purdue University, this 2-year study is designed to determine the academic and emotional impact of relocation on Kindergarten through 12th grade students of families in all four Services. The results will be used to help public school educators and parents better support the needs of the military child. The information will be available on the militarystudent.org website.

Research Study: Adjustment of Children During Deployment

Conducted for the DoD Children and Youth Division, a study was developed that focused on the adaptations of adolescents in military families when a parent is deployed. Qualitative methods were used through focus groups conducted with youth in the summer of 2004. These findings will be added to the observations made by professionals who work with military adolescents to provide a context for exploring more effective ways to support adolescents who have a deployed parent.

Educational Options for Military Children

Educational Options for Military Children is a research project conducted by the Rand Corporation for DoD that will:

- Identify educational options available near major installation
- Develop information that would allow parents to make informed decisions regarding appropriate educational placement for their children

The results of the Rand Study will help DoD support quality education for dependents and increase retention.

Additional Initiatives

DoD looks for ways to partner with businesses, nonprofits, and educational institutions to better serve the military child. The http://www.militarystudent.org website is regularly updated with the latest in programs, research, and promising practices. Click here to subscribe to the *e-blast* Newsletter for the latest news and information.

Military OneSource

Military OneSource [http://www.militaryonesource.com] is a program of the Department of Defense which provides a wealth of information on countless issues to service members and their families, provided at no cost to these individuals. Some information requires a username and password. However, other information is available in such areas as K-12 education, parenting and child care, and everyday issues (including moving) without a password. Services can be accessed through the main telephone number for Military OneSource, 1-800-342-9647 or via their website.

Army Programs and Initiatives

Operation Military Kids

The Operation Military Kids (OMK) initiative was established in January 2004 and currently consists of representatives and partners in 20 states experiencing high deployment rates: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Washington.

The U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, National 4-H, Military Child Education Coalition, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and other community groups came together to provide and coordinate support for geographically dispersed military families, particularly youth who suddenly find themselves with deployed family members, but who don't live on or near a military installation.

Although the program is open to all military children regardless of service affiliation, it is specifically focused on those of deployed Army National Guard and Reserve members.
For more information or to participate in the program visit the website http://www.usda-army-ydp.org/omk/.

Regional Coordinators—School Transition Specialists

In addition to the School Liaison Officers the Army has regional School Transition Specialists that work with the schools and school liaison officers. Click here for a map that shows the regions covered by each STS.

School Transition Specialists:

- Act as Regional subject matter experts on school systems and practices, national education issues and initiatives, and education related research (e.g., testing, curriculum, schedules, organization, "No Child Left Behind").
- Serve on the Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) Steering Committee to plan, implement and facilitate mutual development of reciprocal SETS Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) best and promising practices.
- Establish and implement communication systems to facilitate networking among MOA signatory superintendents.
- Represent Army on SETS related military and national committees, councils, taskforces, etc.

Army Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS)

In 1999, the United States Army partnered with the Military Child Education Coalition and began the Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) to better understand the challenges facing high school-age military children. The survey took place in nine communities/ installations in the United States, Germany, and Korea.

Memorandum of Agreement

Based on the findings of the SETS study, the nine original communities signed a Memorandum of Agreement. As of March 2005, there are over 166 MOA School District Signatories representing 170 school districts. The Memorandum of Agreement outlined several actions signatories agreed to take in the best interest of military students. These actions include:

1. Improve the timely transfer of records.
2. Develop systems to ease student transition during the first two weeks of enrollment.
3. Promote practices which foster access to extracurricular programs.
4. Establish procedures to lessen the adverse impact of moves from the end of junior year, as well as before and during senior year.
5. Communicate variations in the school calendars and schedules.
6. Create and implement professional development systems.
7. Continue strong, child-centered partnerships between the installation and supporting schools.
8. Provide information concerning graduation requirements.
9. Provide specialized services for mobile students when applying to and finding funding for post secondary study.

The Memorandum of Agreement outlines specific ways to implement each of the nine suggested actions. More specific examples are included in a document MCEC prepared entitled Best Practices for Schools.

Army Teen Panel (ATP)

The Army Teen Panel was created in 1995 to offer military leadership the viewpoint of teens on Army installations and the unique situations these teens may face. There are twenty-five panel members serving two-year terms. Panelists are nominated by their installations and their regions. Each Army installation has a local Youth Panel that keeps the local installation's leadership informed of the teen perspective.

Child and Youth Homework Centers

The Homework Centers are an integral part of the Army Child and Youth Services System. Teachers supervise the centers after school and work closely with School Liaison Officers to keep abreast of "standards of learning" requirements, school homework assignments, ongoing school projects, new curriculum offerings and classroom projects. Tutoring is generally available and children have ready access to computers.

Youth Technology Labs

Each lab had Internet connectivity, 5-15 computer stations, a color printer, digital camera and camcorder and software supporting both educational and recreational programming. Labs allow youth to complete homework after school, acquire workforce preparation skills, view school web sites, connect with Army peer sponsors before they relocate and stay in touch with deployed parents.

"When you get to a new school, even if it's not in athletics, just be involved in something. It's really a great way to break the ice with people, and if it's something you can identify with or you enjoy, then it automatically groups you with a group of people that have the same interest as you."

High School Senior, DoD Round Table, California

Special Education Students

Resources for Exceptional Family Members

Roughly one out of every ten DoDEA [DoDEA Special Education Website] students is considered a special education student. In DoDEA, special education and related services are available to eligible students, ages 3 through 21 years of age. To be eligible for special education:

- The child must have an identified disability;
- The disability must adversely (negatively) affect the child's educational performance; and
- The child must need a specially designed instructional program.

Specialized Training of Military Parents (STOMP)

STOMP-Specialized Training of Military Parents is the only National Parent Training and Information Center for military families providing support and advice to military parents without regard to their child's type of medical condition. STOMP began in 1985 as a project of Washington PAVE and is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The staff of the STOMP Project consists of parents of children who have disabilities. These parents have experience in raising their children in military communities and traveling with their spouses to different locations. STOMP serves families in four main ways:

1. By providing information and training about laws, regulations and resources for military families of children with disabilities
2. By connecting families to other families
3. By assisting parents and professionals in developing their own community parent education/support groups
4. By raising awareness of issues faced by military families of children with disabilities.

The STOMP project estimates that there are 540,000 active duty sponsors each caring for a family member with special medical or educational needs. While all military families face certain challenges, families with special needs family members face additional difficulties. The STOMP project has identified several difficulties on their website, some of which may have been resolved by recent changes to IDEA.

Exceptional Family Member Programs

The Department of Defense has a Special Needs Program that designs and maintains DoD policy for special education and early intervention services, military career assignment coordination, and Family Support services for exceptional family members. The program maintains the Exceptional Family Member Program web page. The Services have individuals to assist families with exceptional family members at the installation level. The Army and the Marine Corps staff their family centers with individuals called the EFMP Managers (Army) or EFMP Coordinators (Marine Corps). In the Navy, the EFMP staff that supports the Personnel Function may provide family support services, but the Navy does not staff their family centers with EFMP Coordinators. In the Air Force, the Special Needs staff is located in the Military Treatment Facility (MTF) only. The Air Force Special Needs website provides information on Air Force Programs and regulations for

children with special needs. There is a contact form that allows families to select an installation and request a response from a contact there.

In sites outside the continental United States, DoDEA provides special education services. The Military Medical Departments, through their Educational and Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS), are responsible for providing related services (e.g., physical and occupational therapy, clinical psychology). EDIS is responsible for the provision of Early Intervention Services (EIS) for children, ages birth through 2, at all DoDEA locations. More information is available through the DoDEA Special Education website.

Additional Resources

For more information, visit the MilitaryStudent.org website, Families with Special Needs Children, or MilitaryHOMEFRONT's Special Needs/EFMP portal. On the Exceptional Family Member Program page you will find websites for All Department of Defense Exceptional Family Member Programs and valuable links to issues concerning military families.

Military OneSource provides special needs consultation, research, resources, and materials which are intended to enhance current military services available to families with special needs children. Specialty services can be accessed through the main telephone number for Military OneSource, 1-800-342-9647 and an appointment with a military special needs specialist should be requested.

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) conducts the **Special Education Leaders Institute (SELI)**, developed to promote awareness and increase the availability of professional educators who understand the challenges associated with transitioning mobile military connected students with special needs. The Institutes are conducted in cooperation with the schools and military communities to support the military-connected special needs student.

School Safety

Safety is a major concern of many military families. Families are concerned not only about external threats that their children may face because of their association with the military, but with a child's safety at the school from bullies and gangs. DoDEA worked with The George Washington University and University of Hawaii to deal with questions and concerns raised by individuals affiliated with DoDEA schools. The results of these projects may be helpful to all school districts.

DoDEA Safe Schools Project

The George Washington University/ University of Hawaii Safe Schools Project seeks to respond to the questions and concerns that are raised by teachers, counselors, media specialists, administrators, and parents who are active participants in improving public schools operated by the Department of Defense.

The GWU/UH Safe Schools Project Website focuses on 11 topics identified by DoDEA as pressing and relevant. Those topics are:

- Anti-bullying
- Behavior Management
- Character Education
- Conflict Resolution
- Gang Prevention and Resistance
- Hate Prevention and Intervention
- Life Skills
- Parental Involvement
- Substance Abuse Prevention
- Suicide Prevention
- Mental Health Support

Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools is responsible for policy and grants for school safety, particularly drug and violence prevention in schools. The office is responsible for working with other agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security. They work with schools to provide for emergency response and crisis management.

In March of 2003, the office developed a website designed to be a one-stop shop to help school officials plan for any emergency, including natural disasters, violent incidents and terrorist acts. For additional information, click on Emergency Planning - Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools or http://www.ed.gov/emergencyplan. A press release associated with the project has a list of tips for schools to consider.

Glossary of Basic Military Terms and Acronyms

For the convenience of School Leaders, some of the most frequently used military terms and acronyms are included below. For more information, DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict) is the Department of Defense Dictionary of military terms. Another site, www.militarywords.com, has definitions and acronyms for 5,700 US Department of Defense terms and over 100,000 military and government acronyms and abbreviations. The Army has a glossary for its Army Family Team Building at AFTB: Glossary.

Active Duty Force: Full-time duty in the active Armed Forces

BAH: Basic Allowance for Housing. Monthly housing assistance provided to service members who live off the military installation and in privatized housing on installations. Overseas, it is known as **OHA**, the overseas housing allowance.

BAS: Basic Allowance for Subsistence. The monthly food assistance provided to Service members who do not eat at military facilities.

CHAMPUS: The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services is the Department of Defense's military health care program authorized by Congress in 1963 to provide health care services to the active duty dependents, retirees (under 65) and their dependents. The CHAMPUS Reform Initiative (CRI) (1988) was a managed care program to contain cost growth and improve services to beneficiaries. *See TRICARE.*

CO: Commanding Officer

COLA: Cost of Living Adjustment

CONUS: Continental United States

DDESS: Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools. Schools operated by the Department of Defense Education Activity in the United States.

DeCA: Defense Commissary Agency. DeCA operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families.

DEERS: The Defense Enrollment and Eligibility Reporting System. A data base used to verify beneficiary eligibility.

DoD: The Department of Defense

DODEA: Department of Defense Education Activity. An agency of the Department of Defense which operates overseas schools and domestic schools on some military installations.

DODDS: Department of Defense Dependent Schools. Schools operated overseas by the Department of Defense Education Activity overseas.

DoEd: The United States Department of Education (Note: DoE is the Department of Energy)

Dependent: A family member for whom a service member is legally and financially responsible – usually a spouse or child.

Deployment: Relocation of a military unit outside the United States for an extended period of time.

EFMP: Exceptional Family Member Program. A program for military family members with special medical, psychological, or educational needs.

FAP: Family Advocacy Program. A command support program with responsibility for addressing domestic violence and child abuse in military families through prevention efforts, early identification and intervention, support for victims, and treatment for abusers.

Family Center: Location on an installation that provides services and support to military families. Each Service has its own centers and programs. Air Force - Family Support Centers (FSC), Army – Army Community Services (ASC), Marine Corps – Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS), and Navy – Fleet and Family Support Centers.

ID cards: Identification necessary to use military services and facilities.

IG: Inspector General

JAG: Judge Advocate General – military lawyer

LES: Leave and Earnings Statement. Statement that lists the exact amount of compensation (basic pay and allowances) and vacation time earned during the month.

MWR: Morale, Welfare, Recreation. Military service programs to provide recreation, support services, and entertainment.

Mobilization:	The assembling of forces in preparation for deployment.
NCO:	Noncommissioned Officer. An enlisted person ranked sergeant or above.
OCONUS:	Outside the Continental United States. Any location outside the continental United States, including Alaska and Hawaii.
PCS:	Permanent Change of Station. Reassignment to a different military installation.
POC:	Point of Contact
Privatization:	Occurs when a contractor takes over the operation of a particular area of operations. Examples include housing, transportation, custodial…
Rank:	Grade or official standing of commissioned and warrant officers.
Reserve Components:	The Army National Guard of the United States, The Army Reserve, The Navy Reserve, The Marine Corps Reserve, The Air National Guard of the United States, The Air Force Reserve, and The Coast Guard Reserve.
SBP:	Survivor Benefit Plan
Sponsor:	Military member or civilian with dependents. The term is also used to refer to military member who greets and helps a service member assigned to a new duty station.
TDY or TAD:	Temporary Duty or Temporary Active Duty
Total Force:	All components of the Armed Forces: active duty (Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines), National Guard, and Reserves.
TRICARE:	The triple-option Department of Defense health care program which relies on a commercial contractor to develop and manage a private sector network of healthcare providers and service. This network is utilized by CHAMPUS beneficiaries when care is not readily available in the Military Treatment Facility (MTF).
VA:	Department of Veterans Affairs
XO:	Executive Officer. The second officer in command, regardless of rank.

Glossary of Educational Terminology

The Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) has developed *"A Lexicon of Learning; What Educators mean when they say…"* to allow you to do an alphabetical search for most education terms. "Education, like all professions, has a specialized vocabulary that others may have a difficult time understanding. This online dictionary provides clear definitions of educational terms in everyday language" (ASCD, 2005).

Simply click on the first letter of the word for which you need a definition, (e.g. "Cooperative Learning", click "C", scroll down to the word).

http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/menuitem.4247f922ca8c9ecc8c2a9410d3108a0c/

Websites/Resources

Department of Defense Official Website (http://www.defenselink.mil)

U.S. Department of Defense Official Website is the official website of the Department of Defense.

MilitaryStudent.org (http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil)

Militarystudent.org is the DoD website designed for the military child in transition and deployment and the parents, educators and military leaders that support them. MilitaryStudent.org is divided into seven separate websites targeted toward specific audiences:

- The Issues
- Kids (6-12 yrs)
- Teens (13+ years)
- Parents
- Special Needs Families
- Military Leaders
- School Educators

Military Teens on the Move (http://www.defenselink.mil/mtom/index_t.htm)

Military Teens on the Move (MTOM) and MTOM for Kids! (http://www.defenselink.mil/mtom/index_k.htm) are provided as a public service by the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, Office of Children and Youth and the Defense Technical Information Center for teenage children of relocating military families.

Military HOMEFRONT (http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil)

MilitaryHOMEFRONT is "the official Department of Defense web site for reliable Quality of Life information designed to help troops and their families, leaders and service providers. Whether you live the military lifestyle or support those who do, you'll find what you need!"

DoDEA (www.dodea.edu)

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) is an agency of the Department of Defense that operates 222 public schools for military dependents in 15 districts located in 13 foreign countries, seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico.

USA4MilitaryFamilies

USA4MilitaryFamilies.org is designed to develop relationships with states, nonprofits, private companies and other federal agencies. Their 2005 goal is, in collaboration with States, nonprofits and industries, to reduce statute barriers and enhance the ability of military families to transition to new locations.

MilitaryOneSource.com (http://www.militaryonesource.com)

Military OneSource is a program of the Department of Defense which provides information to service members and their families, provided at no cost to these individuals. Most information

requires a username and password. However, the types of information available in such areas as K-12 education, parenting and child care, and everyday issues (including moving), is accessible through their website. Services can be accessed through the main telephone number for Military OneSource, 1-800-342-9647.

United States Department of Education (http://www.ed.gov)

www.ed.gov is the entry into the Department of Education's website. The site has special information for school administrators and information on Impact Aid, Safe and Drug-Free Schools, schools of choice and details about grants available from the department.

Congressional Impact Aid Coalitions

The United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate each have coalitions supporting Impact Aid. These coalitions keep their members aware of the most recent changes and discussions pertaining to Impact Aid. A list of the membership of these coalitions is maintained by the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) at http://www.sso.org/nafis/Impact%20Aid%20Coalitions.htm .

Military Child Education Coalition (www.militarychild.org)

The Military Child Education Coalition is a non-profit organization that seeks partnerships and provides opportunities for networking between schools and military installations to address transition and other educational issues related to the military child. Although the commitment and dedication of our military personnel are well recognized, the sacrifices of their children often receive less attention. MCEC is working to unite installations and their supporting school districts across the nation and overseas to ensure the best education available for military students. MCEC's Membership Roster has a listing of member school districts in alphabetical order. The list has links to the districts' websites.

Military Impacted Schools Association (www.militaryimpactedschools.org)

The Military Impacted Schools Association, MISA, is a national organization formed in 1986 to represent public school districts that serve high concentrations of military children. In addition to MISA Members/Membership of school districts in twenty-six states, MISA's associate members include all U.S. Air Force bases and some Navy installations.

MISA works to ensure that all military children are afforded a quality education. MISA works with local school districts and commanders to highlight best practices and partnerships that can further meet the needs of military families. MISA Members/Membership lists the member schools by state and provides links to member schools websites.

National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (http://www.sso.org/nafis/)

MISA is part of a larger organization, the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS). It is a non-profit, non-partisan corporation of school districts throughout the United States organized primarily to educate Congress on the importance of Impact Aid and to ensure the needs of federally connected children are met with adequate federal funds. NAFIS Members include school districts with a military presence. Their website includes *"The Blue Book"*

[http://www.ssoorg/nafis/2005_blue_book.htm] listing all districts, the number of students they serve under each Impact Aid category and the amount of money they receive.

National Military Family Association (http://www.nmfa.org)

The National Military Family Association, NMFA, is an advocate for military families and supports quality education for military children. NMFA is dedicated to providing information and representing the interests of family members of the uniformed services on which our national security depends. NMFA has members from all ranks of the seven uniformed services worldwide and their families. NMFA provides NMFA Fact Sheets and position papers, including DoD Support to Civilian Schools Educating Military Child and Impact Aid June 2005.

The Military Coalition (http://www.themilitarycoalition.org)

The NMFA is one of thirty-five members of The Military Coalition, a group of 35 military, veterans and uniformed services organizations with 5.5 million members that advocates for support of members of the uniformed services and their families.

The Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA) (http://www.asymca.org)

The Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA) is a non-profit national member association of the YMCA of the USA that works with the Department of Defense to provide support services to military service members and their families. ASYMCA locations worldwide run more than 150 programs to ease the burden of the families of junior-enlisted military personnel, including Operation Hero, a program that aids children from six to 12 years of age who are experiencing temporary difficulty in school, both socially and academically, and Operation Kid Comfort, for children age 5 and under of deployed service members.