



PRESS RELEASE

MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COALITION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Pre-Kindergarten Program for Military Children Passes Texas Legislature, Attracts Participants

Military Parents of Pre-school Children Signing-up for New State-funded Educational Opportunity

Austin, Texas (June 6, 2006) – The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) today hailed the Texas State Legislature for improving education opportunities for pre-school-age children of military personnel.

House Bill 1, the omnibus school funding package passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Rick Perry on May 31st, includes language expanding the eligibility criteria for state-funded pre-kindergarten programs to include the children of active duty military personnel, activated Guardsmen and Reservists, and those service members recovering from injuries sustained in service.

“Because of the unique demands placed on military children by their parent’s service, their kids deserve every opportunity we can provide,” said MCEC’s Chairman of the Board General Thomas A. ‘Tom’ Schwartz (US Army – Retired). “The Texas legislature, especially State Senator Leticia Van de Putte, deserves our thanks for honoring the commitment of America’s military families.”

MCEC helped lead the fight for passage of the measure, working closely with education advocates from the United Way of Texas and national advocate Pre-K Now.

“The Military Child Education Coalition works every day to help military parents provide opportunities for their children,” said Dr. Mary M. Keller, MCEC’s Executive Director. “Because the program also benefits the children of Guardsmen and reservists, any school district in the state may be affected. MCEC is available as a resource to districts that may need assistance in preparation.”

“Already, school districts are seeing a dramatic interest in the new programs,” said Dr. Dave Splitek, Superintendent of the Lackland Independent School District in San Antonio. “Our district has seen great interest from military parents seeking to take advantage of the new eligibility criteria. Today, on our first day of pre-registration, we saw more than 15 newly eligible students were registered. Obviously, this program is urgently needed and wanted.”

The full text of House Bill 1 can be found online at <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>.

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) is a private, non-profit organization addressing the unique academic needs of military children. Working with all of the armed services, parents, and educators, MCEC develops provides programs and timely information designed to ease transitions and deployments. For more information about MCEC and its initiatives to help military children, please visit www.militarychild.org.

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