Military Students on the Move

A Toolkit for Installation Commanders

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About this Toolkit

School satisfaction is a major Quality of Life issue for military families. The installation commander is the key to insuring school satisfaction by working effectively with military parents and local school districts. A productive partnership with schools, based on shared information and support, will help to provide a positive relocation experience and quality education for military children.

The Commander'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 designed for commanders whose installations will gain a significant number of military families due to initiatives such as Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), Global Rebasing, and Army Modularization. As a result, schools that serve the affected installations will be greatly impacted. This Toolkit will assist commanders in working with impacted school districts to insure smooth school transitions for military students.

The accompanying CD offers hyperlinks for quick access to information, forms and resources. Constantly up-dated versions of all Toolkits can be found on www.militarystudent.org and at Military OneSource. Commanders are encouraged to give Toolkits for parents and school leaders the widest possible distribution.

Contents

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

1. **Commander's Checklist** for pre-, during, and post-relocation activities includes:
   - Suggestions for establishing and running a School Transition Response Team
   - Promising practices for developing partnerships with local school districts
   - Suggestions for ongoing communication with various stakeholders involved in relocation
2. **Major Challenges of Student Relocation** identifies challenges and provides:
   - **Recommendations** for ways commanders can address the challenges
   - **Promising practices** and **links** related to each challenge
3. **Background Information** includes:
   - **Schooling choices**
   - **School governance**
   - **Impact Aid**
4. The **Tools** section provides:
   - Suggestions for school and district **websites**
   - Forms to develop and assess **local action plans**
   - A **PowerPoint template** with talking points for presentation to school districts
   - **Glossary** of educational terms
   - **Links** and descriptions of organizations and websites for additional inform.

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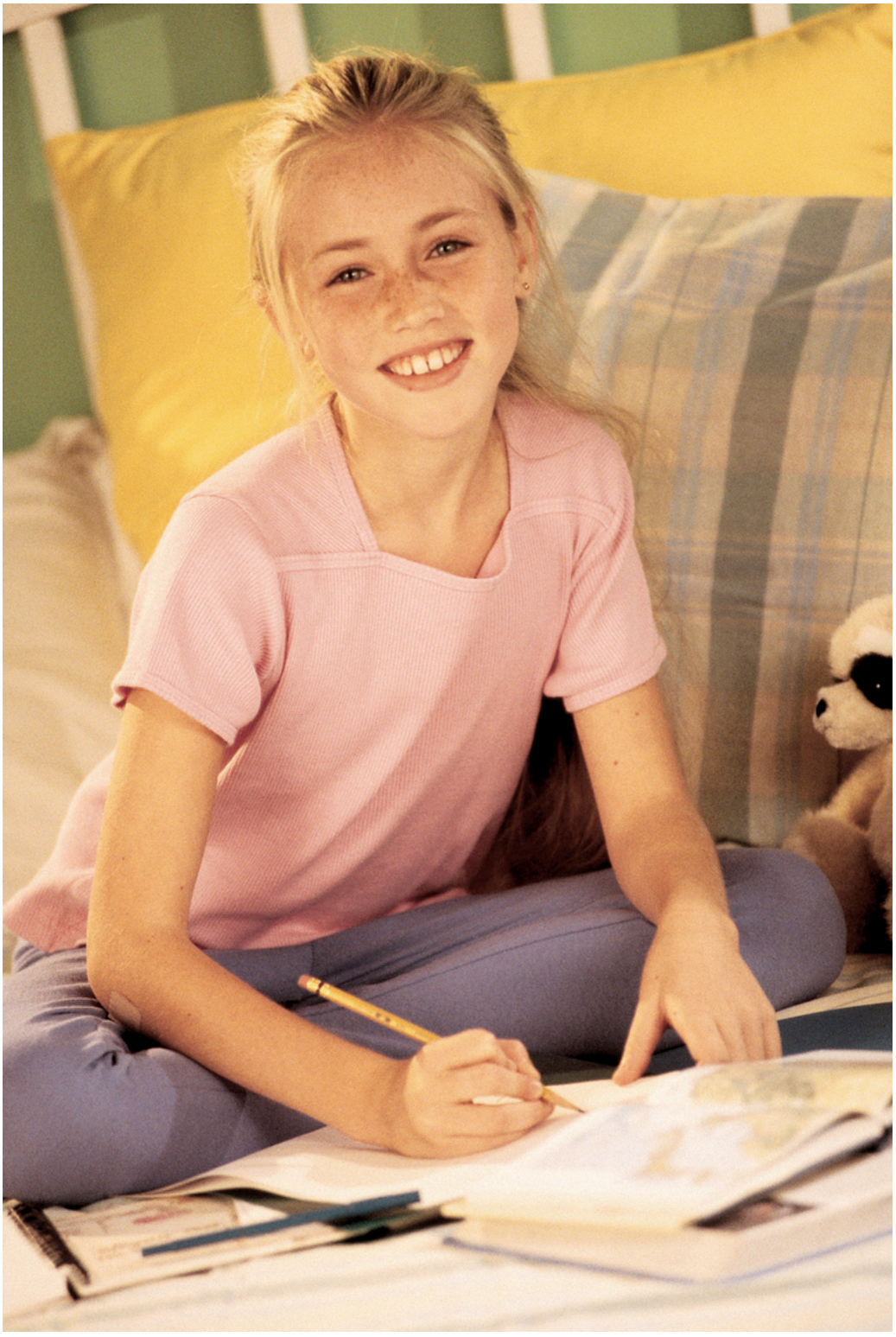

Installation Commander's Checklists

The following checklists are intended to assist installation commanders by providing generic information on key actions needed to ensure a smooth transition of school-age children of military personnel. They are not all-inclusive, but do provide a baseline of actions to be accomplished.

The checklists are presented in three phases:

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

Each phase addresses actions related to three themes:

- **Student Transition Response Team**
- **Partnerships with School Districts**
- **Communication with Parents, Schools, and Community**

Hyperlinks are available for many tasks and provide additional information for accomplishment of the actions on the accompanying CD. The updated version of this and other Toolkits can be found on www.MilitaryStudent.org and Military OneSource at www.militaryonesource.com.

Phase 1: Pre-Relocation

- ❑ 1.1 School Transition Response Team
  - ❑ 1.1.1 Identify Members
  - ❑ 1.1.2 Clarify Mission and Objectives
  - ❑ 1.1.3 Develop Needs Assessment and Collect Information
  - ❑ 1.1.4 Identify Challenges
  - ❑ 1.1.5 Develop a Local Action Plan

- ❑ 1.2 Partnerships with School Districts
  - ❑ 1.2.1 Collect Contact Information
  - ❑ 1.2.2 Designate School Liaison Representative

- ❑ 1.3 Communication
  - ❑ 1.3.1 Provide Information to Parents
  - ❑ 1.3.2 Provide Information to Schools
  - ❑ 1.3.3 Provide Information to the Community

Phase 2: Relocation

- ❑ 2.1 School Transition Response Team
  - ❑ 2.1.1 Implement the Local Action Plan
  - ❑ 2.1.2 Regularly Collect Data and Assess Plan Effectiveness
  - ❑ 2.1.3 Problem-Solve Challenges that Surface

- ❑ 2.2 Partnerships with School Districts
  - ❑ 2.2.1 Attendance at Board Meeting
  - ❑ 2.2.2 Educate the Schools about the Needs of Military Children

- ❑ 2.3 Communication
  - ❑ 2.3.1 Communicate with Parents
  - ❑ 2.3.2 Communicate with Schools
  - ❑ 2.3.3 Communicate with Community

Phase 3: Post-Relocation

- ❑ 3.1 School Transition Response Team
  - ❑ 3.1.1 Collect Data on Activities in Action Plan and Assess Effectiveness
  - ❑ 3.1.2 Adjust the Action Plan
  - ❑ 3.1.3 Write an After-Action Plan to Include Lessons Learned and Promising Practices
  - ❑ 3.1.4 Schedule Periodic Meetings to Address any New or Ongoing Issues

- ❑ 3.2 Partnerships with School Districts

- ❑ 3.3 Communication

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Phase 1: Pre-Relocation Activities

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. Effective planning during Phase 1 is critical because it will inform the actions that occur during all other phases. In addition, the relationships established in Phase 1 are critical for the success of all future actions.

Goals

- Establish a School Transition Response Team to address transition issues.
- Become informed about challenges to the smooth relocation and integration into school for children of military families.
- Establish partnerships with schools and communities.
- Provide accurate and timely information to all stakeholders.

Commander's Pre-Relocation Checklist

- ❑ 1.1 School Transition Response Team
  - ❑ 1.1.1 Identify Members
  - ❑ 1.1.2 Clarify Mission and Objectives
  - ❑ 1.1.3 Develop Needs Assessment and Collect Information
  - ❑ 1.1.4 Identify Challenges
  - ❑ 1.1.5 Develop a Local Action Plan
- ❑ 1.2 Partnerships with School Districts
  - ❑ 1.2.1 Collect Contact Information
  - ❑ 1.2.2 Designate School Liaison Representative
- ❑ 1.3 Communication
  - ❑ 1.3.1 Provide Information to Parents
  - ❑ 1.3.2 Provide Information to Schools
  - ❑ 1.3.3 Provide Information to the Community

1.1 What is the School Transition Response Team?

The School Transition Response Team (STRT) provides an opportunity for local schools and the military community to work together. The intent is to involve a variety of stakeholders to develop the action plan necessary to ensure the smooth relocation of school-age children of military families. This team will also enhance the commander's ability to make informed decisions related to issues of concern to military families and school districts.

1.1.1. Identify Members

The following are suggested members of the School Transition Response Team. The list is lengthy and each installation must determine the relevancy and degree of involvement of these representatives:

- Installation Commander
- Unit Commanders or their Representatives
- Public Affairs Representative
- Parent Representatives
- Education/School Liaison Representative
- Child Youth Services/Family Member Program Representative
- Exceptional Family Member Program Representative
- Officer/Enlisted Spouse Organizations Representative
- Military Advisory School Board Member
- Local School Officials (Superintendents or Designee) from each impacted district
- Army Community Services/Family Service Center Representative
- Teen Representative
- Chaplain
- Pediatrician/Mental Health Representatives
- Representatives from any joint services surrounding or on the installation, to include Guard and Reserves and Coast Guard
- Community officials (city council member, mayor, planning commission representative)

1.1.2 Clarify Mission and Objectives of the School Transition Response Team

Mission: To provide a smooth transition of school-age children of military families into the local school setting.

Objectives for Phase 1

- Assist parents and their children with the transition and relocation process.
- Collect information and data related to the relocation of military students.
- Develop an action plan for ensuring a smooth relocation.
- Establish partnerships with local schools and communities.
- Create proactive communication systems for parents, schools, and communities.

1.1.3 Develop Needs Assessment and Collect Information

The STRT must gather information in order to communicate timely, accurate information to parents and schools. Listed below are some questions that may need to be addressed. Keep

in mind that this is only a partial list of questions. Your particular locale and branch of Service will raise additional questions unique to your situation.

Housing

Many of the issues related to transition and schools have to do with availability of housing both on and off the installation. The STRT should gather the answers to these questions first since they provide background information for the other groups.

Housing Questions Help Define School Issues

- What is the housing situation?
- Where are the families most likely to live?
- What percentages of military children live on the installation?
- Which school districts will be impacted by military students?
- Where do the students go to school when they are in temporary quarters?
- Is there new housing being planned for the installation? If so, what is the completion date? Who will live there?
- What is the wait for housing on the installation?
- Is there an environmental assessment that provides information about which schools (public and private) are available in our community and the attendance boundaries for those schools?

Schools

Information FOR School Districts

School Districts will want to know the following information as soon as it is available so they may begin planning and staffing:

Information FOR Schools

Relocation Information

- Is there likely to be a large turnover in student population (the overall numbers do not change but there are many students leaving and incoming)?
- When will the families be arriving? Will they arrive in waves or all at once? Is there a timeline?

Temporary Housing

- Where will families likely live in temporary housing?
- How long are families likely to stay in temporary housing?
- Will districts place students in schools based on their permanent location instead of their temporary housing assignment to avoid another education transition?

Housing

- Where are the families most likely to live?
- Is there going to be a housing increase on or off the installation? If so, when will it be ready?
- Has land been set aside or could land be reserved for a school building within the new community?

Student Demographics

- How many new students will be relocating to/from each district?
- What are the ages and grade levels of these students?
- Are there students with special needs enrolled in EFMP (physical, emotional, or learning disabilities)? If so, what are the disabilities and ages? What are the needs?
- What information would be helpful for schools to know about the uniqueness of military family life? (e.g., Have these families been experiencing multiple deployments? Are they preparing for deployment?)

Transportation and Contingencies

- Is there a transportation plan for getting students on/off the installation during a contingency?
- Are teachers and parents able to get on/off the installation during contingency?
- What threat assessment has been conducted concerning the safety of transporting students to and from school?

Schools

Information FROM School Districts

The STRT should gather information from schools in order to identify possible barriers to a smooth relocation.

Information FROM Schools

Schools Available

- What schools are in the surrounding area (private and public)?
- What are the attendance boundaries for those 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 in terms of numbers of students and how close to capacity is each facility?

Registration

- Have there been issues with the registration process of military children in the past?
- What kind of support could the military installation provide to the schools to assist in enrollment issues? Do schools have on-line registration? Can the installation help make this happen?

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?
- Will the district transport students to their permanent school from temporary housing?

Student Sponsorship Programs

- What strategies have been successful for getting students settled in their new school? (i.e.: Student/Parent Orientations…). How can the installation help?
- Does the district/school have a sponsorship program for students? Can the installation help with the implementation?

Reciprocity Agreements

- Does the district have a reciprocity agreement for graduation between districts in the state?
- Has the district signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) recommended in the Army Secondary Education Transition (SET) Study? Does the school district have an action plan to address the issues of the MOA?

Parents

Information FOR Parents

Parents need the following information before they move to a new installation. The answers often determine where they choose to live and where they enroll their children. Keep in mind that the answers to some of these questions vary by school district.

Information FOR Parents

Website

- Does each district that serves students assigned to the installation have a website?
- Can I find links to the district websites on the installation website and are they easily found?

Schools Available

- What schools are in the area (public and private)? Are they listed on the installation website?
- What are my schooling options (Public Schools, Magnet Schools, Department of Defense Elementary and Secondary Schools, Charter Schools, Home Schooling, Private Schools, Distance Education)?
- What schools do students living on the installation attend?
- What schools do students living off the installation attend?
- What are the boundaries for schools?
- Can students attend any school or do they have to go to the neighborhood school? Does the district have open enrollment or other enrollment options?
- What is the quality of the various schools?
- Are standardized test scores available for the schools?
- Are the schools safe (violence, gangs, etc.)?

Registration Requirements

- What is the procedure for registering?
- What documents are necessary for registration?
- What documents should I bring from the previous school?
- What are the health regulations and immunization requirements for registration?
- What is the age for entering school?
- What is the process for enrolling my child in special programs (Gifted and Talented Education, Special Education, English as a Second Language)?
- Do I need to bring my student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) in order to enroll my child in special education programs?

School Calendar

- What are the start and end dates of the school year? What time does school begin and end?
- Does the district provide a calendar or list of important dates?
- Do the schools offer a particular type of scheduling? (Block scheduling…).

(Continued)

Information FOR Parents (continued)

Housing
- Where will my child go to school when we are in temporary housing?
- Can my child attend his/her future school while we are in temporary housing?

Transportation
- Does the district provide transportation? What are the bus routes?

Testing
- What are the testing requirements?
- Does the district require an exit exam? At what grades?

Course and Graduation Requirements
- What are the graduation requirements?
- How do I find out if the school will accept course credit from previous schools?

Before/After School Programs
- Does the school provide before/after-school programs?
- Does the installation provide before/after-school programs?

Parents

Information FROM Parents

Many military families have relocated before and faced challenges to smooth school enrollment. The STRT might survey current parents to find out about those challenges. Another option is to conduct focus groups to determine issues that are specific to the installation.

Information FROM Parents

- Have you experienced any difficulties or challenges in the schools due to your move, deployment, graduation requirements, placement, special education needs, school schedule…?
- Was the transition of your child from their previous school to their current school a smooth one? If so, what made it an easier process for you? If not, what aspect of the transition was troublesome or not as smooth as it could have been?
- What kind of information did you wish you had about the schools before coming to this Installation?

The Toolkits for Families and the Toolkit for School Leaders will provide additional information and possible questions or challenges for a needs assessment. These Toolkits may be found at http://www.militarystudent.org or www.militaryonesource.com.

The Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) has created additional questions and checklists for parents, students, and gaining and losing school districts that may generate some further ideas for a needs assessment. [http://www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org/checklists.html]

1.1.4 Identify Challenges

Based on the information gathered in the needs assessment, the STRT determines the challenges that need to be addressed and should also note and acknowledge the systems that are working well. Continue to support successful practices throughout the relocation process.

Challenges that students, parents, and school districts face during relocation are outlined in the Major Challenges of School Relocation section of this Toolkit. Undoubtedly, the needs assessment will surface many of these challenges. Each challenge includes suggested commander actions, promising practices, and links for more information that can be used to develop an action plan.

1.1.5 Develop a Local Action Plan

The STRT needs to develop a Local Action Plan related to the challenges that have been identified for that community. This Local Action Plan is developed jointly with the impacted school districts as a part of the district/installation partnership. This plan will be integrated into larger plans that impact many facets of installation life during relocation. The Local Action Plan is a dynamic plan that will require constant monitoring and adjustment.

Explore the following Local Action Plans that include many "Promising Practices" to address the challenges faced by school-age children in transition:

- Lawton Public Schools [http://www.lawtonps.org/departments/military_child/LAP.htm]
- Fort Lewis and Clover Park School District [http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2610/05-053a1.pdf]
- 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]

Click here to view a planning template and sample plan found in the Tools section.

Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) created the *Show and Tell Workbook* for developing a Local Action Plan which is available at: [http://www.militarychild.org/pdfs/MOAwrkbk.pdf]. The workbook contains indicators of success to use for assessment.

1.2 How Can Commanders Develop Partnerships with School Districts?

Commanders and school leaders need to work together to understand the challenges that military students face and the conditions and systems needed to address those challenges. Acknowledge the importance of the partnership and communicate the importance of schools in the quality of life of the military family. Assure superintendents that commanders do not wish to take over schools, but they do want to help schools address the issues faced by military students and the impact that large numbers of military students will have on surrounding districts.

When approaching superintendents and school districts, come with offers of assistance as well as requests for changes or services. Learn about school culture and structure. Create ways the installation can provide support through resources, personnel, and expertise to school districts.

- Help schools with emergency preparedness/response plans.
- Have the installation's weather station give demonstrations to school groups.
- Help the district with their website.
- Advise the district on safety issues.
- Provide an "Adopt-a-School" or Partnerships in Education program.
- Offer to inservice educators regarding an orientation to military life-style and family challenges during deployment.

1.2.1 Collect Contact Information

Because multiple school districts may be impacted, commanders must establish points of contact within each district. The Important District Contacts form in the Tool section will help collect key contacts for all districts. Each district should also be able to provide a directory. However, as with military personnel, positions change frequently and contacts will need to be updated. Do not forget to collect contact information from impacted private schools.

1.2.2 Designate a School Liaison Representative

One person should be designated as the person responsible for coordination with the districts. Overseas installations have designated school liaisons or personnel who are assigned the school liaison role as an additional duty. CONUS installations vary in assigning a school liaison. The Army has School Liaison Officers on all installations. Institutionally, the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force do not have a mandated position but in some situations, the installation commander has assigned a person to fulfill that role. During a period of large-scale transition, commanders may find it helpful to designate a school liaison. If many school districts in an area are impacted by the relocation, more than one person could be designated. In such cases, school liaison representatives must coordinate with each other so that school districts do not experience multiple contacts on the same issue.

The "School Liaison Guidebook," published by the Army, outlines duties of school liaisons. The School Liaison Representative "enhances the commander's ability to address the needs of school-age military children and helps the commander assess the issues of concern to military families and school systems."

Some duties include:

- Keeping command informed on key parent and community concerns.
- Regularly attending school board or committee meetings.
- Developing and disseminating information on topics of concern to military families, especially relocating families with school-age children.
- Conducting a needs assessment or focus group in which military families can identify their concerns.
- Providing appropriate information and referrals to parents or acting as mediator with school staff in resolving problems/conflicts.
- Educating school personnel on military lifestyle and educational challenges of concern to military families.
- Maintaining communication with school representatives.
- Identifying and distributing school information to military families.
- Arranging access to installation facilities and coordinating assistance from installation operations agencies, as needed.
- Providing oversight of school volunteer programs such as Partnerships in Education (PIE) which provides support to schools from military units.
- Establishing community and state relationships to obtain support and assistance for local schools.

1.3 What Are the Communication Needs of Pre-Relocation?

Build a Communication Plan into the Local Action Plan by attending to the needs of parents, schools, and the community to receive timely and accurate information.

1.3.1 Provide Information to Parents

Moving is a time filled with anxiety. Outreach to families is critical during relocation. Clear communication is linked to readiness and a sense of connectedness. An informed family is better prepared to meet the challenges of a PCS.

Making decisions about schooling and getting their children enrolled is an important part of getting settled. The Department of Defense developed a comprehensive **Toolkit for Military Students on the Move** to aid military parents in making a smooth transition for their children during large-scale relocation. The Toolkit can be accessed on the web at www.militarystudent.org and www.militaryonesource.com.

The Department of Defense also developed **a Toolkit for School Leaders** as a resource guide for schools impacted by relocation of large numbers of military students. The latest edition of this Toolkit can also be accessed on the web at www.militarystudent.org. A brochure explaining what is included in the three Toolkits is available for download on the same website.

If parents receive information in advance or know where to look for information for their specific installation, they will be able to make more informed decisions about housing locations and schooling and feel less anxiety about the move. Parents need access to information about the registration process and documents that will be needed upon arrival. The following resources provide some information for families relocating to a new school:

- **Standard Installation Topic Exchange Service (SITES)** [www.dmdc.osd.mil/sites] – This website provides families with important information about installations. Individual installations are responsible for providing updated information to SITES about available services and resources. Be sure your installation data is current and helpful.

- **Welcome Packet** – The Family Service Center should include as much literature as possible about the local school options.

- **Websites** – The installation website should have links to the local school districts' websites. These links should be on the front page of the installation website so they are easily accessible. A link to current information about the schools or the school liaison web page should also be available on the installation website. See the example below for information found on the MWR Army Hawaii website. For details, see "Suggestions for District and Installation Websites" in the Tools section of this Toolkit.

Helpful Installation Examples

- The Army School Liaison Services in Hawaii provides an excellent guidebook of information for parents. http://www.mwrarmyhawaii.com/cys/SchoolLiaison_Handbook(apr05).pdf

- The Aloha, Military Families & Students (AMFAS) website provides another excellent example of effective communication about schools [http://militaryfamily.k12.hi.us/].

- **Outreach** – Conduct outreach prior to the relocation. Send a representative from the gaining installation to the losing installation to gather information about the needs and questions of families relocating to your installation. A commander from a gaining installation could also visit the losing installation prior to the PCS to brief service members and welcome their families. School districts may send superintendents or registrars to speak with parents about enrollment and the registration process. Fort Hood, Texas, experienced this type of outreach effort when the installation commander in Illeshiem, Germany was about to receive over two hundred families from Fort Hood. He arranged to bring the housing director and school principal from Storck Barracks in Illeshiem, Germany, to Ft. Hood to hold an orientation and transition weekend. This allowed families to sign up for housing, register for school, meet with their new Illeshiem School principal and ask specific and individual questions [http://www.militarystudent.orgportal/page?_pageid=115,107776&_dad=portal9x&_schema=PORTAL9X&pgm=65].

- **Sponsors** – Both service member sponsors and youth sponsors need information to be made available in sponsor kits, including information they can share about local schools. Sponsorship programs are a powerful way of connecting families.

1.3.2 Provide Information to Schools

When a large shift in population occurs in a school or district, district officials need to know years in advance. An increase of 20-30 students in a school can mean a new classroom. An increase of 300 students could mean a new school which could mean new construction or leasing of portable units. In many cases, districts need voter approval to fund construction or operating expenses. Change in enrollment numbers also means an increase in staffing and since quality teachers are hired quickly, districts need to act early to get the most qualified staff. The sooner a school district receives accurate information, the smoother the transition for students. Most budget and staffing decisions for school districts are made by May 1, the previous school year. Share numbers and ages of school-age children relocating to the installation as soon as they are available. Sometimes even a "best guess" of numbers and dates of arrival will give the school district a head start. However, if numbers are just estimates, school districts must be informed that they are estimates so that costly decisions are not made based on conjecture. Any changes in projections should be passed on to the school districts immediately.

Best Practice

- Send weekly "E-blasts" to district superintendents with updates.
- Schedule monthly or quarterly meetings with superintendents during pre-relocation phase.

1.3.3 Provide Information to the Community

The following agencies and organizations will also be supporting military families and their school-age children as they get settled. These agencies are important sources of information for the installation commander and the STRT.

Installation Agencies

- Installation Housing
- Child Care Services
- Youth Support Services
- Family Service Center
- Community Services Center
- Child Development Center & Before and After School Programs
- Department of Public Works

Off-Base Community Agencies

Military family quality of life is dependent on the support of the surrounding community. Maintain good will and effective communication with the local agencies. Develop an overall relocation fact sheet as a handout for media, providing frequent updates. Regular news or "no news" reports prevent the perception that information is being withheld.

- City Council/Local Elected Officials
- Local Realtor Associations
- Chamber of Commerce
- Local News Agencies
- Parks and Recreation
- Churches

Working with the Media

The media can be an effective conduit of information during relocation. Wide dissemination of information can ease the stress of moving, avoid misinformation and rumors from surfacing, and garner support from Service members and the community. Effective communication with the media will help the community develop and maintain a positive image of the installation. By being prepared, you can use the news media as a tool for getting your messages out.

Ensure the news media receives accurate, timely, and complete information. Ask your Public Affairs Officer to share tips with your staff for working with the media. Plan for press conferences and prepare ahead of time for questions most likely to be posed by the press, both positive and negative. Revisit these questions throughout the relocation process as circumstances and answers may change.

Phase 2: Relocation Activities

During this phase of the relocation process, the provision of accurate and timely information remains critical. Open communication between the school districts and the military is the key to quickly and effectively resolving issues that may arise.

Goals

- Implement the Local Action Plan to ensure the smooth transition of school-age children of military families.
- Strengthen partnerships with schools.
- Promote two-way communication with all stakeholders.

Commander's Relocation Checklist

- ☐ 2.1 School Transition Response Team
  - ☐ 2.1.1 Implement the Local Action Plan
  - ☐ 2.1.2 Regularly Collect Data and Assess Plan Effectiveness
  - ☐ 2.1.3 Problem-Solve Challenges that Surface
- ☐ 2.2 Partnerships with School Districts
  - ☐ 2.2.1 Attendance at Board Meeting
  - ☐ 2.2.2 Educate the Schools about the Needs of Military Children
- ☐ 2.3 Communication
  - ☐ 2.3.1 Communicate with Parents
  - ☐ 2.3.2 Communicate with Schools
  - ☐ 2.3.3 Communicate with the Community

2.1 What is the Role of the School Transition Response Team during Relocation?

2.1.1 Implement the Local Action Plan

During relocation, the careful planning of the STRT is implemented. The STRT should be active and meeting regularly. The Team monitors timelines and areas of responsibilities as the plan unfolds. Progress can be reported in local newspapers, e-blasts, and at town hall meetings.

2.1.2 Regularly Collect Data and Assess the Plan's Effectiveness

Data collection should begin where appropriate. Surveys of parents and students regarding their relocation will provide valuable data on the success of the initial implementation of the plan and will help identify parts of the plan that need to be revised. Provide time for those responsible for particular activities to report to the STRT on their progress and outcomes.

2.1.3 Problem-Solve Challenges that Surface

Open communication with school districts and parents will help identify unanticipated challenges. The School Liaison is a helpful resource for pointing parents toward the appropriate resources and mediating issues when they cannot be resolved. The STRT will need to revise the action plan as challenges arise.

Expect issues to arise that are outside of the installation commander's control or not installation or Service specific. These issues may need to be elevated. Also, send best practices and ongoing issues forward so they can be shared among installations.

2.2 How Can Commanders Strengthen the Partnerships with School Districts?

2.2.1 Attendance at School Board Meetings

Continue to attend or have a representative attend school board meetings. Often issues emerge at school board meetings that are related to the impact of military student attendance. School board meetings are also an opportunity to share military issues such as deployments and large-scale relocations. Be certain to contact the school districts concerning the process for getting on the school board agenda. A PowerPoint outline has been included that will facilitate preparing a presentation for the school board meeting or other school district events (**Note the information on School Boards in the Background Information section).

2.2.2 Educate the Schools about the Needs of Military Children

Many school personnel do not understand the unique issues faced by military families nor do they understand the culture of the military lifestyle. Some options for educating school staff are as follows:

- Provide information or workshops on transition, deployment, and other issues that are unique to military families and your installation.
- Help schools understand how to contact the spouse or caregiver during deployment.

- Share information with schools on helping students adjust to a new school and sponsorship programs.
- Build relationships with school personnel by providing unit volunteer partnership programs like Partnerships in Education (PIE) or Adopt-a-School Program.
- Make sure school personnel are aware of the military/federal/state/local agencies such as EFMP, 4H, or Armed Services YMCA that are available to support military students.

2.3 How Can Commanders Ensure Communication is Open and Timely?

Regular and frequent exchange of information between parents, schools and community will help avert and resolve problems. The attached chart, "Communicating with Stakeholders," suggests some ideas for ongoing communication during this critical phase.

2.3.1 Communicate with Parents

Newcomer's Orientation is an opportunity to provide parents with necessary information about the schooling options. Invite school representatives to attend and speak to parents. Provide registration packets at that time. Distribute brochures and encourage families to consult www.militarystudent.org for their copy of the Department of Defense's Toolkit for Military Students on the Move.

Town Hall meetings are another critical forum for sharing information with parents. Invite school representatives to share information and listen to concerns.

Make school information available in strategic locations such as temporary lodging facilities, child development centers, youth centers, on-/off-installation libraries, and the welcome center. Family Support Groups and sponsors can provide newcomers with information about schools. Announcements can be made on the military closed-circuit TV channel, on the installation website, and in the installation newspaper.

2.3.2 Communicate with Schools

Maintain regular communication with local school districts to determine if they are receiving the information they need.

Superintendent and commander exchanges will help build rapport. Regular monthly or quarterly meetings are important and provide an opportunity to familiarize the superintendents with the installation.

2.3.3 Communicate with the Community

The local community will want to remain informed of relocation progress. If there are issues with local schools, it is best for the installation commander and the school superintendent to jointly share those issues or concerns with the media in an atmosphere of "collaboration and problem-solving." Regular media releases that share ongoing progress help engage the community and garner support.

Communicating with Stakeholders

Who	What	How
Families	• Housing Issues • School Registration Information • Graduation Requirements • School Enrollment Boundaries • School Calendars	• Welcome/Newcomer's Briefing • Family Service Centers/Fleet & Family Support Service Centers/ Marine & Family Services/Army Community Service/Family Support Center • Installation Website • Installation Newspaper • Flyers • Town Hall Meetings • Spouse Clubs • Electronic Newsletter • E-Blast • Closed-circuit TV Channel
Schools	• Number of New Children (Ages, Gender, Grade) • Number of Students with Special Needs (EFMP) • Possible Housing Locations	• Briefings to Superintendent • Board Meeting Presentations and Attendance • Informal & Formal Meetings • Problem-Solving Sessions • Electronic Newsletter • E-Blast
Community • City Council • Chamber of Commerce • Realtor Associations	• Numbers of New Families • Numbers of Families with Special Needs • Possible Housing Needs	• Media Release • Press Conference • Installation Newspaper • Installation Website • Regular News Releases • Library
Installation Agencies • EFMP • Housing • CYS • Child Care	• Numbers of New Families • Numbers of Families with Special Needs Children (Accessible Housing Needs)	• Formal & Informal Meetings • Written Communication/Updates

Phase 3: Post-Relocation Activities

After the dust has settled, it is time to evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to provide a smooth transition to school-age children. Collecting data will help assess the plan and provide guidance for future relocations.

Goals

- Collect data and information to evaluate the Local Action Plan and make any changes to the plan.
- Write an After-Action Report to include Lessons Learned and Promising Practices.
- Develop calendar for ongoing meeting of the School Transition Response Team to resolve any new or ongoing issues.

Commander's Post-Relocation Checklist

- ❑ 3.1 School Transition Response Team
  - ❑ 3.1.1 Collect Data on Activities in Action Plan and Assess Effectiveness
  - ❑ 3.1.2 Adjust the Action Plan
  - ❑ 3.1.3 Write an After-Action Plan for Relocation to Include Lessons Learned and Promising Practices
  - ❑ 3.1.4 Schedule Periodic Meetings to Address any New or Ongoing Issues
- ❑ 3.2 Partnerships with School Districts
- ❑ 3.3 Communication

3.1 What is the Role of the School Transition Response Team after Relocation?

3.1.1 Collect Data on Activities in Action Plan and Assess Effectiveness

The STRT should collect any data or information that measures the degree of success of activities in the Action Plan.

3.1.2 Adjust the Action Plan

Based on the findings of assessments, changes can be made to the Action Plan. While relocations may not be on such a massive scale in the future, they will always be a fact of life in the military. What we learn can inform future relocations.

3.1.3 Write an After-Action Plan for Relocation

Write an After-Action Report to communicate the successes and challenges of the plan. This After-Action Report should include any "Lessons Learned" and "Promising Practices" so that future relocation committees will not have to start from scratch. The After-Action Report should also include plans for ongoing partnerships with the schools and continued communication with parents, schools, and community around issues concerning military children. The STRT annual report should include any progress or barriers to smooth student relocation.

Submit the After-Action Report. Results should also be shared with the district superintendents, parents, school boards, and community. Installations and school districts may send promising practices to be added to the MilitaryStudent.org website [http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil/portal/page?_pageid=115,109871&_dad=portal9x&_schema=PORTAL9X].

3.1.4 Schedule Periodic Meetings of the School Transition Response Team

Relocation is an ongoing issue. The STRT may serve as a standing committee, meeting periodically, to address new or ongoing issues concerning school-age children of military.

Some agenda items for future meetings might include:

- Maintaining ongoing communication.
- Developing a school/military strategic plan or school improvement plan.
- Working with the School Liaison Representative on possible issues.
- Sharing the good news – communicate progress on overcoming identified challenges.
- Working together to develop quality education opportunities for all students.

3.2 How Can Commanders Maintain Partnerships with School Districts?

Whether it is the STRT, the installation commander, the school liaison, or another designated individual, ongoing communication and partnerships with the school districts are critical.

- Designate a school liaison.
- When there is a change of command, ensure the new commander meets with school superintendents during the first month of command.
- When there is a change of superintendents, make contact with the new superintendent as soon as possible.
- Hold regular meetings of the STRT.
- Survey in- and out-processing families to determine if they are facing challenges in school transition and identify the challenges.
- Develop "Adopt-A-School" programs to maintain frequent positive contact with schools.
- Ask the schools how the installation can contribute to quality education.

3.3 How Can Commanders Maintain Open and Timely Communication?

Provide updated school information to parents via the installation website. As State Departments of Education and local school districts resolve some of the chronic problems related to military student transition, disseminate the changes promptly.

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 changes schools about 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. While there are many steps that school districts and parents can take to ease the transition challenges, the following practices address ways the installation commander can make an impact, support schools, and resolve issues.

The practices are divided into three sections:

- **Installation Commander's Actions** that include steps the commander can take to address the challenges;
- **Promising Practices** that share what other installations or school districts are trying and that might be offered as suggestions to school districts; and
- **Links** that offer more information on the challenge.

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 Specialized 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 – PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Installation Commanders should forge strong partnerships with school districts to seek ways to ease the challenges of students in transition.

Installation Commander's Actions

- Establish a **Student Transition Response Team** to address challenges related to student mobility.
- Share timelines and student data (numbers of school-age children, ages, special needs) with school districts as quickly as possible.
- Develop a **Local Action Plan** with the school district to address the challenges. Sample Local Action Plans may be found at the following websites. These Local Action Plans include many "Promising Practices" that address 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 leaders in the school districts surrounding your installation that are impacted with military students.
- Become familiar with the governance and chain of command of the school districts in your area.
- Create a School Liaison position.
- Schedule regular meetings between the commander of the installation and superintendents of the surrounding school districts in order to develop a common understanding of the challenges faced by students and schools during transition.
- Share the "Toolkit for School Leaders" with school districts.
- Encourage military members and spouses to get involved in the school board and its committees.
- Institutionalize opportunities for parents and 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

- Work with the schools to establish an ex-officio school board member or military advisor to the school board. The Bellevue School district has adopted this approach and you can learn more about it by visiting the Promising Practices section of www.MilitaryStudent.org [http://www.militarystudent.orgportal/page?_pageid=115,107776&_dad=portal9x&_schema=PORTAL9X&pgm=64].
- 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].

- Fund the school district superintendent's attendance at the annual Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) conference, Military Impacted Schools Association Annual Conference, and Department of Defense conferences on the military child.

Links

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

Challenge #2 – FINANCIAL ISSUES

A large influx of students can be a financial burden on schools.

Installation Commander's Actions

- Become familiar with all aspects of Impact Aid.
- Monitor legislation, such as the National Defense Authorization Act, supporting additional allocations for highly impacted school districts.
- Understand the financial implications for school districts of educating military students and the impact on districts of large changes in student populations (gains or losses).
- Learn about programs such as Title I funding and free and reduced lunch programs and how they impact military families and schools.
- Encourage families to sign up for free and reduced lunch programs when they qualify. Registration will make additional funds available to schools.
- Assist school districts in obtaining Impact Aid Funds.

Promising Practices

- Impact Aid is not a military program. However, installation commanders can assist schools in getting as much Impact Aid as possible by supporting efforts to get 100% of the military families to complete the Impact Aid Survey that helps a school qualify for funding. Some installations have taken on this challenge and maximized the aid received.
- Encourage superintendents to explore unique funding methods to finance construction and other expansion costs. Refer to Toolkit for School Leaders on www.militarystudent.org for specifics. Offer to share finance and construction expertise of installation personnel.

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.
- 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.
Temporary living quarters can delay getting settled into a permanent school.

Installation Commander's Actions

- Determine where new families are likely to find permanent housing and share this information with school districts.
- Determine percentages of students who will be living on and off the installation. Share this information with the school districts.
- Discuss with school districts 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 student's education and do not involve multiple transfers.
- Share data with school districts concerning any new military housing construction or renovation. Also, include data on any plans to privatize military housing.

Promising Practices

- Work with school districts to allow students in temporary quarters to attend the school servicing their permanent housing location so students do not have to experience an additional education transition. Some districts and installations provide transportation to the permanent school.

Challenge #4 – SCHOOL CHOICE

Parents want the best possible education for their children.
The search for a quality school for their child is one of their first relocation tasks.

Installation Commander's Actions

- Identify which schools (both public and private) are available in your area and post links to these schools or school districts on the installation website.
- Become aware of the policies and regulations for your state regarding alternative schooling options such as magnet, charter, virtual, and private schools and homeschooling.
- Notify parents of deadlines for magnet and charter school application.

Promising Practices

- The Aloha, Military Families & Students website is a good example of an installation providing parents with good information about school choice [http://militaryfamily.k12.hi.us].

Links

- See the Background Information section in this Toolkit for more information on school choice.
- Standard & Poors has a website [http://www.schoolmatters.com] that shares performance 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].
- Department of Defense is compiling a list of all possible school choices around heavily impacted military areas. Results of this study will be posted on MilitaryStudent.org website [http://www.militarystudent.org] and Military OneSource.

Challenge #5 – TRANSFER OF RECORDS

Timely transfer of academic records ensures appropriate placement of students. Parents must have a clear understanding about what is needed to enroll their students.

Installation Commander's Actions

- Ensure that the installation website has links to school districts. The links should be easy to locate.
- Ensure that parents know which records to hand carry (see "Toolkit for Parents on the Move") and which records the enrolling school requires. Work with school districts to create a list that can be included on the installation and school website and incorporated in the "new students" packet of orientation materials.
- Incorporate school record clearance as part of the installation out-processing (Army Regulation 600-8-101).
- Establish clear lines of communication with the school district to identify and resolve any records issues.
- Work with medical personnel to provide accessible, necessary school physicals and immunizations.

Promising Practices

- Encourage schools to accept hand-carried records for initial placement.
- When a large number of families are coming from one location, 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.
- Encourage 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 the superintendent and principal training offered by MISA [http://www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org].
- 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 to the receiving school to expedite placement.
- 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 student records and vital information.

Links

- A checklist for parents and students that recommends which records may be needed is also available in the "Toolkit for Military Students on the Move" [www.MilitaryStudent.org].
- MISA [http://www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org] and MCEC [http://www.militarychild.org/Checklist.asp] also provide checklists for records needed for school registration.
- For Legislation by State that determines school entrance age, exit tests, graduation and immunization requirements, etc. see the Parent Section of www.MilitaryStudent.org.

Challenge #6 – IMMUNIZATION AND AGE REQUIREMENTS

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

Installation Commander's Actions

- Ensure that parents are fully aware of state and local policies by linking to the school district website and providing necessary information on the installation website.
- Many states or districts require their own form for immunization records. Ensure that these forms are available to parents and the medical facilities. Check that medical personnel are familiar with how to translate existing records to the new forms.
- Support ease of access to 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 in the Parent Section of www.militarystudent.org.
- 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 SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

Students in Programs like Gifted and Talented and English Language Learners discover that qualification requirements vary from location to location.

Installation Commander's Actions

- Link parents who have students in special programs to school districts and district websites that outline program availability, contact information for the program, and lists of what parents need to bring from the previous school.
- Encourage parents to contact the receiving school before moving to the area to determine program offerings and entry requirements.

Promising Practices

- Encourage school districts to 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 programs.

Installation Commander's Actions

- Involve the Exceptional Family Member Program Representative on the School Transition Response Team and arrange for the school superintendent to meet the EFM representative.
- Link parents of special needs students to school district websites that outline programs available, contact information for specialists, and lists of what parents need to bring.
- Make sure school districts are aware of resources the services provide to military children with special needs.
- Inform the housing office and community of special needs students who have handicap access needs.
- Assure Service members that there are not repercussions or stigma attached to being enrolled in Exceptional Family Member Program.

Promising Practices

- Encourage school districts to accept hand-carried records for placement while awaiting official documentation.

Links

- Make sure families are aware of the information provided on the Militarystudent.org/Families with Special Needs Children website [http://www.militarystudent.orgportal/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.

Installation Commander's Actions

- Link the installation website to the school website, include calendar information in the installation website, and include dates and schedules in "new student" packet or orientation materials. Update this information frequently so the information is accurate and timely.
- 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.
- Encourage parents to keep their students in school through the end of the school year.
- Discourage parents from taking leave time during the school year. Schedule deployment and relocation leave during school holidays when possible.
- Coordinate with the school districts to avoid conflicts in calendars during critical times (state and district testing, graduation, etc.)
- Remind service members that one of the purposes of deployment leave is to allow the service member to be reintroduced into daily family life, which would include becoming familiar with their child's school and school routines.
- Communicate the Installation's Special Events Calendar with local schools. Keep schools posted regarding changes and additions including troop deployment and return.

Promising Practices

- Encourage the school district to include calendar and event information on the school district website.
- 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.
- 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.

Challenge #10 – CONNECTEDNESS

Adjusting to a new school is challenging. Academic, social and emotional success is impacted by the degree to which students feel accepted and connected to school.

Installation Commander's Actions

- Provide student and family orientation with school personnel in attendance prior to the start of school.
- Ensure that new student transition information is on the school and installation website.
- Provide extensive school information to new students in a welcome packet. New student orientation packets could be 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.
- Support the creation of networking and sponsorship programs for students.

- Coordinate information on the installation website to provide students and their families with current information about the schools. 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.
- Insure that the S.I.T.E.S. information on schools is current and comprehensive [www.dmdc.osd.mil/sites] for your installation.

Promising Practices

- Encourage surrounding school districts to contact The Department of Defense sponsored "Military Child Initiative" with Johns Hopkins University. The Center is dedicated to working closely with all 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://www.jhsph.edu/mci or email mci@jhsph.edu.
- Provide a New Buddy Email service so newcomers can find out information from other students before they arrive at the installation.
- Encourage superintendents and principals to participate in training in the social and emotional needs of military students in a new program offered by the Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA)'s "Tools for Schools." [http://www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org]
- Suggest that impacted school districts consider using the Department of Defense offering on-line Educator Course, "Educating the Military Child," for school inservice programs. Available June 2006 on www.militarystudent.org.
- 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, locations of 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 training led by students called the Student2Student Initiative [http://www.militarychild.org/S2S.asp]. The program includes training and support.

Links

- Find out more about connectedness and the military child by requesting a free copy of the Johns Hopkins University monograph "School Connectedness: Improving Students' Lives" and "School Connectedness: Extending Connections to Military Children" by emailing mci@jhsph.edu. Share copies with superintendents.
- Consult the Best Practices section of the DoD MilitaryStudent.org website [http://www.militarystudent.orgportal/page?_pageid=115,107748&_dad=portal9x&_schema=PORTAL9X&COHE_ID=163580&LOCATION=SCHOOLS] for suggestions on successful student orientation programs around the country.
- Inform schools of "Military Teens On the Move" [http://www.dod.mil/mtom], a DoD interactive site for teenagers that shares 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.

Installation Commander's Actions

- Educate parents on the importance of enrolling their student 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.

Promising Practices

- Encourage school districts to give seniors priority access to required courses, especially when they differ from the last school the student attended.
- Work for reciprocity for state graduation requirements.
- Encourage school districts to post their district course descriptions on their website so the gaining school can check to see if courses are comparable.
- Develop campaigns and promotions on graduation, scholarships, and testing.
- When a student cannot meet graduation requirements in the new school but does qualify in the previous school system, some school districts will transfer course and test credits back to the previous school for issuance of the diploma.
- During in/out briefings, determine whether graduation remains an issue for students affiliated with your installation. Are there school districts that serve your installation that have created solutions to this problem?

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.

Installation Commander's Actions

- Encourage schools to establish policies for accepting reference letters in lieu of tryouts for entering students. Samples of reference letters can be found in the Family Toolkit [www.militarystudent.org].
- Encourage parents to have their child submit a video in lieu of a tryout when the school allows it.
- Explore the possibility with the school district 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.
- Provide on-base clubs, sports and student sponsorships/mentors 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

- The MilitaryStudent.org website has several promising practices related to extracurricular activities [http://www.militarystudent.orgportal/page?_pageid=115,107776&_dad=portal9x&_schema=PORTAL9X&pgm=0&cat=5].
- Develop an interest survey for new students to link them to extracurricular activities and job opportunities on and off the installation.

Challenge #13 – SENIOR YEAR MOVES

Students who move during their senior year may be unable to enroll in the required classes and obtain necessary credits for graduation in their new school.

Installation Commander's Actions

- Encourage a "no move" policy for families with seniors in your Service. See Army's Senior Move Stabilization Procedure.
- Through in/out briefings, determine whether this remains an issue for students affiliated with your installation.

Promising Practices

- Encourage schools to provide priority placement into courses essential for completion of graduation requirements.
- Support the adoption of Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) from the Army Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) and MCEC for reciprocity for graduating seniors [http://www.militarychild.org/MOACopy.asp].
- 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.

Installation Commander's Actions

- 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. Other topics may include terrorism and safety.
- In the summer of 2006, the DoD on-line course for teachers, "Educating the Military Child," written by Johns Hopkins University, will be available on the Educators Section of www.MilitaryStudent.org. The course is written in modules so that it can be used for inservice training in the schools. Let schools know it is available.
- Develop school partnerships or "Adopt-A-School" programs.
- Speak at faculty meetings about "Understanding the Military Family."
- Provide educators with installation tours to promote understanding of the military life.
- Share installation resources that may be of educational benefit to students in local schools.
- Speak at a school board meeting about services available to military students.
- Give a presentation to the school board on the mission and relevant statistics of the installation. See accompanying PowerPoint template in this Toolkit.
- Provide beginning and end of school year breakfast or reception for teachers. Recognize educators who have been particularly supportive of military children.
- Hold an open house for school staff to share information about military agencies that support school-age children (e.g.: FAP, EFMP, Counseling and Medical Resources).
- Host regularly scheduled meetings with all superintendents of school districts serving the installation to share ideas, update information and reinforce partnerships.
- Share DoD publications such as "Educators Guide to the Military Child During Deployment" developed for schools in support of military children during deployment. Available on the home page of www.MilitaryStudent.org.

Promising Practices

- Encourage school districts to consider hiring military spouses who bring understanding of the military experience to the classroom. Schools might want to explore the Spouses-to-Teachers Program [http://www.spousestoteachers.com/pages/8/index.htm] as well as the Troops-to-Teachers Program [http://www.dantes.mil/dantes_web/troopstopeachers/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 in the summer of 2006 on the MilitaryStudent.Org website [http://www.militarystudent.org].
- Encourage surrounding school districts to contact The Department of Defense sponsored "Military Child Initiative" with Johns Hopkins University. The Center is dedicated to working closely with all 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://www.jhsph.edu/mci or email mci@jhsph.edu.

- 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 Military Impacted Schools Association for school administrators and superintendent training on "Tools for Schools," an orientation program for schools who serve military children [http://www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org].

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 provides information on four aspects of military lifestyle: separations or deployments, homecomings, relocations, and crises.

Challenge #15 – POST-SECONDARY ISSUES

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

Installation Commander’s Actions

- Provide assistance on requesting and preparing applications for schools, applications for grants and financial aid, and letters of recommendation through the youth activities center.
- Use resources at the installation Education Center to provide information and assistance to parents and students on applying for school and scholarships.

Promising Practices

- Encourage state legislators to grant in-state tuition rates for military students.
- Advertise testing and application deadlines to colleges and vocational/technical schools.
- 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]
- Encourage school counselors to attend MCEC's Transition Counselor Institute for training in transition issues, research and solutions [http://www.militarychild.org/MajorInitiatives.asp].

Links

- For a list of states and their instate tuition requirements, go to [https://www.armyeducation.army.mil/InState/StateSummary.HTM].
- For college scholarships available to military students, see the Teens Section of www.MilitaryStudent.org].

Background Information

The Background Information section offers additional information for installation commanders on issues related to student relocation. The four sections include:

- Studies and Initiatives
- School Choice
- School Boards of Education
- Impact Aid

Studies and Initiatives

The following initiatives and studies offer a wide-range of information and opportunities for increasing knowledge and understanding of the challenges of military children in transition and deployment. They also offer solutions and best practices to address these needs.

The DoD Military Child Initiative (MCI)
The Military Child Initiative, at Johns Hopkins University, features best practices for military impacted schools and parents interested in improving the academic, social and emotional success of military students. 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 specialists at Johns Hopkins work, upon request, with school districts on site, at no cost, to address the educational challenges of children of military families.

MCI 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.

MCI 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.

Information regarding this program is available on www.jhsph.edu/mci and through email at mci@jhsph.edu.

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 final report 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 by Virginia Polytechnic and State University 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. See www.militarystudent.org.

Website for Military Children

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 addresses the challenges of deployment by offering best practices and resources.

Publications

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

- The Educators Guide to the Military Child During 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.

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 and 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 offers training sessions for principals on the use of "Tools for Schools" in their districts. Contact MISA at 1-800-776-5204.

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 and In-State Tuition.
Check http://www.militarystudent.org in the Parent Section for updates.

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 and develop information that will allow parents to make informed decisions regarding appropriate educational placement for their children. When completed, it will be posted on www.militarystudent.org.

Army Secondary Education Transition Study

In 1999, the Army commissioned the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) to conduct the Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) to understand the effects of mobility on military high school students and make recommendations to improve the relocation process. They identified several issues that impacted school-age children of military families. The complete SETS study may be obtained from MCEC. MCEC also provides a comprehensive list of Best and Promising Practices for many of the challenges listed in the Major Challenges section of this Toolkit [http://www.militarychild.org/BestPractices.asp#].

Memorandum of Agreement

A Memorandum of Agreement was developed to address challenges identified in the Army SETS Study [http://www.militarychild.org/MOACopy.asp] by the Military Child Education Coalition. As of March 2005, over 166 signatories representing 170 school districts have signed the MOA. The Local Action Plan is what brings the memorandum to life and works to resolve the challenges of military students in transition. More specific examples are included in a document MCEC prepared entitled Best Practices for Schools.

Operation Military Kids (Army Program)

Open to all military children, Operation Military Kids is a support system focused on geographically disbursed youth of deployed Army National Guard and Reserve members. The Army Community and Family Support Center, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, National 4-H, MCEC, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and other community groups partner to serve 20 states heavily impacted by deployment (AL, AK, CA, FL, GA, HI, ID, IN, IA, MD, MO, NH, NY, NC, OH, SC, TN, TX, VA and WA). For information: http://www.usda-army-ydp.org/omk/.

Army Regional Coordinators: School Transition Specialists

Regional School Transition Specialists work with the schools and school liaison officers to:

- Act as regional subject matter experts on school systems and practices, national education issues and initiatives, and education related research
- Serve on the Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) Steering Committee to plan, implement and facilitate best and promising practices.
- Establish and implement communication systems to facilitate networking among MOA signatory superintendents.
- Represent Army on SETS related committees, councils, taskforces, etc.

Click here for a map that shows the regions covered by each STS.

School Choice

All parents want the best possible education for their children. Studies have shown that many service members are accepting or rejecting assignments based on their schooling options. Commanders should be aware of the schooling choices and quality of the schools surrounding their installation in order to assist parents in understanding their education options. Because education is regulated by the state government, available options can vary between states.

All students have different learning styles and needs. Children within the same family may not learn in the same way or at the same rate. Finding the right educational setting for each child requires a careful examination of various options that are available to students and their families. Understanding expanded school choice is essential to selecting the best type of school setting for a child. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) signed in 2002, has given parents additional options when considering how to educate their children.

Here are some quick resources to help military parents make informed choices:

- **Choosing a School for your Child**, a publication of the U.S. Department of Education [http://www.ed.gov/parents/schools/find/choose/index.html] offers a series of checklists and pertinent questions to assist parents in making schooling choices.

- **Military OneSource** is a useful resource for obtaining information on schools. Users can access the service toll free from the United States: (800) 342-9647; from overseas: (800)-3429-6477; or overseas collect: 1-484-530-5908. In addition, Military OneSource offers a website at www.militaryonesource.com for information on a variety of topics and issues.

- **Policies, and legal requirements** are different from state to state. The National School Boards Association website outlines each state: [http://www.nsba.org/site/index.asp].

- **A list of the school choices** surrounding all heavily impacted military installations is being compiled for DoD. The results of this study will be posted on the MilitaryStudent.org website [http://www.militarystudent.org] and will be available through Military OneSource.

Installations can link parents to these websites so they can make an informed choice about their schooling options. Also, installation websites should offer parents links to specific choices for schooling. For an example of one installation's website that shows the public schools and alternative schooling options, go to The Aloha, Military Families & Students (AMFAS) website [http://militaryfamily.k12.hi.us/].

Public Education

District Schools

District schools are often called "neighborhood schools" because they are within the town/city where the student lives. They provide a free, public education for all students who reside within the boundaries of the district and make special arrangements for students with special needs. Teachers must be certified by the state and meet testing requirements of the state. An elected board of education traditionally oversees the budget and policies of the district schools. Most offer transportation to students who are not within walking distance.

Websites:

- http://www.schoolmatters.com
- http://www.schooltree.org
- http://www.ed.gov/parents/schools/find/choose/index.html

Charter Schools

Charter schools are public, nonsectarian schools which aim to provide educational innovation, improve academic achievement and establish a multicultural environment without regard to economic status. They operate as a nonprofit corporation and are independent of the local board of education. Charter schools are open to all students; however, the "Charter document" may limit students to a certain geographic area. A lottery system is used if there are more applicants than spaces available. Teachers must be certified by the state and meet testing requirements of the state. Transportation is generally provided by the public school district where the charter school resides. Charter schools are required to provide for students with special needs.

Websites:

- http://www.uscharterschools.org
- http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/ (National Center for Education Statistics)
- http://www.essentialschools.org
- http://edreform.com/index.cfm?fuseAction=stateStats&pSectionID=15&cSectionID=44 (Center for Education Reform)

Calendar Alert

Selections are often made in April or May for Charter and Magnet schools. Application cut-off dates may apply. Be sure to encourage military families to contact the gaining district early (January or February) to be considered for these schools.

Magnet Schools

Magnet schools are publicly funded schools with an educational focus or theme. Students generally choose to attend a magnet school because of an interest in the school's academic focus or unique programs such as science, technology, math, performing arts, foreign languages or International Baccalaureate. Magnet schools are operated by local districts, regional centers, and/or an agreement between school districts who share policy and curriculum decisions for the school. All students are eligible to attend magnet schools and may not be denied enrollment because of race, religion, economic status, or disability. However, school districts usually limit the number of students who may attend magnet schools and must use a lottery system to select students if there are more applications than spaces available. Transportation is usually provided by the local school district where the school resides. Teachers must be certified by the state and meet all testing requirements of the state.

Websites:

- http://www.ed.gov/programs/magnet/index.html
- http://www.schooltree.org

Department of Defense Schools:

The Department of Defense Education Activity runs two school systems for children of American military families. The Department of Defense Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) are located in the United States and its territories and the other is the Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS) in foreign countries. All schools are accredited and are academically competitive with public school systems in the United States.

Department of Defense Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) provide comprehensive educational programs on military installations located in seven states and Puerto Rico. Military students living off military installations usually attend the local schools or other schooling options. DDESS schools do not provide all grade levels at every location. Where the grade level program is not offered, students of military families living on military installations attend schools operated by local school districts in the civilian community.

Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS) operates 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. An estimated 30,000 children in DoDDS will be part of the Global Rebasing effort and will be returning to schools in the United States beginning in 2005 and continuing for several years.

Website:

- http://www.dodea.edu

Career Technology Centers

Career Technology Centers are often provided for students in grades 9-12 who have an interest in specific vocational or technological training. Some programs are housed in separate buildings from the regular district high school while others are incorporated within the high school. Students who have interest in specific training offered by these schools should consult counselors, vocational teachers, and parents. Transportation is provided by the district and all teachers must have state certification as well as special training/experience in the areas taught.

Websites:

- http://www.schooltree.org
- http://www.schoolmatters.org

Advanced Placement

Advanced Placement (AP) Programs are generally offered within the public high school. Each district decides which courses to offer based on district needs and teacher availability. These courses offer a more rigorous curriculum and students take a standardized test at the end of the course which is given on the same date nationally. The tests are scored by AP personnel on a 1-5 scale. Students must receive a 3 or higher on the test in order to transfer the course for college credit, although many colleges require a 4 or higher to give credit and some colleges will not accept AP courses for college credit. Teachers are required to be certified by the state and undergo special training before teaching AP courses. These courses must be accessible to all students, although the coursework challenges students to perform at a high level academically.

Websites:

- http://www.schooltree.org
- http://www.schoolmatters.org
- http://www.collegeboard.com/article/0,3868,2-7-0-34,00.html

International Baccalaureate

International Baccalaureate (IB) Programs are offered by some public schools, as well as international and other private schools, as part of their regular curriculum. Some IB programs are the "focus or theme" of a Magnet school and the entire curriculum centers around the IB curriculum. Like the AP coursework, the IB curriculum is coupled with challenging assessments as well as intellectual rigor and high academic standards. IB programs also foster ideals of international understanding and responsible citizenship. IB students are taught to think critically and to become informed about local and world affairs. If IB programs are offered through public schools, they must be accessible to all students within the district, although the coursework challenges students to perform at a high level academically. Teachers must be certified by the state and undergo special training sponsored by the International Baccalaureate Organization.

Websites:

- http://www.ibo.org/index.cfm
- http://www.professorlamp.com/ed/TEA/IB.html

Virtual Schooling

Virtual courses are often called “Distance Learning” since they utilize the school’s Internet connections to make coursework available to students. Virtual coursework is available to both public and private school students and to homeschoolers. The instructors for Virtual coursework may be anyone approved by the district and might be on the district faculty, on a college staff, or even in another country. Students may complete the coursework at school or at home and must complete all coursework and required exams in order to receive credit. Virtual coursework offers almost limitless possibilities for students who want to progress at their own rate; are homebound due to illness; and/or who have advanced to the next level of coursework that is not offered by the school district. There may be costs associated with virtual coursework, but public school districts usually pay for distance learning or programmed studies designed to accommodate the learning needs of their students. There are many websites describing individual virtual school programs. One website, however, Distance Education and Training Council of the U.S. Department of Education, offers information and links to others.

Websites:

- http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/virtualschools.pdf#search='virtual%20schools'
- http://www.militarychild.org/VirtualSchools.asp
- http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsis/onlinevir.html

Non-Public Education

Religious Private Schools

Religious schools are private schools which generally espouse a specific religious belief based on the denomination or faith established by the governing board. Often religious schools have open enrollment and do not require their student body to be members of the faith or denomination, although they do require that all students abide by the rules established by the school leadership. In addition to academic coursework, religious schools usually require coursework in religious studies. Students must apply to attend the school and entrance exams may be required. Private religious schools can refuse admission to any student or dismiss a student after enrollment for an infraction of the rules. Teachers are not required to be certified by the state, though they may be required to be a member of the religious denomination. Teachers may hold a variety of degrees and certifications. Requirements vary by school. Tuition costs vary widely. Transportation may be included in the cost of tuition or may be a separate charge.

Websites:

- http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii
- http://www.parochial.com/

Private Secular Schools

Private Secular schools are schools without religious affiliation. Many secular schools have a long history and tradition while others are relatively new. Secular schools often give preference for admission to students whose relatives are alumnae of the school. Secular schools may offer a traditional education that centers around preparation for college while others focus on an educational philosophy or a specific approach to learning such as those that accommodate individuals with special needs, i.e., schools for deaf or blind students. Tuition costs vary widely. Transportation may be included in the cost of tuition or may be a separate charge. Teachers are not required to be certified by the state though they may hold a variety of degrees and certifications.

Websites:

- http://www.schoolmatters.org
- http://www.schooltree.org

Deadline Alert

Before parents enroll their child in a private school program, they should be sure to check school policies and services for special needs students. Checking school accreditation is essential for both private schools and home schooling programs.

Home Schooling

Homeschooling or Home Education may be defined simply as “educating children outside the public-private-parochial school establishment (Glueck, 2002). Parents may decide to Homeschool their children for a variety of reasons—religion, special needs, concern about physical conditions and danger in formal school settings, or fear of unacceptable teaching or religious curricula. Each state has specific mandatory requirements for parents who choose the Homeschooling option.

Parents may decide to perform the schooling themselves in their own home or a relative, neighbor, professional tutor, or homeschooling cooperative may perform the service. Parents who are considering this option should inform themselves completely about time commitments, curricula, relevant state laws, outside resources and available support groups.

Websites:

- http://www.militarychild.org/Homeschooling.asp (Specifics for military families)
- http://www.hslda.org/laws/default.asp (Home Schooling by state and state laws)
- http://www.nheri.org/ (National Home Education Institute, making informed choices)

School Choice Snapshot:

Public Schools

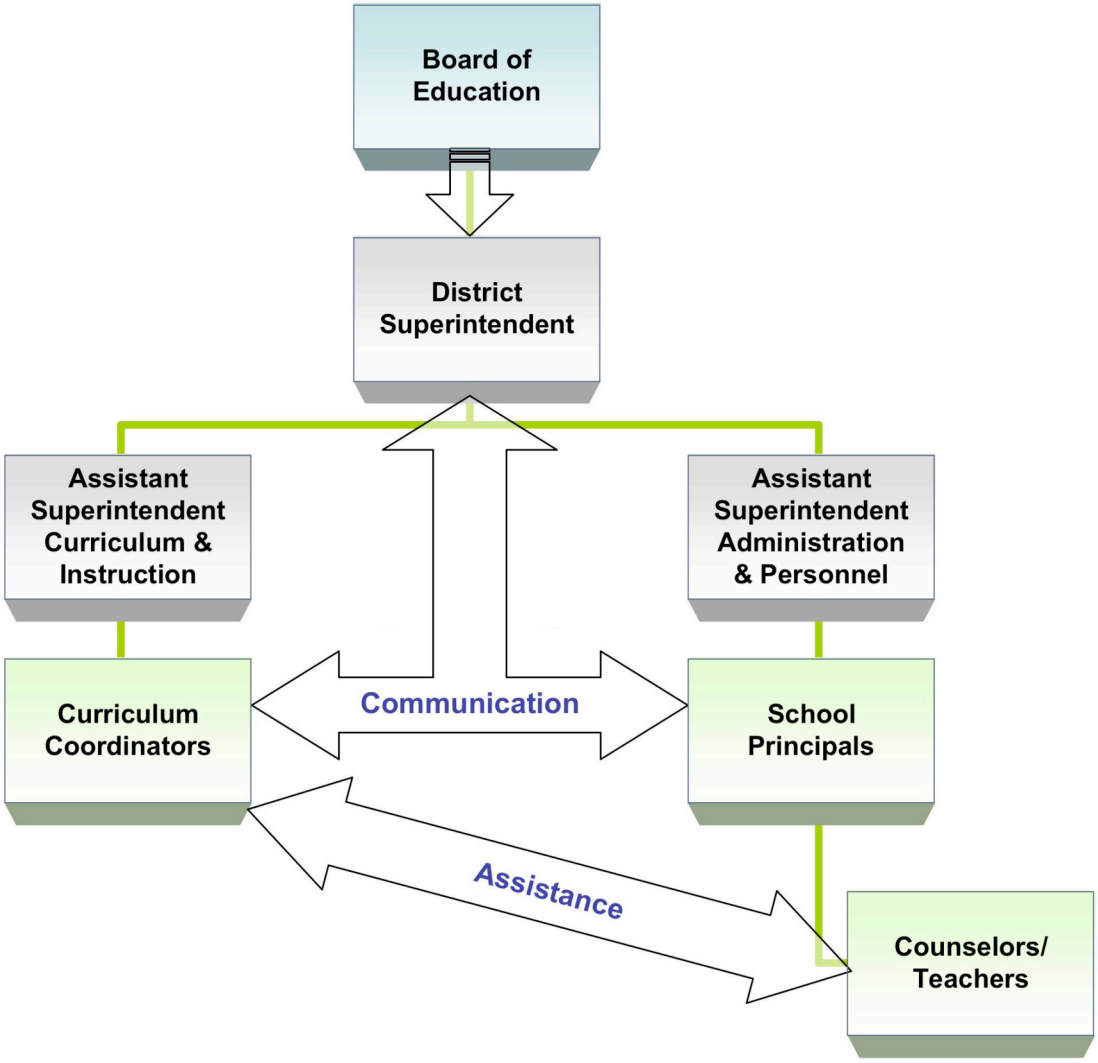
	Who is Eligible?	Tuition	Transportation	Admission	Certified Staff
District	All who reside in District.	No	Usually	Registration Only	Required by State
Charter	Must reside in geographic boundaries of District.	No	Usually	Application & successful in possible lottery.	Required by State
Magnet	Must reside in Participating District.	No	Usually	Application & successful in possible lottery.	Required by State
Technical	Sponsored by District for 9-12 for Vocational, Technical and Technological Training.	No	Usually	Application & recommendation by parent, teacher or counselor.	Required by State
AP & IBP	Advanced Placement & International Baccalaureate Programs are offered within High schools or as separate Magnet schools depending on state requirements Usually for grades 10-12.	Fees may apply	Usually accessible to all students	Application & must pass final test score of 3 or higher to receive college credit.	Required by State. Special training required for instructors
Virtual	Often called "Distance Learning" these courses are available by using a computer at home or school.	Fees may apply, but usually paid by district	N/A	Arranged though school.	Required by State. Curriculum approved by school.

School Choice Snapshot:

Private Schools

	Who is Eligible?	Tuition	Transportation	Admission	Certified Staff
Religious	Private Religious Schools often have open eligibility; others require that students be members of the religious faith to attend. In either case, eligibility is determined by the school bylaws. They have the right to refuse admission to any student	**Yes $ to $$**	May be part of Tuition or separate fee. Parents may be required to transport students.	Enrollment is based on the specific requirements of each school. Entrance tests may be required before students are admitted.	Not Required by State
Secular	Private Secular Schools are schools without religious affiliation. Many secular schools have a long history while others focus on an educational philosophy or an approach to learning. Eligibility is determined by the school by-laws. They have the right to refuse admission to any student.	**Yes $ to $$$$**	May be part of Tuition or separate fee. Parents may be required to transport students	Enrollment is based on the specific requirements of each school. Entrance tests may be required before students are admitted.	Not Required by State
Home Schooling	All parents may arrange for their children to be home schooled. Parents may perform the schooling or have a relative, neighbor, or even a professional tutor act as the "home" teacher. Each state requires an approved curriculum and program of studies.	**Yes**	N/A	N/A	Not Required by State

Typical School District Chain of Command



School Boards of Education

Most public school districts operate with a governing body called a Board of Education. Boards of Education are made up of members elected (occasionally appointed) by the citizens in a general town/city election and are frequently subsidized by political parties. Unlike the "advisory role" of the School Advisory Committees (SAC) used in the Department of Defense schools, the Board of Education has full control over the selection and evaluation of the school superintendent, the school budget recommendations to the town/city, and all policies that apply to the school system.

The mission of the Board of Education is to provide high quality public education for all children through effective leadership and oversight of policy and budget issues. The National and State Boards of Education serve as advisory and support organizations for local Boards of Education. All local Boards must adhere to state and federal laws and statutes and no local policy can override or choose to ignore such laws and statutes.

There are convenient websites that allow quick access to specific state issues, procedures, and policies. The National School Board Association (NSBA) [http://www.nsba.org/site/index.asp] is a federation of state boards of education. Individual state boards of education may be accessed from this site.

School boards usually focus on the majority's needs and may not be aware of the special challenges faced by military children. For this reason, commanders need to help make school boards aware of the issues faced by military students. The most effective contact an installation commander can make is with the district superintendent. Working with the superintendent, the commander could arrange to provide a presentation on relevant topics to the school board. A PowerPoint briefing has been created for use in addressing local school boards and is included in this Toolkit.

It is important to note that the role, formation, and composition of school boards vary from state to state and district to district. Therefore, commanders must research the districts specific to the installation's locale.

Impact Aid

Impact Aid is a federally funded program that provides funding for a portion of the educational costs of 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 (DoED)'s Impact Aid Program
DoED 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 to school districts in 2004 was $804,000. Awards ranged from $200 to $35,000,000 per school district.
[http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/impactaid/index.html]

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 DoED, 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 DoD Impact Aid Programs– DoD Supplemental, DoD Impact Aid for Children with Severe Disabilities and a Supplement for Military Relocation Impact on Schools.
[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]

Department of Defense Supplemental

In 2006, the DoD supplemental Impact Aid Program will distribute an additional $30 million among school districts with 20% or more average daily attendance of military dependents. This program invites districts to submit applications based on information provided by DoED. In 2005, 120 qualifying school districts received $105.63 per student.
[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]

Department of Defense Impact Aid for Children with Severe Disabilities

The DoD Impact Aid for Children with Severe Disabilities Program will distribute $5 million, in 2006, 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. [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]

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

In the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, Congress approved $7M to be dispensed by DoD to school districts that are 20% or more military impacted and demonstrate need caused by an increase or reduction in military students due to Global Rebasing, official creation or activation of one or 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, which provides information on the history and current issues related to Impact Aid. NMFA also 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. Impact Aid payments by school district are included in the NAFIS 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 that relate 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 BRAC, the Global Rebasing Initiative, and force/structure changes may have on school systems and their funding.

Impact Aid Clarification

An incorrect assumption is often made that Impact Aid money must be spent on programs for military students. The purpose of Impact Aid is to make up for loss of property, sales, and other taxes that would be received by the school district if military members paid property taxes or did not shop in the commissary or exchange. These monies go into the school district's general fund and may be used for any expenses the district may have, including such categories as facilities, transportation or salaries.

In 2005, school districts received an average of $2,200 per student who live on base and $450 per student who live off base. These monies provided by Impact Aid make up only a fraction of what it costs to educate a child. The national average for educating a student in 2004 was $7839 per year. In addition, the amount of aid provided is determined using the previous year's statistics. The program is not forward-funded, meaning that the military students attend the schools for one year before the district receives Impact Aid funds for them.

Since 1970, the Impact Aid program has faced severe cuts and is currently funded at 60%. Superintendents can share information about the money they receive through Impact Aid with commanders to help them understand the economic issues related to educating military children in local school districts.

Tools

This section of the Toolkit is designed to provide Military Leaders with additional resources, information, and useful website links to facilitate the transition of military students and their families. In conjunction with the School Leaders, Military Leaders have the opportunity to 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.

The Tools include:

Suggestions for School District and Installation Website

Guidelines for Local Action Plan

Military Student Transition Action Plan Template

Sample Military Student Transition Action Plan

Assessing the Action Plan

Conducting a Focus Group

Talking Points and PowerPoint Presentation to School Boards

Important District Contacts

Glossary

Informative Web Links

Suggestions for District and Installation Websites

Installation websites should be linked to the school district websites. This link should be easily accessible on the front page of the installation site. Below are some suggestions for schools and additional links or information for installations (Adapted from "Tools for Schools" – a joint project of the Military Impacted Schools Association and The DoD Educational Opportunities Directorate).

School Website Suggestions

- General information about the school district and individual schools
    - Total enrollment
    - Name of schools, addresses, phone numbers, contact person with email
    - Class size
    - Attendance areas
    - School calendar
    - Qualifications for free/reduced breakfast/lunch program
    - Testing program and dates
    - Busing routes
- School contact - Include counselor's name, phone number and email address to answer questions and expedite appropriate placement of students.
- On-line registration and forms
- What parents need to bring with them
    - Report cards
    - School records, course descriptions…
    - Immunization records
        - Immunization and physical exam requirements
        - Can a student accomplish requirements before arriving at new school?
    - Birth certificate
- School housing boundaries and maps
- Graduation requirements – State and local course requirements and exams
- Advanced Placement Courses Offered
- General Course Offerings
- Programs
    - Special Education - School programs, required paperwork, contact person
    - Gifted – grade levels, qualification requirements, and contact
    - Kindergarten - Full or half-day and entry ages
- Sports/Extra-curricular Programs
    - Options
    - Tryout dates and provisions for students who miss the tryouts
- Sponsorship Programs
- Student Handbooks

Installations should offer the following information on their websites:

- School Liaison Officer's email address and services provided
- Listing of school choices within and outside the public schools
- On- and off-base before- and after-school programs
- EFMP contact information for parents with special needs children
- Installation Sponsorship Programs
- Housing Information, including information on school attendance in temporary housing

Examples of exemplary military websites for families:

- The Army School Liaison Services in Hawaii provides an excellent guidebook for parents [http://www.mwrarmyhawaii.com/cys/SchoolLiaison_Handbook(apr05).pdf]

- The Aloha, Military Families & Students (AMFAS) website provides another excellent example of effective communication about schools [http://militaryfamily.k12.hi.us/].

- Hampton City Schools [http://www.sbo.hampton.k12.va.us/parents/parents.html] provides extensive information for parents and has a link to the site for military families that was prepared by the Joint Military Services School Liaison Committee [http://www.militaryk12link.com].

- Fort Polk School Liaison Office [http://www.jrtc-polk.army.mil/School%20Liaison/index.htm] website contains pertinent information for families moving to the area.

- Camp Pendleton provides links to many school districts and other informative sites. [http://www.mccscamppendleton.com/qol/cytp/SchoolLiaisonOfficer.htm].

- Fort Bragg School Liaison website offers extensive information for students [http://www.bragg.army.mil/mwr/school%5Fliaison].

Guidelines for Developing and Assessing 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 Florida 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.

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

Sample: Military Student Transition Action Plan

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.

Assessing the Action Plan

The action plan cycle includes design, implementation, and evaluation or assessment. The evaluation and assessment phases of the cycle are vital to having a worthwhile, current and meaningful plan. Assessment measures whether the objective or criteria for success has been achieved. Assessments should produce timely, relevant, objective findings and conclusions. In addition to assessing success, they help determine next steps.

MCEC created the "Show and Tell Workbook" for developing a Local Action Plan which is available at the following site: [http://www.militarychild.org/pdfs/MOAwrkbk.pdf]. This document offers guiding questions that may assist installations in creating indicators of success for the challenges faced by military students and determining how to assess the challenges.

Key Issues in Collecting Data and Information

1. **What kinds of information should be collected?**
   - Factual/Descriptive information (e.g., numbers participating in a program; hits on a website; number of complaints; meetings held)
   - Judgmental information (e.g., expert opinions; parent/teacher/student perceptions…)

2. **Who should provide the information?**
   - Individuals or groups of people (e.g., parents; teachers; students; school officials; service members; STRT members; community organizations)
   - Pre-existing data (e.g., school records; housing records; chamber of commerce data)

3. **What kind of data should be collected?**
   - Quantitative (e.g., surveys/questionnaires with rating scale; scores; polls; counts)
   - Qualitative (e.g., surveys/questionnaires with comments; focus groups; structured and informal interviews; observations)

4. **What instrument will be used?**
   - Pre-existing instrument
   - Self-designed instrument

5. **How is the data or information collected?**

6. **What does the data or information indicate (analysis of data)?**
   - Look for trends, patterns, surprises, or questions.

7. **What conclusions or inferences can be drawn? How will the conclusions be reported?**

8. **What are the next steps or future actions?**

Conducting a Focus Group

Focus groups are a way of gathering opinions, experiences, and feedback that can be useful for planning, implementing, or evaluating.

Purpose:

- Gathering opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences about issues of interest
- Testing assumptions
- Encouraging discussion about a particular topic
- Providing the opportunity to learn more about a topic or issue

Organization Tips:

Define the purpose of the Focus Group

- Be very clear and specific on the objective of the group.

Establish a timeline

- Effective focus groups take time to organize well; a timeline can keep the group on task.

Identify the participants

- Determine how many participants you need. Six to twelve is generally an effective number. Fewer than six may limit the conversation and more than twelve does not allow for full participation by everyone.
- Invite participants that reflect the diversity necessary to give the clearest picture of the issue on all pay grades, ethnic and gender levels etc.
- Personal phone calls are often the most effective way of getting volunteers.

Generate the questions

- Four to seven questions are all you will have time to ask. Prepare one or two introductory questions or warm-up questions, and then several serious questions that address the issue or purpose.
- Questions should be open-ended and move from general to specific.
- Make sure that your questions address your purpose.

Develop an agenda

Your Focus Group should last one to two hours. One hour is the minimum because opening and closing remarks may not leave enough time to address the questions adequately. Over two hours is draining for the participants.

Select the facilitator

- Should be knowledgeable about the topic.
- Someone with whom the participants feel comfortable.
- Skilled at establishing trust and encouraging people to share thoughts honestly.

Choose a location.

- The location should be comfortable and accessible.
- Chairs should be placed so participants can see each other.
- The location should be a place where refreshments can be served.

Record the session

- Recording the data or information is critical. Consider using a tape or video recorder.
- Do not count on your memory.
- It is helpful to have a co-facilitator who takes notes or charts the comments.

After the Focus Group clean up your notes

- Make notes on your written notes to clarify or fill in information.
- Record any observations you made during the sessions such as the nature of participation.

Interpret and report the results.

- Summarize each meeting as soon as possible after the group while your memory is fresh.
- Analyze the summaries. Look for patterns, trends, and surprises. Highlight the main themes, issues, challenges, or questions that emerged.
- Decide on the next steps or actions that are needed based on the findings.
- Write the report. The final report should include:
    - Background and purpose of the Focus Group
    - Details of the session
    - Results/Conclusions
    - Next Steps

Sample Agenda

A. Opening

- Welcome the group
- Introduce yourself
- Thank the participants for becoming involved
- Introduce the purpose and content of the Focus Group
- Explain the ground rules
- Explain what the Focus Group is and how the session will unfold
- Make introductions
- Share how the information will be recorded

B. Questions

- The questions should be written on chart paper or on a handout. Questions should be addressed one at a time.

C. Closing

- Thank the participants
- Share how the data will be used
- Explain the way the Focus Group results will be reported and that they will be receiving a copy of the report

Materials Needed

Flip Chart
List of Participants
Markers
Masking Tape
Name Tags
Clock or Watch
Refreshments

Facilitator Guidelines

A. Set the tone. Participants should feel comfortable and enjoy the experience.

B. Ensure all participants have the opportunity to share. Encourage quiet participants by asking questions like, "Can you add to that?" or "What do you think/feel?" If that does not work or if one participant is dominating the discussion, use a roundtable approach.

C. Listen and gather information. Do not try to justify your position or explain why the suggestions cannot be acted upon.

D. Get complete answers. Ask participants to elaborate on their answers. Instead of, "That's great," ask for the response, "That's great because . . ."

E. Monitor time closely and stay within the time limits.

F. Keep the discussion on track. Try to get to all or most of the questions.

For more information on Focus Groups, go to: http://www.smallschoolsproject.org/PDFS/focusgroups.PDF. The site includes suggestions for facilitators, a sample invitation letter, and a sample facilitator's guide.

For help developing powerful questions, engage the expertise of the Military Child Initiative at Johns Hopkins University. Email: mci@jhsph.edu.

Commander's School Board Briefing

The following slides are prepared as a suggested briefing for school boards, superintendents and educators. This sample is intended to be modified to reflect your installation. The brackets on the slides are comments to Commanders and should be removed for presentation. The PowerPoint version is available on the accompanying CD and at *www.miltarystudent.org* in the Commander's Toolkit.

Talking Points

Who we are as an installation and what we do

- Mission
- Demographics

Tentative information on incoming families

- Anticipated number of families and schools age children
- Tentative timetable
- Where they are coming from. Deployment status.

Education is important to military families

Challenges for military children that move frequently

Challenges for military children whose parents are deployed

Communication & Partnership

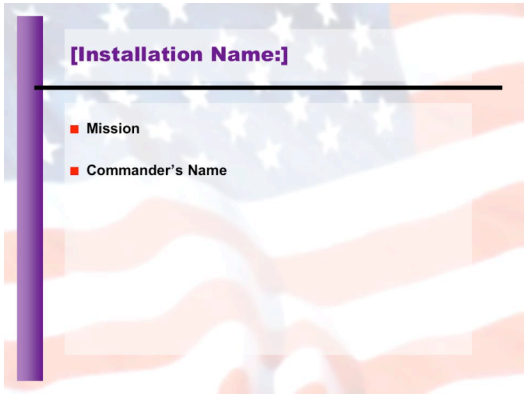
- Join our Student Transition Response Team
- Regularly scheduled meetings with superintendents
- School Board presentations and installation representation
- School Liaison Officer
- Installation programs that support students

What we have to offer your schools

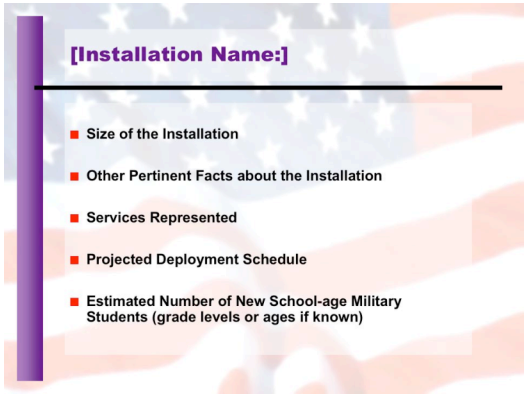
- Possible joint programs
- Sharing resources and expertise

Slide 1

Slide 2



Slide 3



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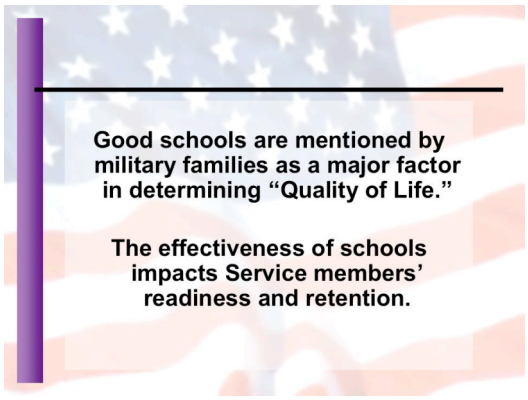

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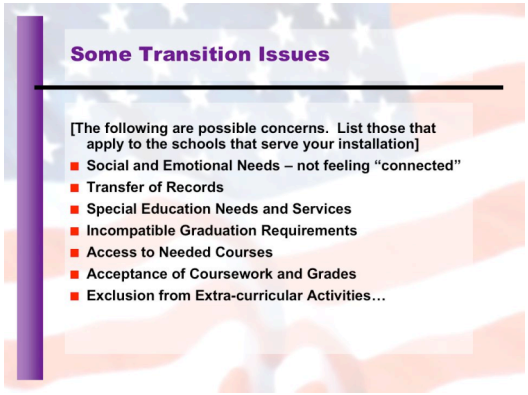

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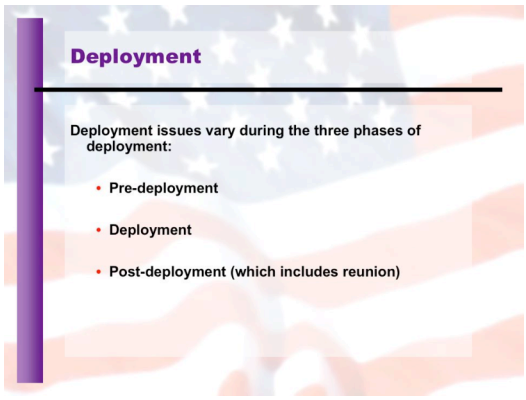

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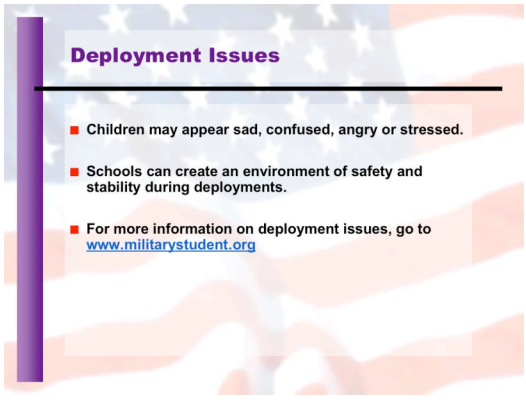

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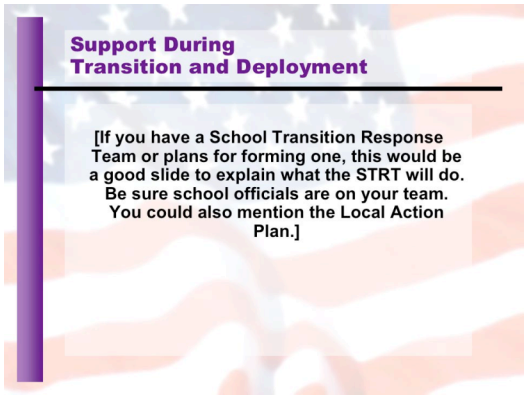

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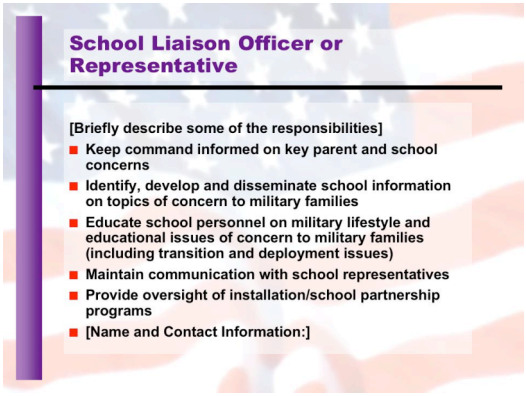

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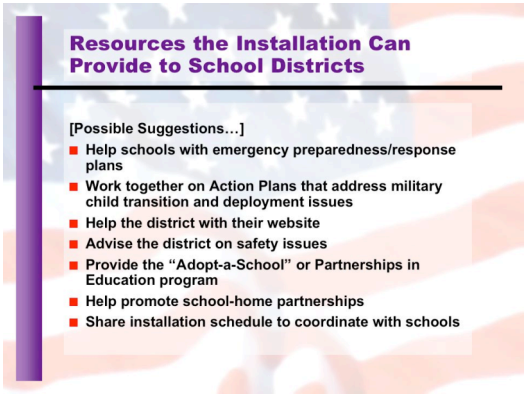

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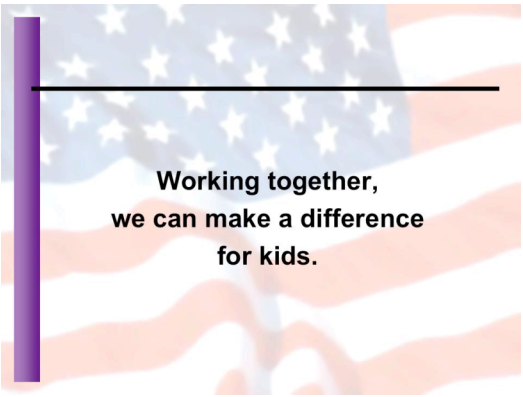

The PowerPoint version is available at www.militarystudent.org in the Commander's Toolkit and on the accompanying CD.

Important District Contacts

School District _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Fax Number _____

School Board Meeting Date and Time _____

Position	Name	Phone Number
Superintendent		
Assistant Superintendent		
Principal (School)		
Principal (School)		
Principal (School)		
Principal (School)		
School Board President		
School Board Member		
School Board Member		
School Board Member		
School Board Member		
Director of Transportation		
Public Information Officer		

Glossary

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/

Informative Links

Organizations

- http://www.ausa.org – Association of the United States Army (AUSA)
- http://www.sso.org/nafis/2005_blue_book.htm - Blue Book of School Districts Receiving Impact Aid
- http://www.sso.org/nafis - National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS)
- http://www.nmfa.org – National Military Family Association (NMFA)
- http://www.nsba.org/site/index.asp - National School Boards Association (NSBA)
- http://militarychild.org – Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)
- http://www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org - Military Impacted Schools Associations (MISA)
- http://www.moaa.org – Military Officers Association
- http://www.stompproject.org/ - Specialized Training of Military Families (STOMP): For military families of individuals with disabilities
- http://www.schoolmatters.com – Standards & Poors site that shares data on schools and helps parents make informed decisions about school choices

Government/Military Sites

- http://www.militaryonesource.com – Military OneSource
- http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil – Military HOMEFRONT
- http://www.militarystudent.org or http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil – DOD Website for the Military Child in Transition and Deployment
- http://www.dod.mil/mtom - Military Teens on the Move (MTOM)
- http://www.usa4militaryfamilies.dod.mil – DoD Website for military families
- http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/sites - SITES
- http://www.dodea.edu – Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)
- http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml - Department of Education
- http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/impactaid/index.html- Impact Aid
- http://www.afcrossroads.com – Air Force
- http://www.goacs.org – Army
- http://www.lifelines2000.org – Lifelines – Navy and Marine Corp site for military families
- http://www.usmc-mccs.org – US Marine Corps
- http://www.gardfamily.org – National Guard

- http://www.guardfamilyyouth.org – National Guard Youth Site
- http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/ - Reserves
- http://www.spousestoteachers.com/pages/8/index.htm - Spouse-to-Teachers Program
- http://www.dantes.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/index.htm?Flag=True - Troops-to-Teachers Program

Promising Practices

- http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil/portal/page?_pageid=234,252645&_dad=portal9x&_schema=PORTAL&pgm=0&cat=0 Provides a list of Promising Practices used by many districts and installations to create smooth transitions for military children
- http://www.militarychild.org/BestPractices.asp# MCEC's list of best practices for addressing nine challenges of school transition
- http://www.militarychild.org/MOACopy.asp - Memorandum of Agreement (SETS)