

MILITARY CHILD
EDUCATION COALITION™



HANDBOOK

for

Garrison Commanders

and a reference for

School Superintendents

This **Handbook for Garrison Commanders
and a Reference for School Superintendents**

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by

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FOREWORD

The *Handbook for Garrison Commanders and a Reference for School Superintendents* has two purposes.

- Serve as a research-centered, practical guide to assist Army Garrison Commanders and their staff in:
 - ~ engaging their supporting school district(s), and
 - ~ assessing and developing action plans to “ensure excellence in schools” in accordance with the Army Family Covenant.
- Highlight promising practices from partnerships between installations and school districts to address:
 - ~ the stresses of deployment, and
 - ~ the significant turbulence/uncertainties created in the wake of Army Transformation.

July 2008

Dear Friends,

In my Active Duty career, and now as the Chairman of the Military Child Education Coalition™ (MCEC®), I have always stated that there is nothing more important than the education of military-connected children. Soldiers and their Families make hard choices every day about remaining in the Army, and their perception of the quality of the schools educating their children is hugely important. The leadership of the Army has made a commitment with the Army Family Covenant. Yet, our commanders do not fully understand the public education system and the importance of state and local factors; superintendents don't always understand the military culture that values top-down command structure and standardization. When Army installations and school districts communicate effectively, and forge partnerships to make the education system better, everyone is a winner. That is what this handbook is about. Please reflect carefully on the ideas it contains, and resolve to leave the system better than you found it ...for the sake of the child.™

Thank you for all that you do,

Thomas A. “Tom” Schwartz
General (Ret.) USA
Chairman of the Board, Military Child Education Coalition™

AMERICA'S ARMY: THE STRENGTH OF THE NATION™

Army Family Covenant:

We recognize the commitment and increasing sacrifices that our Families are making every day.

We recognize the strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their Families.

We are committed to providing Soldiers and Families a Quality of Life that is commensurate with their service.

We are committed to providing our Families a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive.

We are committed to building a partnership with Army Families that enhances their strength and resilience.

We are committed to improving Family readiness by:

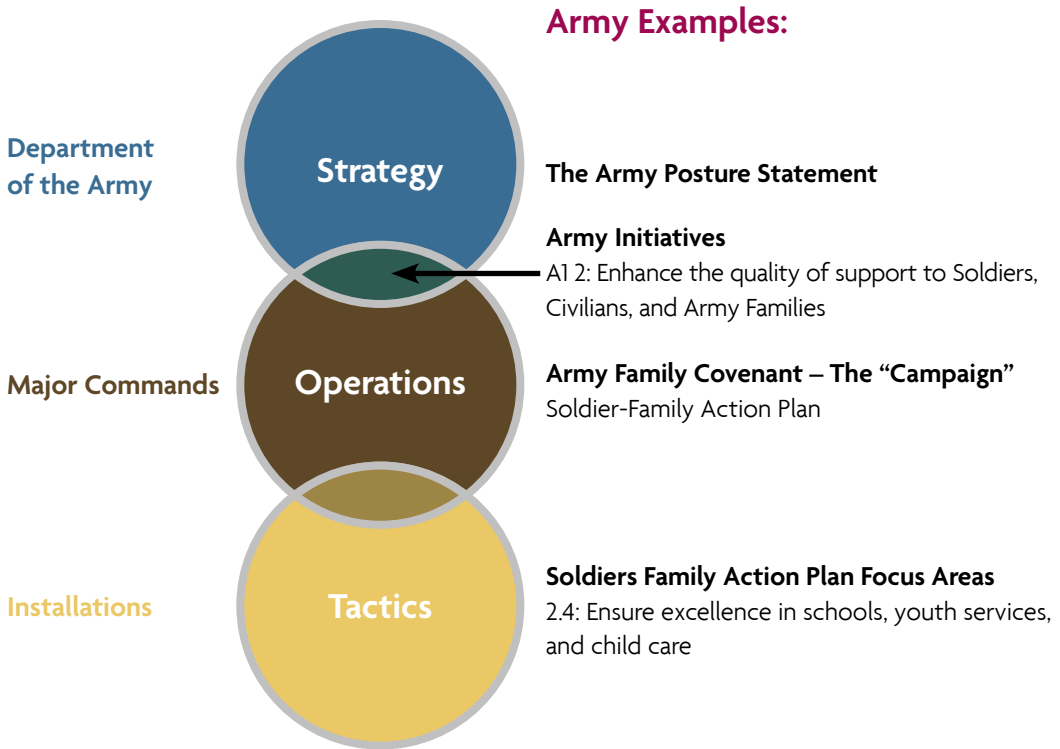
- Standardizing and funding existing Family programs and services
- Increasing accessibility and quality of healthcare
- Improving Soldier and Family housing
- **Ensuring excellence in schools, youth services, and child care**
- **Expanding education and employment opportunities for Family members**

Secretary of the Army Peter “Pete” Geren announced the **Army Family Covenant** in October 2007, noting there are 500,000 Army spouses and 700,000 Army-connected children facing the uncharted territory of over six years of war. If the Army is to remain ready and healthy, just as “the Soldier of 2007 does not look like the Soldier of the year 2000... Family support in 2007 cannot look like it did in year 2000 either.”

The Army Family Covenant is one measure of a commitment to the welfare of the Soldier and Army Family. The Soldier Family Action Plan (SFAP) implements the Army Family Covenant. Since 1998, the Army, largely in conjunction with non-profit organizations such as the Military Child Education Coalition™ (MCEC®), has built an infrastructure to support the school transition process for mobile military children. Additionally, the Army has designated School Transition Services as a core competency of the Army Child and Youth Services program resident at every Army installation.

Many of the partnerships and promising practices highlighted in this handbook are based on an effective employment and deployment of these School Transition infrastructure programs.

THE FRAMEWORK

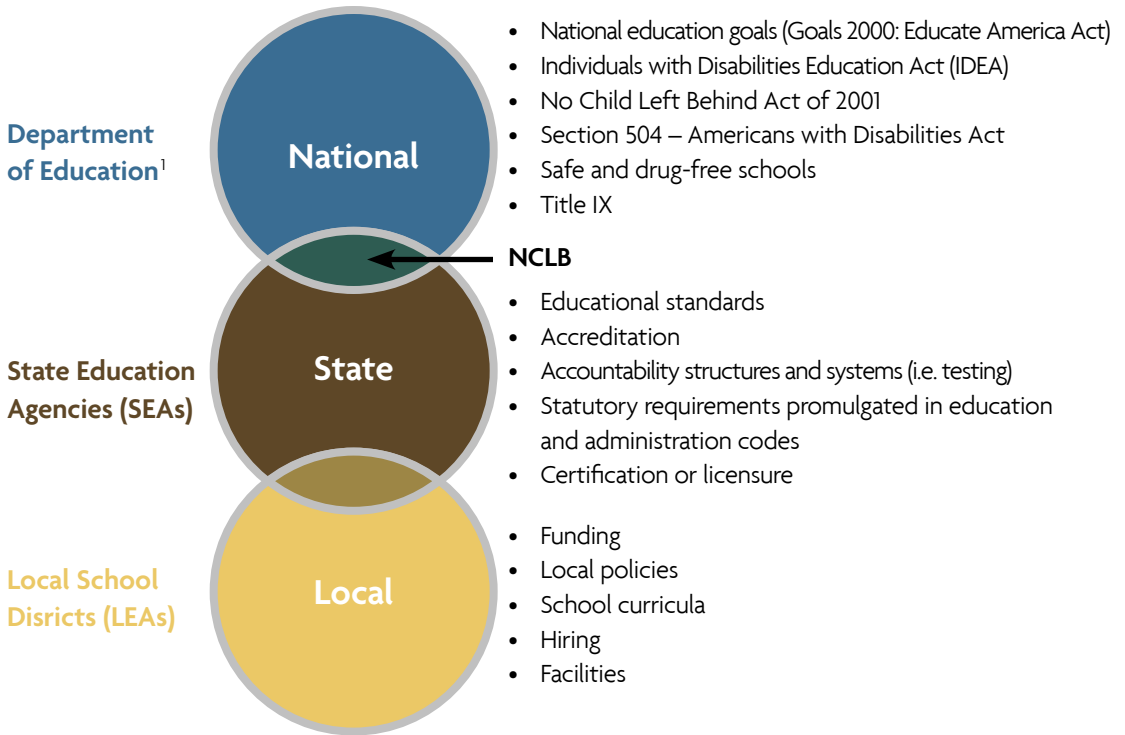


The Military perspective:

“The [Strategy/Operations/Tactics] levels have no finite limits or boundaries. They correlate to specific levels of responsibility and planning. They help organize thought and approaches to a problem. The levels clearly distinguish between headquarters and the specific responsibilities and actions performed at each echelon.”

FM 3-0, *Operations*
27 February 2008, page 6-1.

Public School Examples:



The Educator's perspective:

The authority to operate a school in the United States is granted by each of the states individually. There are approximately 16,000 public school districts nationwide, and public education school cultures and traditions are inherently local. **The Department of Education has no control over the accreditation process.** The state has both the responsibility and the authority for their public school systems.

"The federal rule in education is not to serve the system. It's to serve the children."

President George W. Bush
August 2001

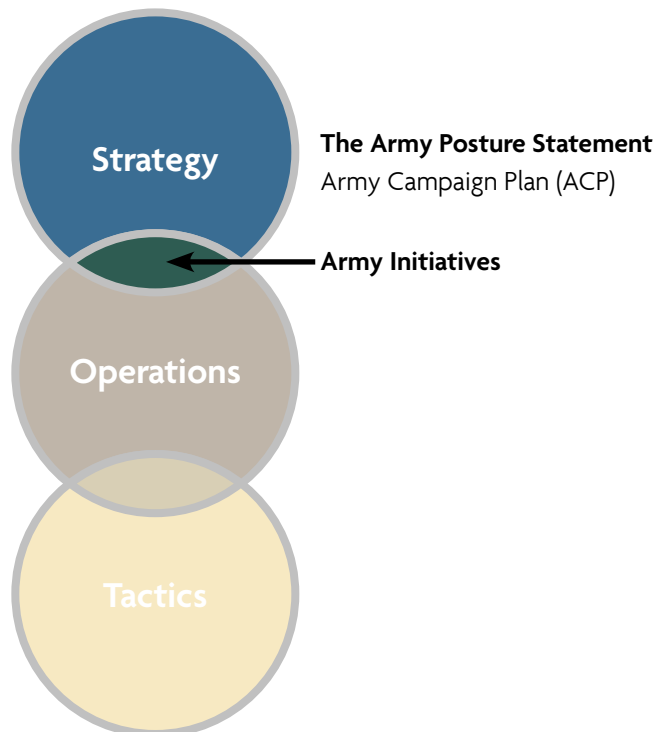
1. There are additional federal agencies that oversee regulations impacting public education at the state and local levels. For example: the Department of Agriculture's Free-and-Reduced Lunch Programs; Department of Justice - Office of Civil Rights; and Department of Health and Human Services - children's health initiatives.

CHAPTER 1: STRATEGIC SETTING AND LINKAGES

The Same...Only Different

Things You Should Know:

- The annual Army Posture Statement (www.army.mil/aps) summarizes Army roles, missions, accomplishments, plans and programs. It serves a broad audience as a basic reference on the state of the Army and reinforces the Secretary and Chief of Staff's budget testimony before Congress.
- Approximately 76 percent of Army-connected children attend U.S. public schools.
- The federal government typically provides less than 10 percent of overall funding for public education.



After nearly seven years of prosecuting the Global War On Terror, the Army leadership has determined its forces are “out of balance.” The 2008 Army Posture Statement cites *Restoring Balance* in an era of persistent conflict as one of the Army’s critical challenges. The Army’s strategy to address this issue is nested within the Army Campaign Plan (campaign objectives) and a set of Army Initiatives. This handbook focuses on Army Initiative 2: Enhance the Quality of Support to Soldiers, Civilians, and Families.

The Army leadership is committed to sustain the quality of life for Soldiers and their Families by implementing the Army Family Covenant and other programs that:

- standardize services,
- increase the accessibility and quality of health care,
- improve housing and installation facilities,
- **provide excellence in schools and youth services, and**
- expand spousal education and employment opportunities.

The Army’s mission is simple and straightforward: to fight and win the Nation’s wars. As a result, the military culture tends to be straightforward as well: standardization and authoritative control are highly regarded and necessary. Change is required and expected to counter any trend towards complacency. There is an expectation woven into the Army’s organizational culture of rapid response and decision making.

By contrast, public education culture and traditions in the United States are inherently local, decentralized and tenure is celebrated and rewarded. The Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS)² identified this dichotomy as often being the nexus of the friction, both from the different organizational cultures as well as the expectations, between military-connected Families and the school districts that support military installations.

As indicated in the following chart, the overwhelming majority (approximately 76 percent) of Army-connected children attend public schools, either on the installation, or in the community where they live.³

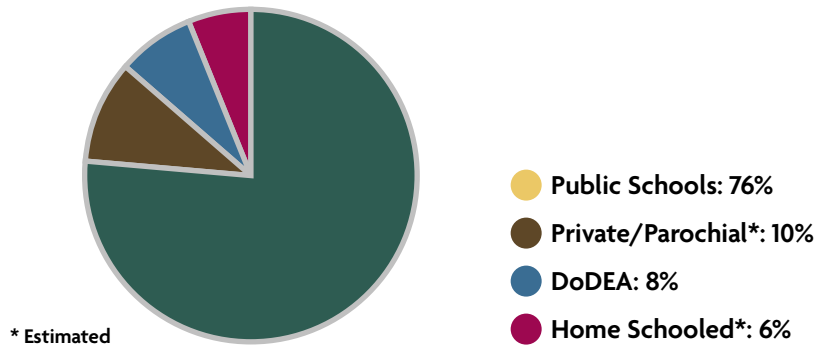
“I would hope someday there would be a true national standard for these kids.”

Garrison Commander

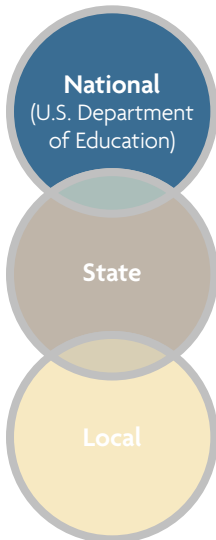
2. In February 1999, the Army asked the Military Child Education Coalition™ to conduct an in-depth study and make recommendations to improve the transition of military-connected students by: learning about moves during high school in order to find meaningful ways to lessen the myriad of transition challenges; discovering processes, policies, and solutions that have the potential to make the mobile life better for the teen and military Family; and surfacing opportunities to improve and amplify the capacities of schools and installations to respond confidently to the complexities of transition. This qualitative research effort was termed the *Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS)*, and was published in June 2001.

3. Source: Military Child Education Coalition™ *Military Demographics*

CHART 1: Distribution of Military-connected Children - by Type of School Environment



The Public Education System in the United States



The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 Requires Each State to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalize academic standards.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a standards/assessment/accountability system that will result in a 100 percent passing rate by school year 2013-14. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Math and reading will be tested in each of grades 3-8 and once between the sophomore and senior years of high school ~ In the future, science will be added to the required testing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish its own start point and goals in order to reach 100 percent passing by 2013-14.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all core-academic teachers are highly qualified (degree, competence test, full certification).

However, the primary function of the U.S. Department of Education is not to establish national educational policy, but rather to formulate federal funding programs involving education, and to enforce federal education laws regarding privacy and civil rights. Proponents of strong local control over education policies, starting with the founding of the United States often cite the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: powers that the Constitution does not delegate to the United States and does not prohibit the states from exercising are “reserved to the states respectively or to the people.”



“One school had a higher dropout rate because 20-30 soldiers (made a) PCS and the school didn’t know... The school thought that they dropped out, and the state declared the school low performing.”

Superintendent

Educational standards are set and accountability standards are determined by state governments. The state education agency establishes policy and overarching objectives for the state’s education system which is funded under a framework normally directed by the state legislature. Therefore, each state will have an autonomous curriculum and accountability system; the authority to operate is granted by each of the states individually.

School curricula, teaching, policies, and to a degree, funding, decisions are set by locally-elected school boards who exercise jurisdiction over the estimated 16,000 school districts (or Local Education Agencies - LEAs) that exist in the United States.

Critics of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) contend that it inhibits the historically local control of the public education system, and results in “teaching to the test” in order to meet the national standard of 100 percent passing in math, reading, and science by 2013-14. Advocates for NCLB say that it has assured states and school districts set standards; instructional decisions are based in research; teachers are highly qualified; the public has information about student achievement by campus and district; and alternatives, such as school “choice” and charters, are now available.

The key metric to NCLB is Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP is an individual state’s measure of progress towards the goal of 100 percent of students achieving the state’s academic standards in (at least) reading/language arts and math using annual tests and related academic indicators. NCLB mandates that state and local education agencies/school districts make report cards available to the public detailing the performance of the state, school districts, and individual schools.

These report cards are available at the school/district Web site, or from the Department of Education Web site (www.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html). Additionally, the National Center for Education Statistics Web site (www.NCES.ed.gov/nationsreportcard) allows a comparison of state performance by grade, subject, student group, and year.

Consequences of Not Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Administration/School

Parents/Students

For 2 consecutive years

- Must be identified as needing school improvement before the beginning of the next school year.
- School officials must receive help and technical assistance.
- Must develop a two-year plan to meet AYP.
- Must be given the option to transfer to another public school (not in need of improvement) within the district; transportation subject to a spending cap provided by the school district.

For 3 consecutive years

- The school remains in school improvement; the district must continue to offer public school choice to all students.
- Student from low-income Families must be offered “supplemental educational services” - free tutoring or additional academic help provided outside the regular school day.
- Parents can choose the services from a list of approved providers.

For 5 consecutive years

- The LEA must create a plan to restructure⁴ the school.

For 6 consecutive years

- The LEA must implement the school restructuring plan.

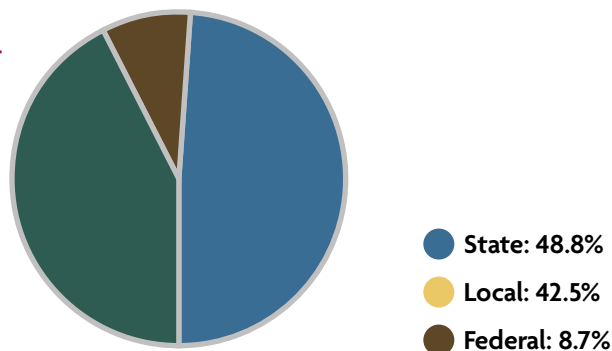
SOURCE: Department of Education (www.Answers.ed.gov) and “LEA and School Improvement Non-Regulatory Guidance” Revised July 21, 2006 (www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/schoolimprovementguid.pdf)

4. NCLB provides five restructuring options: replace all or most of the school staff who are relevant to the failure to make AYP; reopen the school as a charter school; enter into a contract to have an outside organization with a record of effectiveness operate the school; turn operation of the school over to the state, if the state agrees; any other major restructuring of the schools’ governance arrangement that makes fundamental reform. For a discussion of how the Michigan Department of Education implemented this last option, see “The Sit Down Dinner”, Center on Education Policy (www.cep-dc.org)

Money Follows Money

On average 90 percent of public education funding comes from state and local sources.

CHART 2:
Sources of Public Education Funding -
Federal, State, and Local



The University of Washington's Center on Reinventing Education's School Finance Redesign Project set out to examine how funding resources help schools achieve the higher levels of student performance that state and national educational standards now demand. They found that "spending ratios by student type vary widely across states, districts, and schools with little apparent logic behind the variability." In examining 15 districts across four states (North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Washington), the study determined the average federal share of revenues for elementary and secondary public education was 8.7 percent. The states' share was 48.8 percent, and local school districts generated an average of 42.5 percent of total revenues.⁵

The research found the federal government's share of revenue is "intended to boost services for some students, experiment with new schooling models, or supplement funding for atypical districts (e.g. those in military communities)." State-to state allocation policies vary significantly, in part based on funding equity lawsuits filed over the past 20 years.⁶ Washington and North Carolina fund public school staff based on the number of students enrolled. Texas and Ohio use local property tax values to determine how much state funding each district will receive, based on dollars per student or average daily attendance.

Local school districts are then left to fill the gap. Most districts use a form of fund accounting that tracks targeted funding from federal and state sources separately, assign expenditures that qualify for those restricted funds, and where needed, cover additional program/service

5. School Finance Redesign Project, Center on Reinventing Public Education, University of Washington, Working Paper 9, "What is the Sum of the Parts? How Federal, State, and District Funding Streams Confound Efforts to Address Different Student Types." March 30, 2007. The State:Local ratios varied as follows:

Texas: 41% State:49% Local

Ohio: 45% State:49% Local

Washington: 62% State:29% Local

North Carolina: 64% State:27% Local

These numbers are consistent with the National Center for Education Statistics "The Condition of Education" - Federal 8.5%; State 48.7%; Local 42.8% nationally. See Center on Education Policy, "A Public Education Primer", 2006.

6. 38 States have been sued challenging their school finance system. In 21 of those lawsuits, the courts found the state's school finance system unconstitutional; 10 states have lawsuits still pending. Source: "A Public Education Primer", 2006.

costs from the district's unrestricted operating funds. The research found that there was a wide variance in per-pupil expenditures between schools within the same districts, and between districts within the same state.

The legal mandate of state and local control of the public education system and the various formulas of federal, state, and local funding means all schools serving military children are not the same. In examining the State standards of the nine original participants (based on size of the military population) the SETS research found that the standards differed only slightly between each other. Therefore, mastery of the academic skills and concept by a student in one place likely correlates highly to those necessary in the next school system. The "devil is in the details" however - such as the sequence of discrete academic skills and knowledge (for example - math concepts).

The Role of Impact Aid

Since 1950, Congress has provided federal funds, known as Impact Aid to selected local school districts responsible for educating federally-connected children (military bases, Indian lands, and low-rent housing) that have lost property tax revenue due to tax-exempt federal property within their district. The overwhelming majority of Impact Aid is administered by the Department of Education, however, DoD distributes the "supplemental" Impact Aid program to districts serving a high proportion of military children. To receive Impact Aid, LEAs must document they have either at least 400 students or 3 percent of the district's total average daily attendance that are federally-connected. Most Impact Aid funding is considered general aid and districts may use the funds in whatever manner they choose in accordance with local and state requirements.⁷

There are two formulas used to determine the amount of Impact Aid an LEA receives:

- a. **Basic Support Payment (BSP)** - a pro-rata payment based on the district's Local Contribution Rate (LCR) [see discussion above] multiplied by a weighted factor for the different category of federally-connected students based on whether the parent lives and/or works on federal property.
- b. **Learning Opportunity Threshold (LOT)** - this additional formula was added as second tier funding in 1994 and is based on the percentage of the federally-connected enrollment, plus the percentage of the district's budget that is dependent on Impact Aid.

7. An excellent reference for more information on Impact Aid is the RAND National Defense Research Institute study "Impact Aid and the Education of Military Children," Richard Buddin et al., 2001. Additionally, the National Association for Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) has a series of Impact Aid Issue Briefs on their Web site <http://joomla.nafisdc.org/>. See also the Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) www.militaryimpactededschoolsassociation.org/.

School Choice

Traditional public education provided by the Local Education Agency/Independent School District is only one of the many options available to, and exercised by, military-connected Families. The amount of on-post housing, the length of the waiting list, and past experiences may be significant factors in the decision about which schools military children may attend. In addition, there may be additional choices within the public education system supporting the Army installation, such as Charter and Magnet Schools.

Charter Schools

The Department of Education defines Charter schools as nonsectarian public schools of choice that operate with freedom from many of the regulations that apply to traditional public schools. The “charter” establishing such a school is a performance contract detailing the school’s mission, program, goals, students served, methods of assessment, and way to measure success. Charter schools are accountable to their sponsor - usually a state or local school board - to produce positive academic results and adhere to the charter contract. Most charters are granted for three to five years. The basic concept of charter schools is that they exercise increased autonomy in return for this accountability. Parents and teachers choose charter schools primarily for educational reasons — high academic standards, small class size, innovative approaches, or educational philosophies in line with their own. Some also have chosen charter schools for their small size and associated safety (charter schools serve an average of 250 students). Currently, 40 states and the District of Columbia have charter laws. More information on the legal definition of a charter school in a particular state can be found at www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs_docs/sp/index.htm.

Magnet Schools/Programs

Magnet Schools are publicly funded schools with an educational focus or theme. They are created and operated by the public education system outside of zoned school boundaries with alternative or otherwise compelling modes of instruction. Magnet schools were originally created in the late 1960s (typically within urban school districts) with the original purpose to voluntarily reduce racial segregation by attracting, rather than forcibly busing students. *Public School Review* identifies three distinguishing characteristics of magnet schools⁸:

- distinctive curriculum or instructional approach,
- attract students from outside an assigned neighborhood attendance zone, and
- have diversity as an explicit purpose.

The pros and cons of magnet schools often are reflective more of educational philosophy versus performance. Supporters cite that magnet schools increase the choices available to parents and students in typically urban districts while allowing them to remain in the public school system. Additionally, the specialized programs facilitate students’ and teachers’ commitment

8. Source: Public School Review fact sheet (www.publicschoolreview.com/article/2)

to the school and allow them to surpass the achievement typical of a zoned school. Critics claim that magnet schools disadvantage neighboring public schools by taking away the brightest students, and while they may increase racial diversity, they encourage segregation based on ability and talent.

Magnet programs may also be offered within a traditional public school. Students generally choose to attend a magnet school because of an interest in the school's theme, academic focus or unique programs such as science, technology, math, performing arts, foreign languages, or International Baccalaureate⁹. There may be eligibility or prerequisite criteria for students to be admitted to the magnet school or programs, such as a portfolio presentation, performance, attaining an academic standard, or recommendations. Magnet programs can be very competitive with application processes beginning the year prior to the requested date of admittance.

Department of Defense Schools

Worldwide Department of Defense schools are under the overall direction of the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), which is headquartered in Arlington, Virginia (www.dodea.edu/home). On certain Army installations in CONUS, schools are administered by the Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS), or overseas by the Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS), and not by a local school district. DDESS Schools, formerly known as Section 6 schools (originally authorized by Section 6 of Public Law 81-874 - which established the Impact Aid program), are located on installations where schools in the local community were judged either unable to provide a suitable education for military-connected children, or state law prohibited tax revenues of the state, or any other political subdivision, to be expended for the free public education of military children living on the installation.¹⁰

Within CONUS, Army installations that have DDESS schools on-post are:

- West Point, NY
- Fort Knox, KY
- Fort Campbell, KY
- Fort Bragg, NC
- Fort Benning, GA
- Fort Stewart, GA
- Fort Jackson, SC

9. The non-profit International Baccalaureate Organization was established in 1968 with the original purpose to facilitate the international mobility of students preparing for post-secondary education by providing schools with a curriculum and diploma recognized by universities around the world. IB encourages students around the world to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners through challenging programs and rigorous assessment. There are three IB programs: Primary Years (ages 3-12), Middle Years (ages 11-16) and Diploma (ages 16-19). They serve approximately 638,000 students in 2,365 schools in 128 countries. More information is available at www.ibo.org

10. RAND Note N-29993-FMP, "Section 6 Schools in Six States: Eleven Case Studies of Transfer Issues," Susanna W. Purnell et al., 1991.

Additionally, public schools on some Army installations are not part of the DDESS system. The boundaries of these public school systems are “coterminous” with the boundaries of the installation. Public schools on these installations are operated by a separate LEA under state control and under the authority of an installation school board. Coterminous school districts are eligible for state funds and Impact Aid, but have no local tax base.

Coterminous school districts that serve Army children are:

- Fort Leavenworth School District #207 (Fort Leavenworth, KS),
- Fort Sam Houston Independent School District (San Antonio, TX), and
- Fort Huachuca Accommodation Schools (Fort Huachuca, AZ).

Local Public School Districts

Several large Army installations will typically have more than one LEA/ISD serving the assigned military-connected children that live off-post, and often one public school district will have the responsibility for schools in multiple communities as well as the on-post schools. One example is Fort Hood, TX where the Killeen Independent School District administers the elementary and middle schools on post, as well as the public high schools and all schools located in the communities of Killeen, Harker Heights, and Nolanville. At Fort Lewis, WA, the Clover Park School District serves on-post children in addition to administering the elementary schools on post. However, Fort Lewis-connected Families are serviced by up to 20 different school districts, and four (Tacoma, Bethel, Yelin, and North Thurston) have large military-connected enrollments.

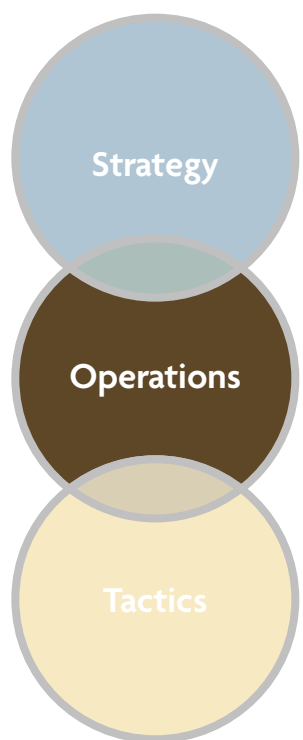
The Army’s ability to **ensure excellence** in the schools in each situation is clearly a daunting task. There are a number of different possibilities and combinations the Garrison Commander may encounter in terms of the public education structure and other school choices available to military-connected Families assigned to the installation. Garrison Commanders will be a better advocate for the education of military children if they understand the education structure, and/or multiple structures they will encounter at their installation.

In partnership with the supporting school district/local education agency, Army installations can play a major role in creating effective schools.

CHAPTER 2: THE ARMY FAMILY COVENANT - “Ensuring Excellence in Schools”

Things You Should Know:

- Over 75 percent of Army Soldiers are assigned to only ten states.
- As a result of the 2000 Army Education Summit, School Liaison Officers (SLOs) have been hired for each Army installation. Since 2003, Installation Management Command has hired Regional School Transition Specialists.



Army Family Covenant - The “Campaign”
Soldier-Family Action Plan

“It seems to me, the best part of these kinds of books (handbooks) would be links back to information like state laws, MCEC®, or state requirements.”

Garrison Commander

Covenant:

Formal, solemn and binding agreement; a written agreement or promise...between two or more parties...for the performance of some action.

Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition

One-half of the Army's Soldiers (both Active and Reserve Components) are married, and it is estimated that there are more than 700,000 children of Army Soldiers. The Global War On Terror has surpassed the conflicts of the 20th century to now rank as our nation's second longest war. Repeated deployments with insufficient "dwell time" between have created stress on Soldiers, their Families, and support systems. Preserving the All Volunteer Army requires a national commitment to provide quality support, and is the foundation for the Army Family Covenant and the Soldier Family Action Plan.

CHART 3: The Top 10 States for Army Presence

State	Active Army Soldier Population	% of Total Army	Active Duty K-12 Children	ARNG & USAR Soldiers	Reserve Component K-12 Children
Texas	73,654	17.4	66,570	39,916	33,063
Georgia	52,107	12.3	38,090	22,171	18,415
N. Carolina	43,384	10.2	45,148	20,126	13,488
Kentucky	38,335	9.0	23,199	12,450	7,635
Virginia	24,084	5.7	78,609	17,111	14,994
New York	23,464	5.5	12,045	22,533	14,295
Washington	22,787	5.4	26,479	13,588	12,291
Hawaii	18,687	4.4	22,803	6,346	5,587
Colorado	15,593	3.7	17,077	7,953	9,108
Kansas	14,725	3.5	10,808	11,260	8,962
		77.1%			

SOURCE: DoD Personnel and Procurement Statistics, FY 2006 <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil>, and Office of Military Family and Community Policy, Department of Defense.

As the chart above indicates, over 77 percent of active duty Soldiers are assigned to installations in only 10 states. Therefore, it is a reasonable assumption that three out of four Soldiers (and their Families) have moved from one of only a maximum of nine other states. Ideally, the public education systems within those 10 states would be similar enough that a smoother transition for military-connected, school-age children would be simplified, if not transparent. Unfortunately, as Chart 4 depicts, there are significant differences between the top 10 states for Army presence. For example, the public school teachers may have state regulations that permit collective bargaining and the right to strike. It is very important to understand the military-connected children (with parents in Active and Reserve components) actually make up a small percentage of the total student population. This goes back to the need for strong local partnerships.

CHART 4: Comparison of Top 10 States for Army Presence

State	Pass State Test to Graduate?	Promotion Exams?	Right to Work State?	# of Public School Students	# of School Districts /LEAS	Total Military K-12 Students	% Military Connected of Total Students
TX	yes	yes	yes	4,525,394	1035	99,633	2.2%
GA	yes	yes	yes	1,598,461	180	56,505	3.5%
NC	yes	yes	yes	1,416,436	115	58,636	4.1%
KY	no	no	no	679,878	176	30,834	4.5%
VA	yes	no	yes	1,214,472	134	93,603	7.7%
NY	yes	no	no	2,185,581	730	26,340	0.9%
WA	yes	no	no	1,031,985	296	38,770	3.8%
HI	no	no	no	182,818	1	28,390	15.5%
CO	no	no	no	779,826	179	26,185	3.4%
KS	no	no	yes	467,285	300	19,770	4.2%

Shaded areas represent <5% of total population

SOURCES:

For graduation and promotion examination requirements - *Education Week Diplomas Count 2008*. www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2008/06/05/index.html; note: the January 2, 2008 edition of Education Week reports that DE, FL, GA, LA, NC, TX and WI require students to pass examinations to be promoted to the next grade. Applicable grades are often grades 3, 5, and/or 8. Subjects generally include English/reading and/or math.

For states that have Right To Work laws - National Right To Work Legal Defense Foundation, see www.nrtw.org/rtws.htm. The interactive map shows that state's law on Right To Work.

Enrollment numbers come from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) - common core data for 2005-06 school year and state profiles. www.nces.ed.gov/naep3/states.

Consistent with the findings in the Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS), the Army Child and Youth Services data continues to indicate that military children move an average of every 2.9 years, which is three times more frequent than their civilian classmates. Between 2005 and 2013, due in large part to Army Transformation and BRAC, approximately 55,000 Army-affiliated school-aged children will transition from and among CONUS and overseas school systems. Military children and youth may also transition as a result of a Family need or decision, such as the child of a single parent or dual-military parents living with a caregiver, where a parent is deployed, moving to an area near a military treatment facility when a parent is recovering, or deciding not to move to the new duty station when the military parent goes ahead alone (“geographical bachelor”). With repeated or extended deployments, especially in cases with young children, Families may

choose to “return home” rather than remaining at the duty station while a parent is deployed. The reality is military-connected students move from school system to school system about three times more often than other students, and military parents need support and training to play many of the roles of a good school counselor (SETS, iv.).

The Army Secretary and Chief of Staff have directed that the Army align its structure, authorities, resources, roles, and responsibilities for Family programs more effectively and establish goals in the areas of health care, housing, employment, education, and the funding and access to current Family services.

Army Child and Youth Service programs, under the direct control of the military chain of command and administered by the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation organization from installation level through Department of the Army, can be standardized so that the delivery of services is generally consistent and predictable as Soldiers and Families move between Army installations. The Army designated School Transition Services as one of the well-being baseline services for each installation and committed to fully resourcing the school transition function.

Soldiers are accustomed to a uniform set of conditions and standards for every task they encounter. The Soldier Family Action Plan, which will make the Army Family Covenant a reality, invests new levels of resources and support to Army Families designed to provide uniform and consistent services at all Army installations. In signing the Army Family Covenant, the Army leadership committed to improving Family readiness by “ensuring excellence in schools, youth services, and child care.” However, the Army’s policy influence to **ensure excellence** in schools is limited, due to numerous and different educational structure situations, as highlighted in Chapter 1, that a Garrison Commander may encounter.

School Liaison Officer (SLO)

“I also think the best thing the Army did is the School Liaison... there has to be someone who is totally focused on the school and Family. If the Family isn’t happy, the Soldier won’t reenlist.”

Garrison Commander

In response to the recommendations of the 2000 Army Education Summit involving parents, school administrators, students and Garrison Commanders, School Liaison Officers (SLOs) have been hired to “act as the primary advisers to Garrison Command staff on matters relating to schools serving Soldiers assigned to the installation. They work closely with local school personnel to identify and resolve issues that impact transitioning military students, serve as “ombudsmen” between military Families and schools during in/out processing periods, and encourage school systems to become [SETS] MOA signatories.” (School Liaison Transition Support Initiatives for Military-Connected Students, 2008)

The Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command (FMWRC) defines the Garrison Commander and SLO responsibilities for a variety of possible school-related issues as the following:

CHART 5: Army School Liaison Officer's Roles and Responsibilities

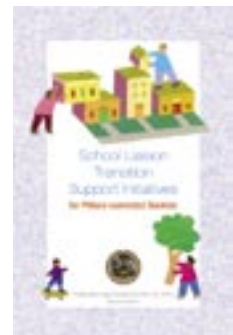
Command Responsibility	Commander/ SLO Responsibility	SLO Responsibility
<p>SLO informs command and coordinates the installation -LEA interchange</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School decisions that impact Families (e.g. redistricting) • MOA with schools to address transition issues • Security issues (weapons, bomb threats, etc.) • Construction/safety issues (i.e. signs on post) • Establish in/out-processing procedures in accordance with the Army's policies and regulations • School bond initiatives • School Transition Response Team • Legislation • Impact Aid • RCI (Housing privatization) • Parent-school conflicts (missed appointments due to mission) 	<p>SLO informs and seeks guidance from command</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Army School Transition Specialist(STS) Policy/ Procedures guidance • Share information on and incidents of: sexual abuse, school violence, and disruptive behavior in school (e.g. hotline, town hall) • Execute the Army's in/out-processing regulation • Growth Installations - establish School Transition Response Team • Deployment support • School transportation 	<p>SLO informs command as needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family support-school conflict issues (i.e. IEP) • Relocation issues • Partnerships in Education • Command initiated actions • Youth education transition issues (credit transfer, graduation) • School use of installation facilities • Emergency Contingency Conditions • Provide feedback to command and school districts on in/out-processing procedures

SOURCE: "School Transition Services 101 - What Commanders Need to Know", Army Child and Youth Services, 2007.



Want more ideas?

Check our FMWRC's great publications that highlight the many initiatives undertaken by the Army and other organizations to "level the playing field."



At the Installation Management Command (IMCOM) Region level, School Transition Specialists, hired as a result of the 2002 Army Education Summit, "help establish an Army infrastructure that facilitates the adoption of reciprocal practices among and across school systems in their assigned geographic areas." School Transition Specialists work closely with installation School Liaison Officers to elevate systemic school transition issues to be addressed from an Army wide policy and/or procedural perspective (ibid).

As supporting research for this handbook, Garrison Commanders were interviewed by the Military Child Education Coalition™ to assess how their School Liaison Officers advised them and assisted local school personnel in identifying school transition issues. In almost every situation, there are at least two levels of supervision between the SLO and the Garrison Commander (Child and Youth Services (CYS) Director, and the Director of Family and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation). To clarify responsibilities, there should be a written local protocol in place signed by the Garrison Commander and/or Installation Commander. This protocol outlines the SLO scope of responsibilities; access to the Commander; methods and frequency of contact with the chain of command; level of interface with local school systems, and military/civilian community agencies; and, circumstances under which the SLO may represent the command/Commander. Additionally, very large Army installations that may serve over 20,000 military-connected children will typically have only one SLO who is responsible for coordination and liaison between multiple LEAs, each with their own local control, culture, and policies. The Army Family Covenant provides funding for specific initiatives. One of those initiatives is to increase the number of SLOs at installations with frequent deployments (OPTEMPO).

Ensuring “excellence” for military Families that frequently transition from installation to installation and school system to school system requires the installation leadership and the leadership of the Local Education Agency (Administration, school boards, etc.) to collaborate and develop partnerships that work to resolve transition issues, facilitate information flow for parents, level the playing field for military children, and ensure rigorous academic curricula and standards that well-serve the military child, not only in their current academic setting, but also in establishing the foundation for academic success regardless of where mobile military children find themselves assigned in the future.

Excellent Schools = Effective Schools

Is there a model to ensure “excellence” in all schools serving military children, and due to the local nature and funding sources of public education, can that model be universally applied? The short answer is probably “no.” However, thirty years of research and applied practice in this area affirms that there are **seven basic principles**¹¹ for effective or high quality schools.

Seven Basic Principles of Highly Effective Schools

1. Clear mission, purpose and unyielding focus on students.
2. High expectations for all students.
3. Measurement and accountability – teaching and learning are monitored and adjusted.
4. Instructional focus – the teaching and learning strategies that are making a difference, and how time is used.
5. Parents matter – parents are included and involved; home-school connections are taken seriously.
6. Safe and orderly schools – school environment and climate, including discipline and expectations for behavior are conducive to teaching and learning. The environment is personal.
7. Leadership – strong school leaders drive the course of a competent, high quality school.

11. An excellent resource for creating more effective schools is the Association of Effective Schools, Inc., www.mes.org

"No matter how different they may appear, good schools share certain characteristics."

Diana Townsend-Butterworth¹²

Ensuring Excellence through Shared Responsibility Using the Seven Principles of Effective Schools

Parents

Military - Local Commanders

Schools - Local Leadership

Leadership and Mission

Understand and support school's mission; play a role in achieving that mission. Parents matter.

Knows the district/campus leadership. Uses systematic and innovative communication means to keep the school system informed. Ensures horizontal communication links are employed and effective.

Principal is instructional leader - communicates mission to staff, parents, and students. Administrators set the example and establish a climate of trust.

Goals and Expectations for Success

Parents are invited to provide feedback on the transition processes. PTA members welcome new Families to the schools.

Partners with local school district on joint professional development.

Establishes a robust professional development program that focuses on transition, mobility, and deployments.

Instructional Focus

Involved parents are the single most important thing a school must have to help students learn.

Reviews state standards.

Accountability

Academic expectations; attendance; participate in parent-teacher conferences.

Establishes an effective in/out-processing policy; encourage participation in parent-teacher conferences.

Frequent measurement of progress, using a variety of assessment tools.

Safe Atmosphere and Environment

Be aware of student handbook and disciplinary policies.

Supports Adopt-A-School/ Partners In Education program; provides Soldiers to mentor/ tutor at-risk students.

Establishes safe and orderly environment; climate is conducive to teaching/learning - not oppressive.

12. "Ten Common Denominators of Effective Schools," Effective School Research, www.spotsylvania.k12.va.us/tms/ktower/schoolresearch.htm

Military Staff - SLOs

Schools - Campus Staff

Keeps military commanders informed about issues impacting school system. Effectively communicates installation priorities.

Available to students and parents - encourages them to share ideas and concerns. Provides welcoming and support programs for transitioning Families.

Assists schools in identifying transition issues.

Sufficient time allocated for instructing essential content and skills. Family conferences rather than open houses.

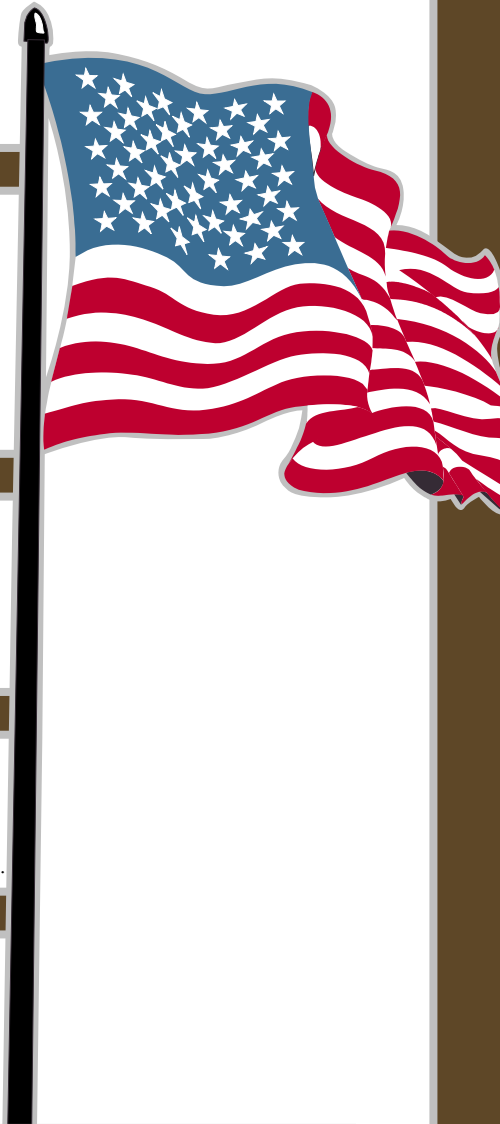
Activities are planned and teacher-directed. Teachers are enthusiastic and interested; teachers and students are engaged.

Ensures installation/campus/district Web sites have accurate information. Enforces in/out-processing policies.

Results of assessments are used to improve student performance and instructional programs.

Be aware of and support school district disciplinary policies.

Classrooms are safe, orderly, and conducive to learning.



CHAPTER 3: THE “TACTICAL” LEVEL - INSTALLATIONS & THEIR SUPPORTING SCHOOL DISTRICTS

“What we have here is... failure to communicate.”

Strother Martin – *Cool Hand Luke*, 1967

Things You Should Know:

- Cultural differences between educators and the military are the nexus of the frustration and aggravation experienced by military-connected Families and educators dealing with military Families.
- Respectful relationships, effective communications, and local partnerships make a profound difference in responding effectively to the needs of children.
- The Guiding Principles (SETS MOA) for addressing the issue of transitioning military students and the Army Family Covenant are mutually supporting documents.
- Access to accurate, timely, consistent, easily understandable information is important for military Families in the pre-arrival phase.
- Families will form an opinion prior to arrival – some based on facts, others on anecdotal evidence and perceptions of their friends.

“...the relationship between military installations and the school districts that serve their Soldiers’ children have profound consequences for the academic and social success of those children.”

Dr. Phillip “Uri” Treisman, SETS, 2001, p.IV



3.1: The Pre-Arrival Phase

In order to translate “theory into practice,” a simulated installation (Fort Redoubt) and its supporting public school system (Dauntless School District) will serve as “a” model to examine the critical components for local partnerships that “ensure excellence” in the school systems serving military-connected Families. The names and events are fictitious, but the scenario provides practical suggestions for using basic principles to build the foundations that result in effective partnerships.

23 March

COL Fred Reddy was officially notified of his selection for Garrison Command of Fort Redoubt, with a change of command scheduled in 16 months. Married with a high school daughter in her sophomore year and a son in the 7th grade (with special needs), Fred knew that among the myriad of things he would need to assess in the coming months was the local education system (Dauntless School District), supporting the Soldiers and Families of Fort Redoubt. Having never been assigned to Redoubt, he was unable to draw from his personal experiences to frame his analysis.

Fred Reddy’s problem is that, due to a lack of personal experience with the Dauntless School System, he would have to gather a list of facts and assumptions - both as a parent of two children who would be attending Dauntless schools and as the future Garrison Commander responsible for addressing the school transition issues of the nearly 7,000 military Families assigned to Fort Redoubt.

Quantitative and qualitative research on military-connected school transitions spanning a 10-year period indicates that military parents want access to accurate, timely, consistent, easily understandable information about their school choices prior to their arrival at a new military assignment. That information includes:

- Whom to contact
- Gauge of traditional public school indicators
 - ~ current test scores comparing student performance as documented by assessments
 - ~ their friends’ perceptions comparing results to student achievement in other states or school systems perceived as an exemplary benchmark
 - ~ access to special needs programs
 - ~ access to gifted and talented or Advanced Placement courses
 - ~ environment: school safety, school conditions and climate, especially academic expectation, acceptance, and conditions for learning
- For parents of children with special needs: to avoid slowdowns in placement and services, the sending school/parents can organize the Individual Education Plan (IEP) well in advance

“Where you live dictates where you go to school.”

Garrison Commander

Checking Out a Potential School

CHART 6: Resource Checklist for Assessing Potential Schools

Resource Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	Check the Garrison Web site for access to links about the local schools.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have the installation's supporting LEAs signed the SETS MOA? Is there a Local Action Plan? When was it last updated?
<input type="checkbox"/> State Information	www.MilitaryChild.org Click on "Education Resource Center" tab and select a state. Information is available on assessment testing (calendar, overview, results, and samples); counselor, curriculum, and state standards; state Department of Education link; district and campus directors; ESL/ bilingual information; gifted and talented programs; graduation/promotion requirements; No Child Left Behind; parents; planning for college; pre-school/ kindergarten; special education; state/district/campus report cards; and students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	www.MilitaryChild.org Click on the "Military Parent Information" tab and select SchoolQuest™ - meaningful facts, resources, and transition advice about area schools that serve the military community; also provides an on-line resource library for Families in transition.
<input type="checkbox"/>	District and Campus data - check the district Web site for student achievement data.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other resources: www.greatschools.net/ ; www.militarystudent.dod.mil/ ; www.schoolmatters.com/ ; www.pickyparent.com/ ; schooldatadirect.com .

Military-connected parents are likely to be knowledgeable about the gaining installation school system. Partnerships and solid communications between the installation and the supporting school district will be a large determinant on whether that knowledge is fact or myth, reality or perception.

"...the very real worries were caused by a lack of information about the new school's culture, environment, and expectations."

SETS, p.99

3 April

Freda Reddy (Fred's spouse) learned from her close friend Peggie, that the Dauntless School District had been rated ★★★★★ by GreatSchools.net (see page 27). Peggie's Family had been assigned to Fort Redoubt six years ago, and recalls that many parents were very satisfied with the Dauntless schools. She encouraged Freda to check them out for herself.

The Information Challenge - Web Accuracy

Unlike traditional information sources such as books, professional publications, etc. no one is required to approve informational content before it is made public on the internet. Therefore, military-connected parents researching their school alternatives at the new installation must be able to assess the accuracy, timeliness, and usefulness of information from the internet as part of their decision making process. A useful tool for this task is **CARS**:

- **C**redibility
- **A**ccuracy
- **R**easonableness
- **S**upport

Watch For

Watch Out For

Credibility

Credentials, education/experiences; provides contact information; level of peer review

Anonymity; spelling/grammar errors signaling carelessness

Accuracy

Timeliness; comprehensiveness; who is the intended audience? For what purpose?

Undated information; one-sided; vague generalities

Reasonableness

Fairness; objectivity; moderateness; consistency

Intemperate tone or language; overclaims; obvious conflicts of interest

Support

Sources cited and corroboration of the information

Statistics with no source; absence of source information when it is needed; lacking corroboration

SOURCE: Robert Harris, "Evaluating Internet Research Sources," www.virtualsalt.com (12 March 2001)

* The GreatSchools.net Web site states "our mission: to improve K-12 education by inspiring parents to get involved" and to help parents choose the best schools by providing comprehensive profiles for more than 120,000 schools nationwide including:

- exclusive ratings
- powerful search and compare tools
- parent reviews
- helpful advice

School ratings are determined by dividing an overall weighted (based on population) average test scores for the school compared to the same grade level in the entire state, and posted comments from parents, administrators, and students. The Web site states that a state-to-state

comparison cannot be made because “different states administer different standardized tests” and “GreatSchools.net does not check their accuracy or verify the reviewer’s identities - use your discretion when evaluating these reviews.”

The intent is not to single out a Web site as a good or bad source, but rather to caution military-connected parents and students to be able to apply some standard of credibility, accuracy, reasonableness, and support to the information and data displayed for a specific school.



Caution

In 2000, the Chicago Tribune reported that the Realtor.com Web site supplied false data about school performance.

10 April

During the Dauntless School Board meeting, the Fort Redoubt Garrison Commander informs the Board that his replacement, COL Reddy, has been named. After attending the Army War College, he would report to Fort Redoubt in June of the following year. The School Board president stated she was eager to meet COL Reddy, and hoped he would continue the strong partnership with Dauntless. Dauntless Superintendent, Ed Yucater smiled, and nodded.

Using the resources checklist to research the Dauntless School System in advance, Fred Reddy determined:

As a Military Parent	As a Future Garrison Commander
There is no school choice; all Fort Redoubt high schoolers attend Beauregard HS.	The dropout rate on the District Report Card is higher than the state average.
Beauregard HS offers some math and science Advanced Placement courses, but no dual-credit arrangement with the local community college.	Dauntless signed the “Guiding Principles for Addressing the Issues of Transitioning Military Students” Memorandum of Agreement in 2003.
During parent-teacher conferences, Fort Redoubt policy is that the Soldiers’ place of duty is the conference.	A bond election to renovate three schools and build one new elementary and middle school was defeated in 2005.
An IEP from the sending school system is required to determine what special needs can be accommodated.	Fort Redoubt’s outprocessing policy requires Soldiers with school-aged children to outprocess with the SLO.
Athletic teams for the fall are normally determined during spring and summer practices, but slots are kept open for incoming students.	The Fort Redoubt Garrison Commander is invited as an ex-officio member of the Dauntless School Board.

16 May

Fred receives an e-mail from the Fort Redoubt Garrison Commander suggesting that Fred may wish to visit Fort Redoubt en route to the War College, check out the new housing being built under the RCI initiative, and perhaps meet the local mayor and some other key individuals he would be working with as Garrison Commander.

17 May

Fred responds to the e-mail, and asks for the Garrison Commander's assessment of the Dauntless School System, and if he had any advice that his Family should consider to make their transition easier.

17 May

The response reads: "Fred, can't be of too much help to you as I don't have kids. Have heard that the schools are generally okay – about average for most installations our size. The School Board president is a great supporter of our Soldiers, but the Superintendent (Ed Yucater) seems disengaged. When I suggest some fixes the District needs to make in preparation for the new infantry BCT that will be coming in the next couple of years, I'm not sure he is listening. I will have the SLO pull together some information and send it to you."

3.2: The Arrival Phase - Support Systems are Key

The transition for a Soldier from one military installation to another is a relatively routine and uniform process. Conversely, the transition for military-connected children from one school system to another is neither routine nor uniform, as indicated in the following chart:

CHART 7: Transition Comparisons

Soldiers	Students
Fairly standardized in/out-processing	Fairly non-standardized in/out-processing
Military records are easily interpreted.	Records are not easily interpreted.
Rank and professional affiliation remain the same.	School rank, GPA, and allegiance could change; loss of scholarship opportunities; top 10 percent
Generally a sponsor is appointed and resources are available to assist in transition.	Generally has no sponsor and few resources

SOURCE: Adapted from *Secondary Education Transition Study*, pg. 4

Army Regulation 608-8-101 requires that each Garrison establish procedures that ensure Soldiers with school-aged children connect with Garrison SLOs to provide timely notification to local schools upon arrival and prior to departure. The intent is to help ensure parents provide timely notification to local schools upon arrival and departure for permanent change of station.

Transition Challenges

When moving to a new installation, military connected children can experience some significant school transition challenges. The research¹³ tells us that mobile children at every level face significant obstacles. However in general, the older the child, the more difficult he or she will have with the move because of the increasing importance of the peer group.

Difficult school adjustments: potential consequences¹⁴

For the Military-connected Family	For the Army
Problems settling into school results in stress and anxiety for the Family.	Stress related to school adjustment impacts the service member's assimilation into the unit.
Poor reputation of a school or district (warranted or not) results in assignment reluctance.	Challenges arise filling personnel assignments.
Reputation of schools (positive or negative) may cause a choice to live outside of immediate community; Family is isolated from the military community.	Long commutes may impact response time and productivity; Family is isolated from the Army community.
Frustrated parents can lead to tensions between the post and the community; disenfranchised and resentful Families view themselves as without a voice in the local decision-making process about schools.	Reluctance of the schools and community to respond to the needs of the military Families adversely impacts community-post relationships; resentful school and community members are less willing to consider support of the military a vital "way of doing business."
The prospect of a high school move may cause choices that separate Families; examples: leaving the teen behind to complete school, the service member moving alone, separation from the service.	Problems in the workplace may occur; increased chance of isolation causing Family problems; force strength implications come into play if, as a result, the Soldier leaves the Army.

13. The UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>) "Transitions: Turning Risks into Opportunities for Student Support" is an excellent compendium of research focused on Elementary and Middle School transitions including "Adolescence, School Transitions, and Prevention: a Research-based Primer," Berliner, 1993; "The Transition to Middle School," D. Schumacher, 1998 from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. See also "Children and Family Moves," American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/fmlymove.htm Additionally, GAO/HEHS-94-45, "Elementary School Children: Many Change Schools Frequently, Harming Their Education," February 1994 addressed concerns expressed by Congress between educational performance and mobility. The Military Child Initiative of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (www.jhsph.edu/mci) on contract with the Department of Defense provides useful resource links concerning mobility and transition.

The Military Child Education Coalition™ "Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS)" was the principal source for high school data. 14. The content of this chart is drawn from the 2001 RAND publication *Impact Aid and the Education of Military Children*. The information discussed on p. 1 of the RAND report (Richard Buddin, Brian P. Gill, and Ron W. Zimmer) was modified and added to using the experiences of MCEC® and the lessons learned from SETS.

Transition challenges: grades K-12

Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Kindergarten and 1st grade entrance ages and other prerequisites vary.	The school size is significantly larger, academic standards are more rigorous, social circles and peer pressures change more profoundly than at any other time in life.	Transfer and Interpretation of Academic Records - added time/effort; enrollment delays; possibility of re-taking courses
A new school is an unpredictable environment; establishing a school routine early in the transition may be the only consistent, stable, and orderly factor for a young child.	Student transition worries: getting to class on time; finding lockers; keeping up with “materials”; finding lunchrooms and bathrooms; getting on the right bus; getting through crowded halls; remembering which class to go to next.	Non-traditional school calendars and schedules add to transition complexities and feelings of disorientation.
“Old” students may not seek new friends, resulting in an inability to connect for the new student. It may not be “cool” to speak up.	For adolescents, participation in extracurricular activities often defines who they are.	Graduation Requirements must be understandable and coherent; implications of high-stakes exit/end of course exams
Children may be exposed to curriculums that vary greatly across schools; if they move in the middle of the school year, they may have difficulty catching up by the end of the year. Records transfer is important.	The transition is accompanied by intellectual, moral, social, emotional, and physical changes taking place in at least part of the transition group at any given time.	Extracurricular Participation - eligibility requirements for participation differ by state and by district, and often lack flexibility at the local level - may contribute to uneven opportunity.
Often due to lack of staff, a late entrant with no records is often placed in an “age appropriate” class without an assessment. In schools with high mobility rates, teachers rarely used student records to place children.	Empirical evidence suggests that middle schools tend to stress relative ability and competition among students more, and effort and improvement less, leading to a decline in academic efficacy.	Social and Emotional Needs - are one of the most robust challenges facing military children. Research indicates it takes about 2 weeks to adjust to a new environment.

CHAPTER 4: PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN ARMY INSTALLATIONS AND THEIR SUPPORTING SCHOOL DISTRICTS

“...you cannot teach who you do not know.”

SETS p. 109

Things You Should Know:

- Garrison Commanders need to assure Superintendents that they don't want to take over the schools, but do want to help address the issues faced by military students.
- Installations and School Districts who participated in the 2005 Army Education Summit should have a jointly developed school transition action plan for a “Ready Community.”
- The only thing constant is change.



“The main thing is communicating and breaking down any barriers that might exist.”

Garrison Commander

Chapter 3 clearly highlighted that the transition from one installation and school to the next presents unique challenges for Soldiers, Families/children, Garrison Commanders, and School Superintendents/Administrators. Assuming that individually and collectively, everyone's objective is to reduce the known transition challenges of military-connected children and provide the highest quality of education available, there are multiple ways to address the problem. Working separate and individually — each within their own “lane” of responsibility — may provide short-term relief, but is not an effective or efficient solution to the problem.

The Secondary Education Transition Study highlighted that respectful relationships between the military installation and the school system can make a profound difference in the ability of both organizations to respond effectively to the needs of military children (SETS, p. 109). Given the differences in education structures; the inherently local nature of public education in the United States; the differences in size, mission, and composition of each military installation; and the fact that the needs of every military-connected child confronting the challenges of a school transition are uniquely different, there is no universal model, or “quick fix” that will work in every situation.

14 July

Fred Reddy reviewed the information provided him by the Fort Redoubt SLO on the Dauntless School System. While the Superintendent had signed the SETS MOA, there was no Local Action Plan to address transition issues. This concerned Fred, knowing that Fort Redoubt was a gaining installation.

The foundation for partnerships between Army installations and their supporting school districts is a local action plan that has been jointly developed. As challenges are identified, effective communication and a logical process to address problems is important. Garrison Commanders have been taught from their earliest professional military education how to apply the military decision making process to solve problems:

- Gather the Facts and Assumptions
- Determine the Mission
- Develop Alternative Courses of Action
- Analyze Courses of Action for Suitability, Feasibility, and Acceptability
- Recommend a Course of Action
- Supervise the Execution

One constraint that can be classified as a universal reality (for both military installations and school systems) is that there will never be enough resources available individually to ensure success in the mission to educate military children. However, when Garrison Commanders and School Superintendents resolve to communicate effectively and partner to pool their available resources, not only is efficiency and effectiveness increased, the synergy can result in successes that neither thought

possible. The evidence suggests that a meaningful commitment to Partnerships between installations and their school systems greatly reduces the friction and frustrations of school transitions.

There is no “one” way, or “the correct” way to form effective partnerships. Rather than propose “best practices” that may work extremely well in one location and situation, yet may fail in another location, the following are “promising practices” that have proven effective and can be modified to appropriately address the challenges Garrison Commanders and School Superintendents find in their unique situation.

4.1 Promising Practices and Opportunities

Transition challenges are not a new phenomenon, and military installations and their supporting school systems have partnered for 10-plus years to address those challenges. Rather than “reinvent the wheel” or attempt to solve problems in isolation, the following list of “promising” partnership practices and opportunities might be a good starting point.

Opportunities for School Leaders

Opportunities for Garrison Commanders

Communication

- Meet the Garrison and Mission Commanders of the installation.
- Encourage a district policy that makes the Garrison Commander an ex-officio school board member.
- Invite Garrison Commander to attend district administration meetings.
- Provide an education acronym list to the Garrison Commander.
- Share the District’s strategic plan with the Garrison Commander - highlight pertinent policies, “hot spots,” etc.
- Send weekly e-mail “blasts” to Superintendents.
Lackland ISD “e-news” www.lacklandisd.net
- Become familiar with the governance structure of the school districts around the installation.
Fort Lewis SLO “Smart Book” www.lewisfamilyfocus.com/SLO.htm
- Schedule regular meetings with the superintendents of the surrounding districts to develop common understanding of the issues.
*Fort Hood 2020
Fort Sill/Lawton, Public Schools Military Child Committee*
- Offer new teacher professional development orientation to the military lifestyle and Family challenges during deployments.

Reciprocity in Records Transfer, Graduation Requirements, etc.

- Sign and act on MOA Guiding Principles.
- Develop district reciprocity agreements for records transfer, graduation requirements, etc.
- Contact sending schools (gaining installation) to discuss plans for transferring records and information.
- Develop a Local Action Plan to address specific/ local military-connected transition issues.
Fort Bragg/Cumberland County, Public Schools Local Action Plan <http://sss.usf.edu>
- Encourage the school district to sign the SETS MOA.
- Offer assistance to the school district when proposing requests for changes or services.
- Ensure support and installation representation on the committee developing the Local Action Plan.

Opportunities for School Leaders

Opportunities for Garrison Commanders

Financial

- Communicate with the installation short-term and long-term district financial plans.
- Collaborate with the installation for Impact Aid Survey response encouragement.
- Inform the installation when Impact Aid surveys are being distributed.
- Understand the specific financial challenges large gains and losses of military-connected children have on school districts.
- Become familiar with the Department of Education Impact Aid Program:
www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oes/impactaid/links.html
rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1272/
- Get 100% of the military-connected (Soldiers and Civilians) Families to complete the Impact Aid survey each year.

Accurate, Consistent Information

- Check school and installation Web sites for accuracy.
- Link to the installation.
- Link to SchoolQuest™.
- Participate in efforts to communicate with military Families – e.g. town hall meetings.
- Check school and installation Web sites for accuracy.
- Link to the school district.
- Link to SchoolQuest™.
- Include schools in town hall meetings, etc.

School Choices

- Inform Garrison Commanders and parents about the state-level policies and regulations regarding alternative (magnet, charter, home-schooling, etc.) school options available.
- Collaborate on planning and projections.
- Assure that accurate information about school transfer policies and/or school choice is communicated.
- Participate in school planning and provide current info for projections.

Housing

- Consider policies that allow military Families in temporary housing to attend schools in the same attendance zone as where their permanent housing will be.
- Share zoning policies/regulations with Garrison.
- Inform Superintendent about future plans for on-post housing (privatization, locations, etc.).
- Share school policies and other information with the housing office.

School Registration

- Develop user-friendly policies to accommodate large gains.
- Consider on-line registration.
- Consider summer registration opportunities and/or centers.
- Consider an installation policy that mandates Soldiers with school-age children out-process with the school district.
- Communicate with housing, MWR, and CDC about school registration and requirements.

Opportunities for School Leaders

Opportunities for Garrison Commanders

Parental Involvement

- Ensure an active duty Soldier/Family member is included in the site-based decision committee (or similar organization).
- Consider hiring a school district liaison to the installation.
El Paso ISD Military Liaisons:
www.episd.org/_schools/mil.php
- Provide an Adopt-A-School/Partners In Education Program; institutionalize opportunities for parents and military units to be invited to visit and participate in local schools.
- Provide tutoring programs for children of deployed parents.
- Promote school-home partnerships.

Facilities

- Explore/create options for facilities usage with the Garrison Commander (e.g. summer off-hours use).
- Consider where facility sharing might be possible between the installation and the school district (before/after school programs, homework centers, athletic activities).

Other resources on Installation-School District partnerships:

- www.MilitaryChild.org/coalition/secondary-education-transition-study (Best and Promising Practices)
- www.militarystudent.dod/mil (click on “Military Leaders” — “Working with local schools” — “Installation and school partnerships”)

4.2 Special Circumstances

A. Growth Installations

Unlike previous Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) rounds of the 1980s and 1990s, which were characterized by the closing of Army installations both in CONUS and overseas in conjunction with a reduction in the size of the Army, BRAC 2005 brings a significantly new challenge to school districts. The Army is undergoing its most dramatic transformation of its force structure since World War II. Layered on top of the Army Transformation initiative is the return of a large number of Soldiers (and their Families) from overseas bases to CONUS installations, (“Grow the Army”), which will add 65,000 Soldiers to the Army’s end-strength, as well as BRAC.

The impact is most pronounced on 11 states, where military installations are either currently experiencing, or planning for, significant growth. The American School Board Journal assesses that school districts in those states face the challenge of accommodating more than 75,000 new students by the year 2011. The Army’s decision to privatize on-post Family Housing that is governed by 50-year Development Plans, means that the Army cannot simply add more on-post Family housing, and the majority of Soldiers at growth installations will elect to live off-post. The impact on schools has broadened to districts that have not normally been impacted in the past as a result of BRAC. While there is no shortage of facts and reasonable assumptions regarding numbers of new

Soldiers/Families and the timeframes when they will arrive at the installation, it is extremely difficult to predict how many new Soldiers will ultimately live within the boundaries of the school districts bordering the growth installations. When an installation has numerous supporting school districts, it becomes even more problematic for Superintendents, Administrators, and School Boards to rationally plan for future growth. From the Superintendent’s perspective, 20 to 30 projected new students in one grade level equate to at least one new classroom; 300 new students could require an entire new school. The challenge for school districts is not so much getting it right, but to ensure they don’t get it absolutely wrong. Funding, particularly federal Impact Aid, is appropriated within set timeframes (normally the year following the data submission), and mid-year/mid-cycle gains may not be funded until well after the arrival of new students.

CHART 9: Working Formula for Projecting Students

Based on 6-year Army demographic averages, the following high-level modeling assumptions can be used to calculate the projected number of new students associated with a gaining installation:

- 48 percent (0.48) of Soldiers have children.
- Married Soldiers have an average of 1.6 children.
- 63 percent (0.63) of Army children are school age.

$$\frac{\text{_____}}{\text{(# of new Soldiers)}} \times 0.48 = \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{(Soldiers with children)}} \times 1.6 = \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{(# of children)}} \times 0.63 = \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{(# of K-12 children)}}$$

Grade	Percent*	Age
K-1st	20%	5-6
2nd-3rd	18%	7-8
4th-5th	17%	9-10
6th-7th	15%	11-12
8th-9th	13%	13-14
10th-11th	10%	15-16
12th	7%	17-18

* Rounded assumption to 100%

Other Community Factors to Consider in Modeling:

- Types of Units at the Installation
- School System History, Trends (Cohort Survival)
- Pre-K and other Special Programs
- School Organization and Feeder Patterns

Other: _____

Participants in the 2005 Army Education Summit approached issues associated with changing military populations (both increases and decreases) within a framework of a “Ready Community.” A Ready Community:

- Has a viable local action plan with:
 - ~ Measurable outcomes
 - ~ Systems designed to improve the transition (entering or exiting) and education experience
- Has ongoing systems for information sharing, tracking assumptions, and updates to the local action plan.
- Considers the SETS guiding principles to bridge (school district-installation) processes and procedures.
- Has a logistics plan for facilities, staffing, services to be in place; if the installation is down-sizing, the school district has a viable plan to sustain the quality of the education experience.
- Collaborates in developing information systems to communicate transition information with incoming parents.

The critical components of Ready Community partnerships are:

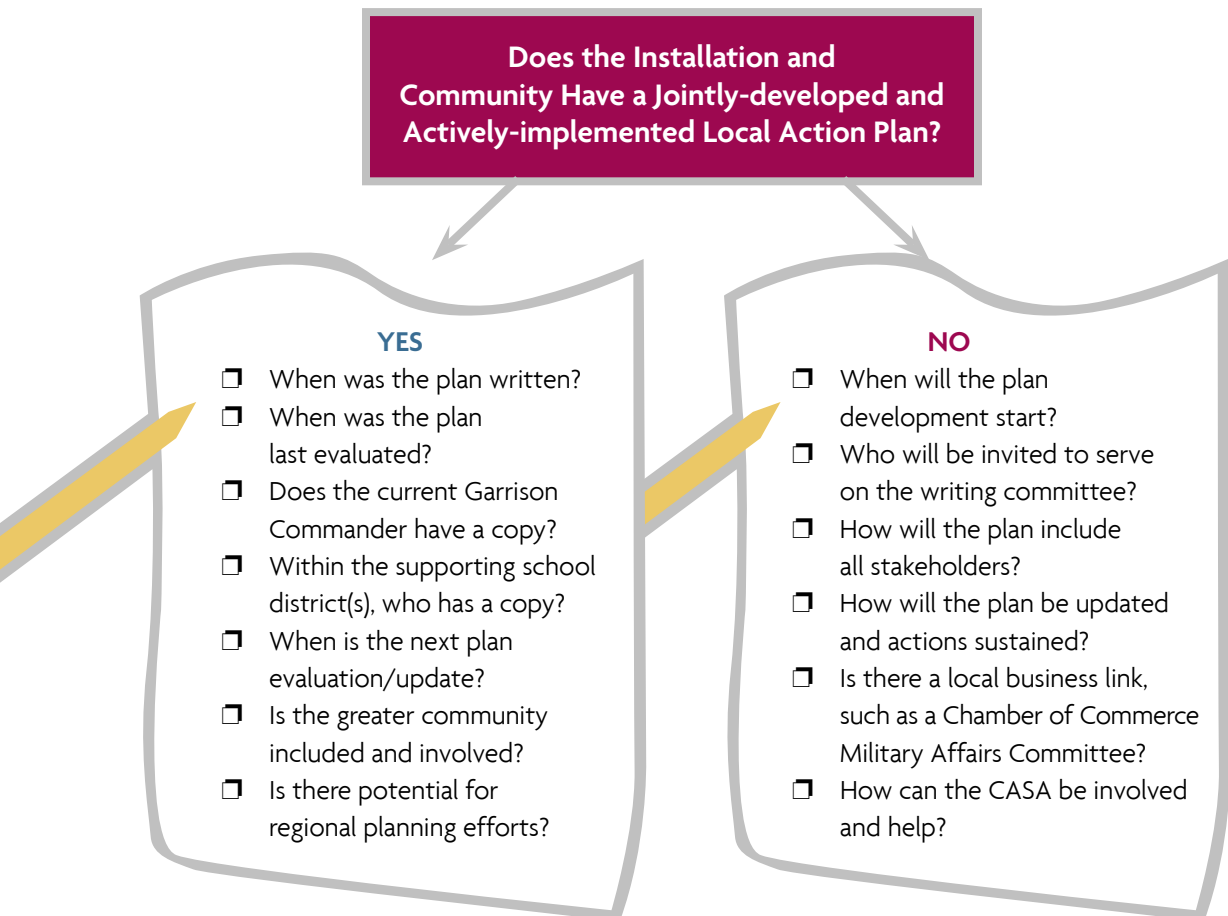
- Senior leadership (installation and school district) providing:
 - ~ Vision
 - ~ Standards
 - ~ Lessons learned
 - ~ Support/collaboration
- Shared responsibility: installation - schools - parents.
- Evaluation and input from stakeholders.
- A strong, viable, Adopt-A-School relationship.
- Ongoing professional communications.
- Jointly developed (military and educational) systems focused on the transition of children with special needs.
- Access to data, inclusiveness, and sustaining structures to provide accountability.
- Systems for assessing success.
- Close relationships between educators and the installation SLO (identify and resolve transition issues), the Regional STS (commonality and reciprocity in-state and within the region), and Child and Youth Services (programs).



Remember

Include and accommodate children with special needs and those enrolled in special programs in your joint planning.

A common theme for ensuring a “Ready Community” and building community partnerships is the existence of a meaningful Local Action Plan, and if one exists, there are procedures for keeping it relevant and viable, especially when situations that impact the supporting school districts occur. The following flow chart provides a quick way to assess the community’s Local Action Plan:



“Get to know those folks, and get to know them in terms of establishing a relationship so it’s more than just going out to a formal meeting, but actually inviting them out for coffee, doing a lunch, just sitting down and getting to know each other personally, because the more you establish yourself as a relationship, the more trust you establish with them.”

Superintendent

B. Impacts of Deployments - *Living in the New Normal*

The Global War On Terrorism has intensified and placed new demands on Soldiers, Families, and specifically their children, resulting in complicated circumstances due to the military lifestyle. The loss of a deployed parent compounds the stress even further. Schools provide a safe and stable setting for children who are experiencing emotional difficulties associated with this “New Normal.”

There are many ways that school districts can work with both the installation and military Families to help children weather these challenges. Below are some suggested ideas¹⁵:

1. **Keep the lines of communication open.** Educators are a part of a child’s support team. Teachers need to ask about changes they observe in the child, and parents need to let teachers know about situations that might affect the child.
2. **Limit disruptions to normal routines.** Continuity is a key factor for a child experiencing trauma, loss, or grief and a predictable schedule can be comforting.
3. **Talk about the changes.** Different ages and children with special needs require different amounts of information, perhaps communicated in a different way.
4. **Discuss feelings.** Children are perceptive, and it confuses them if an adult denies being sad or worried. The child will discuss feelings in his own way, at his own time.
5. **Share existing resources.** The military, communities, and especially schools have sources of support for Families.
6. **Help children cope - don’t pity them.** Honor their courage and sacrifices and involve them in creating coping mechanisms that work for them.
7. **Provide extra support when it is possible.** Don’t confine support to only that period just after the change in a child’s life.

The Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, established by the Department of Defense in 1987 to address concerns about the psychological, behavioral, and health care consequences from exposure to Weapons of Mass Destruction and common accidents amongst military and civilian populations, has recently expanded its mission to include research on the consequences of disaster and trauma. Their research has found that real time communication about the home life transmitted via the internet by Web cam may prove as stressful for the Soldier - compounded by their inability to “fix” problems at home - as accounts of the war are for the Family. The Center’s Web site (www.center-forthestudyoftraumaticstress.org) has a range of resources and fact sheets¹⁶ specifically tailored for teachers as well as Families dealing with trauma and the stress of deployments and war.

15. “Blanketing Military Children with Security,” Stephanie Surlis, *On The Move*, Autumn 05, Volume 3/Issue 4, Military Child Education Coalition”.

16. Specific fact sheets that may be useful resources include: “Teachers Helping Students: Listening and Talking,” Understanding Post Deployment Stress Symptoms: Helping Your Loved Ones”, and “Stress Management for Parents.”

C. What the Military Child Education Coalition™ Offers in Partnership with the Army

The Military Child Education Coalition™ is a non-profit, world-wide organization that identifies the challenges that face the highly mobile military child, increases awareness of these challenges in military and educational communities, and initiates and implements programs to meet the challenges. MCEC®'s goal is to level the educational playing field for military children wherever they are located around the world and to serve as a model for all highly mobile children.

MCEC®'s role is to help Families, schools, and communities be better prepared to support children during these frequent moves and difficult - and sometimes traumatic - times in the life of military Families. The Military Child Education Coalition™ is working to solve the challenge of helping schools and military installations deliver accurate, timely information to meet transitioning parent and student needs, and in the development and education of children from military Families.

In partnership with the Army's Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command (FMWRC), the Military Child Education Coalition™ conducts a series of professional development institutes on or near Army installations around the world to enhance the training and awareness of the transition issues military-connected children face for installation Child and Youth Services personnel, and counselors and administrators of the school districts supporting Army installations. Institutes include:

Transition Counselor Institute™ (TCI™)

- The Transition Counselor Institute™ (TCI™) is primarily held for elementary, middle, and high school guidance professionals, school principals, and installation representatives: School Liaison Officers, Family Support Directors, and Relocation Specialists.
- The Institutes increase in complexity going from Level One (awareness, processes, and networks); to Level Two (deeper understanding - social/emotional needs and the military life); and, to Level Three (master transition counseling - partnerships with the installation).
- The critical importance of the professional counselor in supporting and accommodating the military student in transition is without question. Access to school counselors who understand the needs of the mobile military student and also have the skills to bridge the transition from school to school is currently one of random, localized chance rather than intent.

Special Education Leaders Institute™ (SELI™)

- The Special Education Leaders Institute™ (SELI™) is a series of institutes developed to promote awareness and increase the availability of professional educators who understand the challenges associated with transitioning mobile military-connected students with special needs.
- Approximately 13% of military students are special needs students, compared with 11.5% of all U.S. students. The special education rates in states currently varies from 9% to 16%.
- The purpose of the SELI™ is to support the military-connected, special needs student through understanding, accommodation, processes/procedures and protocols, networking, technologies, and communication.

Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Institute™

- Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Institute™ is primarily held for school educators, especially counselors of all grade levels, and members of the National Guard and Reserves and their Families.
- The primary goal of the Institute is to reach out in a support network to the children of the Army National Guard, Reserve components, and geographically isolated Families through:
 - ~ State Education systems
 - ~ Informed and resourced professional educators
 - ~ A school-based model for training and support
 - ~ State and local partnerships between the schools, military communities, and other organizations

The following Military Child Education Coalition™ “Strategic Initiatives” are in place on many Army installations and in their supporting school districts around the world:

Student 2 Student™ (S2S™) Initiative

- The Student 2 Student™ Initiative (S2S™) meets very real transitioning student needs with:
 - ~ Immediate peer credibility
 - ~ Positive peer relationships
 - ~ Valued information
- Junior Student 2 Student™ (JS2S™) is the middle school program.
- A team from a school campus is trained to return to their home campus to provide leadership in training other students on methods to support students who are transitioning to or from their school. The team is composed of advisors, students, and School Liaison Officers. The focus is student centered, and is student-led with close supervision. The development of student trainers who can return to their home campus for training other peers is critical to the success and credibility of the program.
- For a current list of S2S™ and JS2S™ sites, check the S2S™ tab in the Child and Student Programs button at www.MilitaryChild.org.

Parent to Parent™ Initiative

- The Parent to Parent™ Initiative provides parents with the information and resources they need to be their child’s best advocate for positive school transitions.
- Parent to Parent™ Cadre Teams, primarily military spouses, provide workshops and training to parents on various topics of school transition to include Academic Success, Organizing for Transitions, and Parental Involvement.
- For a current list of Parent to Parent™ sites, check the Parent to Parent™ tab in the Military Parent Information button at www.MilitaryChild.org.

Living In the New Normal: Supporting Children through Trauma and Loss™ (LINN™) Initiative

- The Living in the New Normal™ or LINN™ initiative was developed through collaboration with experts in the fields of trauma and grief, resiliency, health care, and child development sparked by concerns about military children dealing with illness, injury, or death of a parent.
- LINN™ encourages Families to ensure their children have the tools to weather life's storms, fosters homefront efforts to support military children, and provides educators and other concerned adults with information to help them support children during times of uncertainty, trauma, and grief. LINN™'s efforts are predicated on the belief that children are courageous and resilient, and these skills can be strengthened through deliberate encouragement by the adults in their lives.
- LINN™ consists of three key components:
 - ~ Professional Development (LINN™ Institute/LINN™ Practicum)
 - ~ Resources and Research-based References
 - ~ Public Engagement (community training)

SchoolQuest™

- SchoolQuest™ is a safe, secure online resource for military Families. It is organized to allow access to information that the MCEC® has gathered to help parents make decisions on future schools for their children. Based on answers provided to basic questions about your Family and each of your school-age children, SchoolQuest™ will then present — at no cost — meaningful facts, resources, and transition advice to help you find out about the area schools that serve the military community you select. SchoolQuest™ also offers an Online Library that provides resources for Families in transition.

Interactive Counseling Center™ (ICC™)

- The Interactive Counseling Center™ (ICC™) is a Web-based video conferencing system that allows Families and educational counselors to exchange information between sending and receiving schools. The ICC™'s network has now connected schools that are serving the military communities all over the world.
- The ICC™ provides “virtual counseling centers” to ensure transitioning students have a smooth hand-off from one school to another. The system will allow counselors, the student, and the parents to sit in a virtual counseling center and exchange information electronically to and from the sending school and the receiving school.
- For a list of schools with ICC™, click: www.interactivecounselingcenter.org/Locations/.

Additional Military Child Education Coalition™ initiatives can be found on the MCEC® Web site: www.MilitaryChild.org.

CHAPTER 5: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Things You Should Know:

- There is a cultural difference between the local and decentralized public education system and the centralized, standardized, and authoritarian military structure.
- There is a great variance between Army installations on how public education is administered and delivered.
- Accurate, consistent information is the key to decision-making – for installations, school districts, and military-connected parents.
- Deployments and the dynamics of growth due to Army Transformation require effective partnerships between installations and school districts.



The research consistently brings us back to the fundamental conclusion that the Army, Garrison Commanders, school superintendents/school boards, and military-connected parents have a common objective - namely to provide an excellent public education and transition experience for military-connected children. Quality education matters to Soldiers and their Families, and the decisions they make based upon the information they assimilate (some accurate and factual, some anecdotal, some completely inaccurate) in the pre-transition phase significantly impacts their decisions (such as where they will live at their new assignment). Those decisions subsequently impact the installation and the supporting school districts.

Research conducted by the Military Child Education Coalition™, across a wide spectrum of educational topics, has distilled that there are three basic “quality indicators” used by military-connected parents:

1. Student achievement results and indicators
2. Rigorous, meaningful curriculum
3. Information sharing - teacher, campus, district

Student Achievement

Whether it is personal experience, the impact of No Child Left Behind, or some other combination of factors, the most often cited objective indicator of quality and excellent schools is test results. Most likely this involves a comparison of results where they are currently assigned (or some installation they were previously assigned to) and where they are moving to. If parents have questions about the results, or cannot find the information, they will ask. Parents want to know the school’s capacity to achieve its academic goals and how their child will be evaluated.

Rigorous, Meaningful Curriculum

Student achievement **IS** associated with the rigor and challenge of the courses a child takes. Military-connected children need an educational experience that transfers easily without sacrificing rigor. That equates to challenging coursework with clearly articulated and understandable standards that are accepted by the public education system regardless of location and assignment. Due to the post-secondary education implications for the mobile military child, a rigorous academic program is extremely important for high school students and middle school students who will transition into high school during the upcoming two years.

The Military Child Education Coalition™ designed a recommended model for a strong course of high school-level study called the “Academic Passport,” depicted on the next page. This program essentially provides a relatively safe passage while ensuring the student has quality preparation with minimal risk. With a challenging plan with the goal of increasing the probability of on-time graduation, the “Academic Passport” defines a clear academic direction. Making high

grades in a weak program of study may lead to post-secondary consequences. While teachers and guidance counselors provide advice and recommendations, the parent (the constant in the life of the military-connected student) must weigh the selections with careful consideration. Accountability and high stakes exit-level assessments are here to stay, and a rigorous curriculum will enhance the success of the mobile child.

Universal acceptance and transportability are important determinants. For example, at the high school level, the Advanced Placement (AP) program is a de facto “national curriculum.” Some school districts offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) program as early as the elementary level. Dual credit, concurrent enrollment, and “middle college” programs between the school district and local community college offer opportunities for high performing students to sustain a rigorous educational path at their new location.

CHART 10: The Military Child Education Coalition™ “Academic Passport” Recommended Model for a High School Rigorous Course of Study

Core Subjects	Recommended Credits
English/Language Arts	4 Credits ~ take pre-AP and honors courses at 9th/10th grade ~ take courses with a strong base in literature and composition ~ AP, IB, concurrent enrollment courses recommended
Mathematics	4 Credits - take math every year ~ complete Algebra I by end of 9th grade ~ Geometry is important; Algebra II is a must ~ pre-calculus and calculus recommended; statistics an option ~ AP, IB, concurrent enrollment courses recommended
Social Studies	3 Credits ~ U.S. and World History a must; government/civics and economics are important. Humanities courses may be an excellent option ~ AP, IB, concurrent enrollment courses recommended
Science	4 Credits with 3 Lab Sciences ~ Biology, Chemistry, and Physics recommended ~ AP, IB, concurrent enrollment courses recommended
Foreign Language	2 Credits (some states require 3 years for advanced diplomas) ~ look for opportunities to take more of one language, or a second language ~ AP, IB, concurrent enrollment courses recommended
Computer Science	1 Credit ~ be cautious as these courses lack a standard definition

Keep in Mind



There is a misplaced perception that a defined linkage exists between enrollment in the Army's Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) and a school district providing Special Education Programs. In some situations, the two programs may be complementary, but the assumption that special education is automatic for an EFMP child is false.

Special Programs

Beyond test scores, the availability of sustained programs and support structures are an important indicator of quality and excellent schools, particularly for parents with special needs children. Services, eligibility, funding, records requirements, and continuity of programs commonly differ from one location to another. Again, due to local control of public education, military-connected parents should anticipate they will likely have to confront a new system each time they move. A partnership between the installation EFMP manager, SLO, and the school district can help alleviate the challenges.

Access to Gifted and Talented programs, especially at the elementary level is often inconsistent, governed by local rules, policies, and testing dates. Information on the availability and local policies posted on both the installation and school district Web sites about these programs is very effective in removing the "mysteries" for military-connected parents.

Extracurricular programs and activities round out a child's educational experience, and uneven access to these programs was a key issue identified in the Secondary Education Transition Study. Children tend to fit in more easily if they are able to find/make new friends and gain support from teachers and coaches as they make the transition between schools. However, eligibility requirements differ by state and school district, and in those cases where the policies are determined by a state association, the local school district may have little flexibility to determine eligibility. In areas where the local school district does have a degree of flexibility, such as tryout schedules and accepting the National Honor Society transfer status from the sending school (as one example), the inclusiveness of the mobile military child is seen as a "big deal."

"If I had a book that had these topics and I knew the Web had an in-depth answer, it would be great, some kind of collaborative tool."

Garrison Commander

APPENDIX A: INTERSTATE COMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

www.csg.org/programs/ncic/EducatingMilitaryChildrenCompact.aspx

The Council of State Governments (CSG), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Defense Office of Personnel and Readiness, has drafted a new interstate compact that addresses the educational transition issues of children of military Families. Since July 2006, CSG has worked with a variety of federal, state, and local officials as well as national stakeholder organizations representing education groups and military Families to create the new interstate agreement.

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children establishes an independent compact operating authority, the Interstate Commission, which will be positioned to address future interstate problems and issues as they arise. The compact addresses the following, as well as compact enforcement, administration, finances, communications, data sharing, and training:

- Transfer of Records
- Course Sequencing
- Graduation Requirements
- Exclusion from Extra-Curricular Activities
- Redundant or Missed Entrance/Exit Testing
- Kindergarten and First Grade Entrance Age Variances
- Power of Custodial Parents While Parents are Deployed

The compact will activate once ten or more states have adopted the language.

While many states and communities have responded on an ad hoc basis to ease the shift of military children, no comprehensive policy approach exists to improve the long-term educational transitions and outcomes of this constituency.

The governing body of the new interstate compact is the Interstate Commission, composed of representatives from each member state as well as various ex-officio members representing impacted stakeholder groups, the Interstate Commission will provide general oversight of the agreement, create and enforce rules governing the compact's operation, and promote training and compliance with the compact's requirements. Each state will be allowed one vote on compact matters and the Commission will maintain a variety of policy and operations committees. Rather than states operating under an interstate agreement without any national coordination, the Interstate Commission will provide the venue for solving interstate issues and disputes.

The Interstate Commission will have the ability to enforce the provision of the compact and its rules on states and school districts, as a means of going beyond a set of good ideas under which no one feels compelled to abide. With enforcement capacity, the compact can force states and districts to comply for the good of military children.

APPENDIX B: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Deputy Secretaries of the Department of Defense and Department of Education signed a formal memorandum on 25 June 2008, agreeing to work collaboratively to ease the challenges of transitions for military-connected students. The document is the culmination of many years of informal partnering between the agencies. The memorandum of understanding is designed to establish a framework for collaboration between the Department of Defense and the Department of Education to address the quality of education and the unique challenges faced by children of military Families.

In general terms, the memorandum will serve as the basis on which the two departments will work together to strengthen and expand school-based efforts to ease student transitions, and to help military students develop academic skills that will last a lifetime and coping skills to help during deployment periods. The departments will work in concert to address five specific areas:

- quality education,
- student transition and support when a parent is deployed,
- data sharing,
- communication and outreach, and
- resources.

The MOU responds to the relocation of thousands of military-connected children over the next five years as part of base realignment and closure, global rebasing, and other force-structure changes. Of the 1.2 million school-age military students, only 8 percent attend DoD schools; the remaining 92 percent attend America's public, charter, private, independent, and parochial schools across the nation. Some are home-schooled. The rebasing impact provides an opportunity for the Departments of Defense and Education to support local education activities and military communities in pursuit of quality education through the examination and sharing of successful educational options and best practices.

The Deputy Secretary of Defense stated that the memorandum is designed to be broad and comprehensive. It doesn't require nor mandate any actions on the part of any of the participants, especially local school districts. The goal is to provide a framework and focus for collaborative efforts between the departments. The real work of this effort will take place in small working groups which will be made up of representatives from both agencies and the local education community.

The memorandum of agreement can be viewed online at:
www.defenselink.mil/news/d20080625doddoe1.pdf

APPENDIX C:

ARMY EDUCATION SUMMITS - EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

To date, the Army has sponsored three Education Summits to address issues associated with transitions for military-connected children. The key outcomes for each Summit are summarized below.

1. Army Education Summit 2000

The first Education Summit disseminated the results of the Army's Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS). The precursor for SETS began in June 1997 when the Army launched a two-year investigative effort to find out more about the educational issues that impact Army-connected children - what worked and didn't work for military children as they moved and changed schools. A conclusion of this effort was that a structured research study was needed to further examine transition challenges with a specific emphasis on high school students. The Army requested the Military Child Education Coalition™ (MCEC®) to conduct the study. Delegates to the Army Education Summit 2000 (parent Soldiers and spouses, school administrators, students, and Garrison Commanders) recommended:

- a. hiring School Liaison Officers at Army installations,
- b. using reciprocal agreements regarding graduation requirements and exit-level testing between school districts serving large numbers of military children to reduce obstacles to high school graduation, and
- c. improving the transition process for parents with special needs children.

SETS was subsequently published in June 2001.

2. Army Education Summit 2002

The Army's second summit was designed to highlight the progress towards resolving the challenges identified during the 2000 Summit. Major outcomes included:

- a. funding and hiring of School Liaison Officers,
- b. instituting the policy and procedures for high school senior move stabilization,
- c. development of a SLO course and handbook, and
- d. an increase to 200 signatories on the SETS "Guiding Principles for Addressing the Issues of Transitioning Military Students" Memorandum of Agreement.

Delegates recommended:

- a. region-level School Transition Specialists be funded,
- b. establishing a national SETS steering committee and providing a Web forum for MOA signatories, and
- c. producing a teen-to-parent video to educate parents about school transition issues.

3. Army Education Summit 2005: “Communities Working to Improve Student Transitions”

In the wake of the 2005 round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), Army Transformation, and the Global Defense Posture Review, the Army convened Installation and Garrison Commanders, school superintendents, and school board presidents from 25 highly-impacted Army installations in CONUS and Europe to explore the impacts on local communities and schools. The Summit was designed to provide a more complete understanding of the Army’s plans for both growth and loss of Soldiers at these installations, and assist in joint planning to make the installation a “Ready Community” through partnerships and the sharing of promising practices.



4. Army Education Summit 2008

This summit is scheduled for July 2008 and will be the Army’s fourth Education Summit. The focus will be on the goals of the Army Family and Community Covenants to build partnerships that support the strength, resilience, and readiness of Soldiers and Families in ways that promote excellence in the school experience.



APPENDIX D: QUICK CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOL MOVES

From the Parent/Guardian:

- Student's birth certificate
- Student's social security number
- Student's health record (immunizations, etc.)
- Legal documents, as needed
- Proof of residency/Military orders

School Information:

- Address, phone numbers, other contact information
- Course description book/grading scale (if available, for 6th grade and above)
- Copy of the cover or the title page of each textbook
- School profile/handbook
- School Web site (URL)
- Other: _____

School Records:

- Copy of cumulative folder (only the copy mailed between schools is considered official)
- Current schedule
- Report cards
- Withdrawal grades or progress reports
- Test scores (standardized or special programs testing, etc.)
- Other: _____

Special Programs Records, as Appropriate:

- Individual Education Plan (IEP)/Individual Accommodation Plan (504)/gifted program description
- English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual education
- At-risk or other action plans for classroom medications
- Other: _____

Other Documents and Examples:

- Writing samples and other work examples
- Activities records (co-/extracurricular)
- Community service or service learning
- Other work or performance examples
- Academic recognition and competition participation
- Other: _____

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APPENDIX E: WEB SITES REFERENCED IN THIS HANDBOOK

Page	Organization/Agency	URL/Web Address
6	U.S. Army Posture Statement	www.army.mil/aps
10	U.S. Department of Education	www.ed.gov
10	National Center for Education Statistics	www.nces.ed.gov
10	Center On Education Policy	www.ced-dc.org
12	National Association for Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS)	joomla.nafisdc.org
12	Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA)	www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org
13	U.S. Charter Schools	www.uscharterschools.org
13	Public School Review	www.publicschoolreview.com
14	International Baccalaureate Organization	www.ibo.org
17	Personnel & Procurement Statistics (Defense Manpower & Data Center)	www.siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil
18	Education Week Diplomas Count	www.edweek.org
18	National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation	www.nrtw.org
21	Association of Effective Schools	www.mes.org
26	Military Child Education Coalition™ (MCEC®) - Education Resource Center - SchoolQuest	www.MilitaryChild.org www.schoolquest.org
26	Standard & Poors School Matters	www.schoolmatters.com
26	Picky Parent Guide (Private Schools)	www.pickyparent.com
26	Military Homefront	militarystudent.dod.mil
27	GreatSchools	www.greatschools.net
40	Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress	www.centerforthestudyoftraumaticstress.org
49	DefenseLink	www.defenselink.mil/news/d20080625doddoe1.pdf
General Reference:		
	Military OneSource	www.militaryonesource.com

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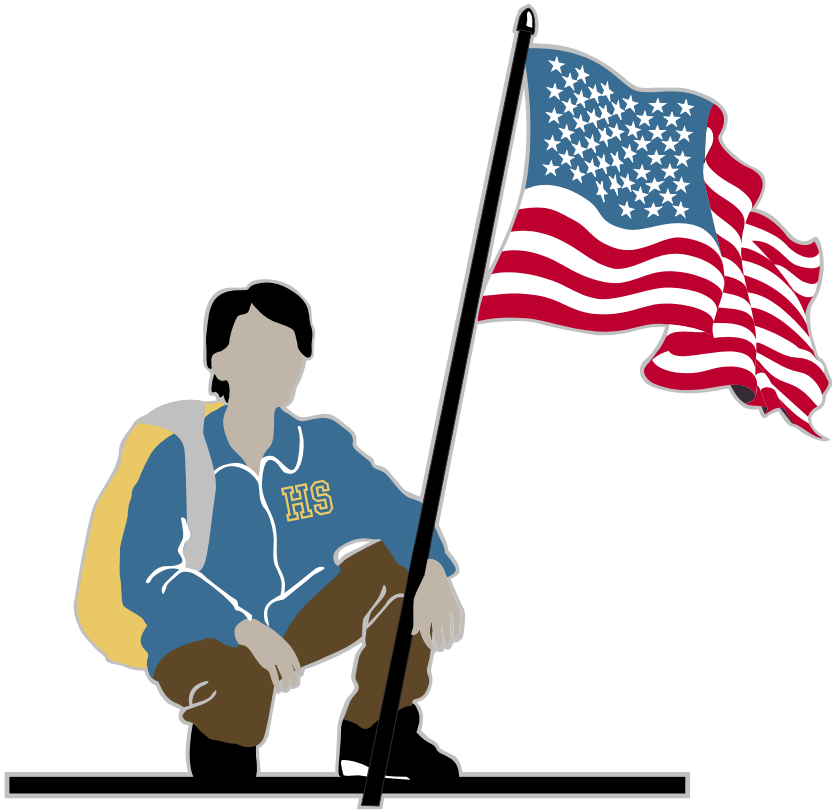
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