

ON THE MOVE[®]

the official magazine of  MCEC[®]

A Journey of
Success
Guided by a
Military Student
Consultant

Military Family

Holiday
Traditions

01. OUR MISSION

MCEC supports all military-connected children by educating, advocating, and collaborating to resolve education challenges associated with the military lifestyle.

02. OUR VISION

Every military-connected child is college-, work-, and life-ready.

03. OUR VALUES

MCEC remains committed to meeting our Mission and Vision through collaboration, integrity, relevance, and service.



ACHIEVEMENTS



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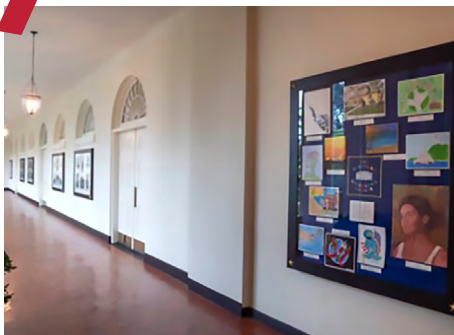
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The views and opinions expressed in articles appearing in On the Move® are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Military Child Education Coalition®.



MCEC's Call for the Arts initiative, dating back to 2002, empowers military-connected children worldwide to express their dreams and experiences through art. This platform has showcased the talent and resilience of thousands of young artists from all over the world and every branch of service.

CALL FOR THE ARTS



THE 2023 CALL FOR THE ARTS INITIATIVE SAW A FEW EXCITING FIRSTS.

We welcomed Kellogg's (now Kellanova) as a partner in supporting military kids' art. Their "Celebrate Military Kids" contest ran concurrently in April with MCEC's Call for the Arts. Winners of Kellogg's contest were submitted to Call for the Arts and resulted in two artists, Gabriel C. with his pencil drawing, "Worth Defending" and Alyssa T. with her painting, "Insert Freedom," finding acclaim in our competition.

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) made a significant contribution by sponsoring winning artists and their families to attend our 25th Anniversary Global Training Summit (GTS) in Washington, DC. This unique experience allowed nine artists to shine and share their pride in their service member parents and youthful joy with hundreds of GTS attendees.

Lucy K., middle school Spotlight award winner, received a standing ovation for her original song, "#Life of a Military Kid." Annabelle C., elementary Spotlight award winner, impressed both with her winning illustration, "All My Favorite Things," and her twirling white dress adorned with her original art, landing her on the cover of MCEC's 2024 calendar.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Kellanova and DAR for recognizing the importance of celebrating young artists and supporting their growth.

MCEC'S 22ND CALL FOR THE ARTS OPENS IN JANUARY 2024.

You can view our 2023 winners now and soon find 2024 information on our website, [MilitaryChild.org/programs/the-call-for-the-arts](https://militarychild.org/programs/the-call-for-the-arts)



FROM THE CHAIRMAN



WHEREVER THERE ARE MILITARY CHILDREN

Families and children connected to the U.S. Military serve America's interests all over the world. While they may not hold official ranks, they are essential (and productive) members of the support systems surrounding service members across all branches.

Wherever military children exist, our mission at MCEC extends to help them meet their unique challenges. Our work benefits their education, their future potential, and their self-esteem while also supporting parents and educators.

MCEC is busy through numerous initiatives in support of our mission including but not limited to the following efforts:

- **MCEC 360 Summits** are our customized training events that bring ideas, programs, and opportunities to communities with high concentrations of military-connected children and families. These informative, collaborative events offer content crafted especially for teachers, parents, school administrators, and kids with the specific needs of each community in mind. Our next 360 Summit is coming to Fort Cavazos, Texas, in January 2024. For more information on that Summit or the possibility of bringing one to your area, visit [MilitaryChild.org/360summits](https://militarychild.org/360summits)
- MCEC is the national advocate for **Purple Star Schools** to support military-connected children who relocate to new schools due to a parent's change in duty – typically every two to three years. The Purple Star School program helps schools respond to the kids' educational and social-emotional challenges. MCEC is the nation's most complete resource for schools aspiring to Purple Star designation. For an introduction, visit [MilitaryChild.org/purplestarschools](https://militarychild.org/purplestarschools).
- In October, MCEC was part of a national conference for Purple Star Schools, which now reach across 40 U.S. states and over 3,000 schools. See the article on page 28 in this issue for an overview.
- Our world's conflicts and violence can cause stress and sadness for anyone. To help families and educators deal with these difficult topics in the most careful and helpful ways possible, MCEC hosts an online collection of resources called **Helping Kids Work Through the Fear and Consequences of Global Violence**. The resources are thorough and frequently updated for relevant current events. The guidance, dialogs, toolkits, and even live crisis help lines are presented by the nation's foremost authorities on mental wellness, behavioral health, child psychiatry, and other areas of care. See this vital resource at [MilitaryChild.org/resourcesglobalviolence](https://militarychild.org/resourcesglobalviolence)

These are just a few examples. With 2024 upon us, please consider participating in the **MCEC Global Training Summit** in Washington, D.C., on July 29-31, 2024 ([MilitaryChild.org/gts](https://militarychild.org/gts)); registration is opening soon. This inspiring, informative event brings renowned experts to guide you in the support military kids need. I hope to see you there!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cecil D. Haney".

Cecil D. Haney
Admiral, United States Navy (Retired)
Board Chair
Military Child Education Coalition

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



WHAT WILL THE HOLIDAYS MEAN FOR YOU?

As I write this letter, we are entering the holiday season with Thanksgiving just a few days away leading into the December holidays for people of all faiths. No matter which holidays we celebrate, it seems almost everyone finds themselves reflecting on spiritual issues, sharing celebrations and tidings with friends and family, and preparing themselves to begin a new year.

Note that I said almost everyone. For many, the December holiday season may be marked by stress, loneliness, and sadness. Worrying about finances, a loved one who is deployed, or conditions in areas of natural disaster or conflict can make comfort and joy seem out of reach. Of course, these issues are often magnified for military-connected families – especially children.

But holiday traditions are also opportunities to reach out to those who might need us. They give us ready-made reasons to share a smile, a hug, a small gift, or a story of hope. Any of these can remind or show someone you care, and bring them incredible, reassuring relief.

As we roll into 2024, I am excited to announce two important additions to our team, and to acknowledge an above-and-beyond contributor who is so special to our organization.

The first addition is our new Chief Operating Officer. We spent a year in search for a candidate who could bring MCEC the right blend of capability, educational experience and new thinking. We found these qualities in Kyle Wood, who has over 15 years of success in education – both in classrooms and in administration. Most recently, Kyle served as Director of School Operations for Achievement First at its flagship high school in New Haven, CT. You can read more about Kyle [here](#).

We have also added a new Military Student Well-Being Manager and a longtime MCEC collaborator, Rollie Sampson. For the last five years, Rollie has served as the Military Liaison Counselor for Moore County Schools in Carthage, NC, near Fort Liberty, where she supported over 3,500 military-connected students, supervised the district's Student 2 Student (S2S) programs, and much more. Bringing Rollie aboard is a win for MCEC – read more about her (and her own military-connected family's holiday traditions) [here](#).

I mentioned that we had brought in Kyle Wood as COO after a year-long search. Of course, our operations needed steady guidance during the search. We were so fortunate that longtime MCEC staffer (and champion) Laura Cayton stepped up as Interim COO. During these critical months, Laura oversaw multiple initiatives to set the stage for our future, and was tireless in her work to help us achieve a winning Global Training Summit in Washington, D.C., this past summer. Laura, from all of MCEC: Thank you!

And to all of our MCEC family and to the educators and families we serve: Here's wishing you and yours a safe, happy, and meaningful holiday season,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Becky J. Porter".

Dr. Becky Porter
President and Chief Executive Officer
Military Child Education Coalition

ADHD:

Debunking Common Myths

BY DR. ERIC M. FLAKE
Vice Chairman, MCEC Board of Directors, and Co-Chair, MCEC Science Advisory Board

SAB

ADHD, the abbreviation for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, is the most common childhood neurodevelopmental disorder. The specific pattern of behavior characterizing ADHD has been defined and studied for over 100 years. Today 7-9% of children and adults may have ADHD. Despite being common and well-studied, many misconceptions about this condition contribute to people with ADHD not getting the help they need to succeed and minimize the disorder's lifelong impact. A survey of hundreds of adults, including individuals with ADHD, parents of children with ADHD, and medical and other professionals working with people with ADHD, revealed these ten most common myths. We hope that debunking these myths will help dispel the misunderstanding that contributes to people with ADHD.

MYTH #1:

People with ADHD are stupid, lazy, misbehaving, undisciplined, or "bad."

TRUTH: ADHD is not a reflection of a person's intelligence, work ethic, or character. ADHD is a difference in neurocognitive development that impairs a specific category of mental tasks known as "executive functioning." Executive functions include mental activities such as planning, organization, impulse control, and sustained attention. A person with ADHD may be brilliant and capable despite weakness in this specific category of tasks. In fact, people with ADHD are commonly strong in creativity and problem-solving. Appropriate treatment is essential in helping a person with ADHD maximize their strengths and be successful.

MYTH #2:

ADHD medications are dangerous and addictive and should only be used as a "last resort."

TRUTH: Medications approved for treating ADHD, when used as prescribed by a qualified physician, are essential to ADHD management and shouldn't be considered a "last resort." Kids with untreated ADHD get stuck in an unhealthy thought pattern known as the "bad kid" cycle. Struggling to sit still, stay organized, pay attention, and perform other executive functions in school or different settings where these behaviors are expected results

in a child with ADHD getting in trouble repeatedly. The child then feels singled out and eventually starts to see himself as the "bad kid," killing their motivation and self-esteem and leading to continued behavior challenges. The continued behavioral difficulties then reinforce their self-image as the "bad kid," continuing this self-destructive cycle. The "bad kid" cycle can lead to school failure, risky or delinquent behavior, poor personal relationships, depression, and other problems. Appropriate medication use can prevent or break this cycle by making it easier for a child with ADHD to perform executive functions, avoid getting in trouble, and becoming labeled (both by others and themselves) as the "bad kid." ADHD medications are safe and not addictive, although they do have the potential for abuse if used inappropriately. While people with ADHD are more prone to developing addictions, the use of ADHD medications improves impulse control and can actually help prevent addictions.

MYTH #3:

All people with ADHD have the same symptoms or behave the same way.

TRUTH: ADHD is characterized by a standard set of challenges defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5). While all people with ADHD struggle with executive functioning, an individual with ADHD may be stronger in some executive functions and weaker in others. For

example, one person with ADHD might struggle with impulse control but have more substantial planning and organizational skills. Another person with ADHD might need to work with organization and planning while having better impulse control. The DSM-5 classifies ADHD into three distinct types: predominantly hyperactive-impulsive presentation, predominantly inattentive presentation, and a combined presentation. However, just like everybody else, people with ADHD are unique individuals with different strengths and weaknesses; and even the same type of ADHD may look different between people.

MYTH #4:

ADHD is due to poor parenting or discipline practices.

TRUTH: ADHD is a brain condition that a person is born with and tends to run in families. In other words, a person is more likely to have ADHD if they have one or more parents, siblings, or relatives with ADHD. Because of their neurological condition, even with good parenting and discipline practices, a person with ADHD will struggle with executive functioning and may need medication or other treatment. There are, however, behavioral management strategies that aid parents in helping their child with ADHD improve executive functioning skills and be successful.*

MYTH #5:

Academics are the only area of a person's life impacted by ADHD.

TRUTH: Executive functions are required to navigate many areas of life. While a child with a short attention span is more likely to struggle in school, they are also more likely to have difficulty completing chores or other activities of daily living at home. Problems with impulse control can result in a child talking out of turn or not being able to sit still in class. It will also make it harder for them to play well with other kids and make friends due to challenges with taking turns and other socially appropriate behaviors. Poor organization affects a child's ability to keep track of homework and school materials and makes it harder to manage their duties and perform necessary daily activities at home. As a child moves into adolescence and adulthood, demands increase, further taxing their executive functioning skills. As a result, people with ADHD are more likely to struggle in school and with personal relationships,

employment and finances. In fact, a person must show challenges in at least two different settings (for example, at school and home) to meet the criteria for a diagnosis of ADHD.

MYTH #6:

If someone can focus on some things or pay attention and sit still in some settings, they can't have ADHD.

TRUTH: People with ADHD have abnormal regulation of primarily two essential brain chemicals (or "neurotransmitters") known as dopamine and norepinephrine, critical to the brain's pleasure and reward system. High levels of dopamine and norepinephrine drive focus and attention. Enjoyable, exciting, or otherwise mentally stimulating activities cause the brain to produce higher levels of dopamine and norepinephrine, making it easier for anyone to focus on activities that stimulate dopamine and norepinephrine production. For this reason, a child who struggles to stay seated in school may have no problem sitting for extended periods during screen time or other highly stimulating activities. This effect is more pronounced in someone with ADHD due to impaired regulation of dopamine and norepinephrine. In fact, it is common for someone with ADHD to become "hyper-focused" on an activity that induces high levels of dopamine and norepinephrine production and have difficulty switching their focus to another task.



MYTH #7: ADHD is “not real.”

TRUTH: ADHD is an actual neurodevelopmental condition characterized by patterns of behavior that have been well defined and studied for over a century. Over the past few decades, research has confirmed that ADHD is associated with chemical and physical differences in multiple brain regions, including the prefrontal cortex, the limbic system, the basal ganglia, and the reticular activating system. The executive function impairment characterized by ADHD results from impaired communication between these brain regions.

MYTH #8: ADHD can’t coexist with other mental health disorders.

TRUTH: The brain regions involved in executive functions such as sustained attention, planning, organization, and impulse control contribute to various complex intellectual, behavioral, and emotional processes. The structural and chemical differences in the brain that contribute to ADHD can manifest in many ways. As a result, ADHD is commonly associated with other mental health conditions. In fact, it is estimated that nearly half of people with ADHD also have at least one other coexisting mental or developmental disorder. Coexisting conditions, or “comorbidities,” commonly associated with ADHD include disorders of high-level brain functioning, such as learning disabilities, language impairments, and motor (movement) disorders; emotional regulation problems such as depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), oppositional defiant

disorder, tic disorders, and bipolar disorder. Therefore, it is essential that doctors look for and appropriately treat these comorbidities in a person with ADHD.

MYTH #9: Medication will “fix” or “cure” ADHD.

TRUTH: While medication is a key component of treating ADHD and is considered the first-line treatment in school-aged children, medication is neither a “cure” for ADHD nor the sole treatment modality. ADHD medications work by improving the regulation of neurotransmitters in brain regions involved in performing executive functions. Treatment modalities other than medication, such as behavioral management strategies, school accommodations, and behavioral health counseling, are essential components of comprehensive ADHD management, helping a person with ADHD develop skills to compensate for and improve weak executive functioning.

MYTH #10: Kids with ADHD will “outgrow” it.

TRUTH: The differences in brain development that cause ADHD create structural brain differences with lifelong effects. While many people with ADHD develop skills to compensate for or enhance weak executive functioning and improve as they progress through adolescence and adulthood, most people with ADHD will have some degree of symptoms throughout their life. Therefore, approximately two-thirds of people needing ADHD medication during childhood will continue to need a prescription into adulthood.

ADHD resources:

Books for parents of children with ADHD:

- *Taking Charge of ADHD: The Complete, Authoritative Guide for Parents* by Russell A. Barkley, PhD
- *Smart But Scattered: The Revolutionary Executive Skills Approach to Helping Kids Reach Their Potential* by Peg Dawson, EdD, and Richard Guare, PhD
- *Getting Ahead of ADHD: What Next-Generation Science Says about Treatments That Work and How You Can Make Them Work for Your Child* by Joel Nigg, PhD
- *Thriving with ADHD Workbook for Kids: 60 Fun Activities to Help Children Self-Regulate, Focus, and Succeed (Health and Wellness Workbooks for Kids)* by Kelli Miller, LSCW MSW

Books for adults with ADHD:

- *The Smart but Scattered Guide to Success: How to Use Your Brain's Executive Skills to Keep Up, Stay Calm, and Get Organized at Work and Home* by Peg Dawson, EdD, and Richard Guare, PhD
- *The Couple's Guide to Thriving with ADHD* by Melissa Orlov and Nancie Kohlenberger, LMFT
- *Taking Charge of Adult ADHD* by Russell A. Barkley, PhD

Websites:

www.additudemag.com
www.learningworksforkids.com
www.understood.org

Who I Am Today

BY MAVERICK K.
BELTON HIGH SCHOOL, BELTON, TX

Student 2 Student® is a program that makes a new student's transition into our school seamless and welcoming. Through this organization I have had great interactions, fun stories, and been to some awesome events, which has shaped me into the person that I am today.

Student 2 Student has been a big part in shaping who I am today and why I have the leadership qualities I bring to the table. A big part of Student 2 Student is the interactions with students worldwide, who may be exchange students, military students, or students coming from homeschool. The best part about Student 2 Student is the different interactions that I have with each student when welcoming them to our campus. I like to be an open door and an open space where they can tell me their worries and what they may need help with while making the transition to our campus. I can notice when they may be struggling or need help. It is all part of taking a leap into a leadership role, especially when those around us need help, so I can help them be the best they can be.

Another component to Student 2 Student is the awesome events I can attend, which allow me to sharpen my leadership skills, share these skills with my peers, and present them to our new students. These events impacted the person I am today, especially the Frances Hesselbein Student Leadership Program.

In my sophomore year of high school, my counselor notified me of an opportunity that takes place at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Only 10 students are chosen every year, and I happened to be one of them! My experience brought me so much knowledge on leadership and taught me skills

that have shaped me to be a better leader in my community now, as well as in the future. I had a great conversation with former U.S. Army General, and 33rd Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, Dennis Reimer, in which he shared some great wisdom with me about emotional and interpersonal communication and cultural intelligence. After hearing this, it brought me happiness knowing that the members of this program are able to understand what emotions military children experience moving school to school. This all helped me become a better leader and a better voice for those who need it in my community.

Last, but certainly not least, are the stories that I can share with those around me, as well as the stories that those around me share - especially our new students. I enjoy hearing different stories and getting different perspectives on how someone else may see a situation. Analyzing all parts of a story makes for a better understanding or solution. There are many students who come from different countries and states since we are so close to a military base. They share some awesome stories about things they may have experienced, such as the diversity and culture that they were surrounded by while out of state or out of country, and they also share things that they did not like, such as being away from family and friends.

Hearing these stories shaped me into who I am today because I can

comprehend that not everyone may have the same view as me and have not experienced what I have, so by being attentive, I can visualize what they experienced.

Student 2 Student has changed my life and expanded my way of thinking. It goes beyond just showing new students around. We are like a family within our campus that welcomes anyone with open arms. The events we attend, the laughs we share, and the interactions we have, all contribute to how I have been shaped into who I am today, and how we have an improved impact on our peers as well as our community.



This essay was part of Maverick's college application packets. Just recently MCEC has learned that he was accepted to his first choice University - the College of Agriculture & Life Sciences at Texas A&M where he'll major in Biochemistry and launch his dream of med school. Congrats to this S2S Superstar!



Holiday Traditions

BY ROLLIE SAMPSON

MCEC Military Student Well-Being Manager

The holidays in my family were always a time of year when my father became a child again and our home was filled with laughter. As I got older, I started referring to Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas as the “Trifecta.” While most people associate a trifecta with horseracing, for me, it was all about family, friends, and holiday traditions.

Like many military families, we rarely had an opportunity to go home for the holidays. During my childhood, international phone calls were expensive, and mail was our primary method of staying connected to family. I also spent most of my childhood living overseas, which means our holidays were often shared with other military families. Yet, somehow, my dad managed to keep family traditions alive while celebrating each new location.

One of my first holiday memories revolves around Christmas music. My dad had a thing for gadgets and had an old-school reel-to-reel player and stereo system. Each year, he would buy a record or two of local Christmas music from each place we were stationed and create a reel-to-reel holiday mix tape. Then he would hook up his stereo

system to outdoor speakers and stream Christmas tunes throughout our neighborhood. I still remember one night when he forgot to turn on the music, and a neighbor stopped by to ask him to turn it on because his children had been waiting to hear the holiday music before they headed to bed.

While I still appreciate holiday music and now have my own travel-inspired collection, I am not live-streaming it for my neighbors. Like my dad, I pull out what is now an old-school CD player to bring the season to life for my family and kickstart the festivities. For me, the holidays are a time that brings me back to my childhood and memories of tacky twinkle lights on the house, Christmas Eve pajamas sent in the mail from grandparents, apple pie and meat stuffing, and my favorite memory – decorating the Christmas tree.

While many people have tree themes or matching decorations, our tree was a hodgepodge of eclectic ornaments reflecting our family’s milestones and travels from around the globe. My dad was meticulous about tree decorating. Starting with strategically placed lights, then garland, ornaments, and finally – the bane of every vacuum cleaner – silver tinsel. He was methodical with his tinsel, ensuring each strand was perfectly placed with no clumping allowed. Only after the last strand was placed and he was pleased with our creation, did he top the tree with a brightly lit tinsel star.

For me, decorating the tree was what kept our family traditions alive, no matter where we lived. The process of placing ornaments on our artificial tree (that made every move with us) was a journey down memory lane. From the woven animals from Hong Kong to the brass stamped ornaments from Germany to the popsicle stick



For me, the holidays are a time that brings me back to my childhood and memories of tacky twinkle lights on the house, Christmas Eve pajamas sent in the mail from grandparents, apple pie and meat stuffing, and my favorite memory – decorating the Christmas tree.

sled my sister made me in elementary school, our tree was a reminder of our best times as a family.

When my sisters and I left the nest, my mom split our family ornaments among us. I still remember sitting around the bins and taking turns picking the ornaments that meant the most to me. My mom's gift was an opportunity to take a piece of our family traditions with us as we started our own families. Eventually, these ornaments would become the beginning of my family's Christmas tree.

I still remember our first Christmas as newlyweds. My husband and I bought a star tree topper – which we still use – and our first family ornament together. The ornament was a beautiful hand-painted glass globe with mountains and snow, reminding us of our first duty station together in Colorado. This began a cherished tradition that has continued throughout our 26-year marriage, with many ornaments – and many chapters in our story.

After the birth of our first child, we started her collection of ornaments. Each year, we would pick an ornament that highlighted one of her milestones or a favorite activity and did the same for her siblings. As our children grew, they often picked out their own yearly ornaments to add to their collection. Each time we traveled or visited a unique spot, we bought an ornament as our family souvenir instead of T-shirts and ball caps. And as our collection grew, so did our tree.

This year, the holidays will be more nostalgic as my children enter adulthood. My youngest is in their last year of college and our older daughters live on their own. My husband and I recognize that this might be the last time we have everyone under one roof for a while and look forward to decorating the tree with them. Because pretty soon, it will be my turn to split up ornaments and give them to my children as they begin their own families and create their own holiday traditions.





Bill's Cornbread Dressing

Ingredients

Cornbread

(24) cornbread muffins. Can be prepared 1-2 days in advance

Celery (3)

Bell peppers (3)

Onions (1)

Sage

Poultry Season

Chicken Broth

Turkey necks/ gizzards sliced thin

2 eggs



Preparation

1. Prepare cornbread and crush. Place crushed cornbread in large trash bag
2. Sauté vegetables with a little butter in the water add a little poultry season, and sage. Poultry season to sage is used 3 to 1.
3. Placed sauté vegetables in large trash bag with the cornbread
4. Shake the bag for about ten minutes until cornbread and vegetables are very well mixed.
5. Pour contents into a large bowl
6. Add eggs
7. Add poultry season and sage (add as follows 3 shakes of poultry season to 1 shake of sage)
8. Add turkey necks, sliced gizzards
9. Take about 3 cups of chicken broth plus leftover water from cooking turkey necks gizzards add to bowl (taste for a chicken flavor taste)
10. Stir very good
11. Taste. Mix should start tasting like dressing, if needed add poultry season & sage
12. If mix is dry add more broth in cup increments for texture
13. Remember you want the mix more juicy than dry
14. Keep repeating steps 10, 11, 12 until it's the bomb
15. Place all around meat
16. Bake in oven at 350F for 45 minutes, covered
17. Bake 30 minutes more, uncovered

Recipe courtesy of MSG Simms



Meet Rollie!

Welcome our new Military Student Well-Being Manager (MSWB), Rollie Sampson. Based outside Fort Liberty, Rollie joined the MCEC family after spending five years as the Military Liaison Counselor (MLC) for Moore County Schools in Carthage, NC. In her previous role, Rollie supported over 3,500 military-connected students, supervised the district's Student 2 Student (S2S) programs, provided professional development for school administrators and staff, and managed the district's Impact Aid Program.



As the MSWB, Rollie oversees our S2S teams, working closely with sponsors and students to expand training opportunities and grow the S2S program's reach. She will also be using her skills as a licensed mental health counselor and school counselor to support MCEC student well-being efforts. She is passionate about military-connected youth behavioral health and hopes to continue providing proactive well-being support in her new role by collaborating with school-based behavioral health staff.

On a personal level, Rollie is a military family member and has spent her entire life connected to the Army as a military child, Veteran, and military spouse. Like many military-connected children, she attended eight schools before high school graduation and has had 34 different home addresses! She and her husband are both from multi-generational military families with strong ties to the Army. They met when Rollie attended a 30-day training exercise in Germany and dated long distance until their marriage two years later. They now have three adult children and their trusty sidekick, Maggie the dog. She lives in Southern Pines, NC, with her husband, a retired military officer who served 29 years in the Army.

In her free time, Rollie enjoys reading, visiting her adult children (especially her daughter living in Edinburgh, Scotland), being crafty with a glue gun, and hiking with her husband.

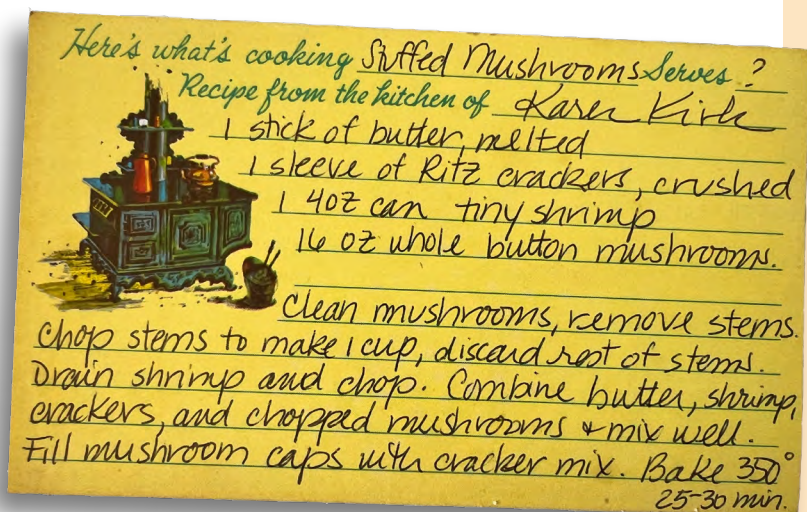
Fun Facts:

Rollie was born at Camp Zama, Japan, climbed Mount Fuji when she was ten years old, and has a passion for modular origami.



The Saucedo Family celebrating the holidays.

Every year when picking out our Christmas tree, we visit a nursery that names them. We wander through the selection looking at height, girth, needle type and smell. When we finally find our tree to bring home and decorate, we read the tag with their given name. He or she becomes our guest and are referred to by their name throughout the holiday season. Selecting and bringing home a Christmas tree with that personal touch has brought such a continued element of holiday spirit, we look forward to "meeting" our tree each year.



Scholarship Recipients “Transformed” Frances Hesselbein Student Leadership

Congratulations to these ten exceptional students who attended the MCEC's Fall 2023 Frances Hesselbein Student Leadership Program (FHSLP) at the United States Military Academy at West Point, October 23-27, 2023.

The Fall 2023 class of students represented five states and Italy:

- >> **Destiny P.** from Killeen High School (Killeen, TX)
- >> **Emma D.** from Leavenworth High School (Leavenworth, KS)
- >> **Finn M.** from Union Pines High School (Cameron, NC)
- >> **Jacob S.** from Bob Jones High School (Madison, AL)
- >> **Jayla H.** from Crossroads High School (Copperas Cove, TX)
- >> **Kiani S.** from Daleville High School (Daleville, AL)
- >> **Matthew K.** from Granby High School (Norfolk, VA)
- >> **Natalie S.** from James Madison High School (San Antonio, TX)
- >> **Nicholas V.** from Sigonella Middle High School (Sigonella, Italy)
- >> **Olivia K.** from Pinecrest High School (Southern Pines, NC)

Throughout the week, students participated in team building exercises, met inspirational speakers, absorbed a wealth of knowledge, made life-long friendships, and even celebrated a birthday! The jam-packed schedule touched on effective communication, physical and mental health, goal setting, mentorship practices, character building, and the importance of reflection. Activities and lessons were provided by West Point personnel and cadets, the American Red Cross, and the Military Child Education Coalition.



MCEC's Frances Hesselbein Student Leadership Program (FHSLP) fall class of 2023 at the scenic overlook of the Hudson River Valley near Trophy Point during the West Point Walking History Tour, led by Major Greenberg.

“I was able to build my leadership skills during the week while making relationships that will last a lifetime. It was a truly transformative event that I will always remember and be extremely grateful for.”

Jacob, Madison, AL

during MCEC's o Program



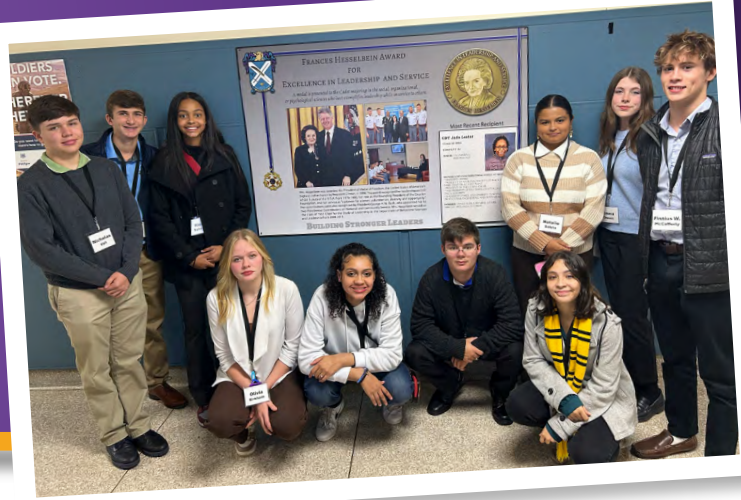
LTG Gilland (USMA Superintendent) with Matthew after a morning PT session where he talked with students about doing their best, positivity, and teamwork.



O'Neil High School S2S hosted students for an ice cream social where the current president introduced Natalie to the group during an icebreaker.



Each student had the opportunity to lead an evening activity to reinforce skills they learned throughout the week, demonstrated here with Finn and Jacob during "blind bowling."



Students pause to reflect on the legacy of Frances Hesselbein (November 1, 1915 – December 11, 2022).



Kiani holds up a heart from an activity lead by the American Red Cross during their "Roger That! Communication Counts" workshop.



Olivia and Emma with Dr. Mike Matthews during his character lab session with the students.



Destiny and Nicholas working through the Navigator/Explorer exercise which emphasizes effective communication.



Congratulations to Nicholas, recipient of the 2023 Suzy Carlton Student Leadership and Civic Responsibility Award.



FHSLP joined the AVID students at West Point Middle School in a STEAM-focused class involving textiles, robotics, and problem-solving games.



Jayla at the Center for Enhanced Performance at West Point.



Alabama-native West Point football player #39 Hamilton Baker stopped in to chat with students. Jacob, currently living in Alabama, discovers they have some shared acquaintances.

The Fall 2023 FHSLP was powered in part by Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) to honor and empower post-9/11 injured service members, veterans, and their families. Additional scholarship funding was provided by Star Market (AL) and First National Bank (TX).

NOW THROUGH DECEMBER 15:

Hurry! Applications and recommendation forms for the next FHSLP at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs are due NOW. Students should see their S2S sponsor for application information. Student interviews will be held in January. The program is scheduled for February 20-24, 2024.



The Power of Relationship-Building in the Palmetto State

BY SARA JANE ARNETT, MCEC Community Coordinator, Columbia, SC

I have never lived in a state with as much natural charm as South Carolina. From experiencing the taste of all four seasons to residing in a beautifully historical town with Revolutionary War roots — all while our military-connected community is surrounded and lifted by local and state community members and my children experience the small-town luxury of walking to school or riding bikes with friends in the neighborhood — the alliance of harmonic values empowers the strong connections made every day. This welcoming attitude and environment have been instrumental in the awareness, growth, and development MCEC has channeled over the past 12 months and is directly tied to the rich South Carolina cultural significance of relationship-building.

The group theory of how culture begins and evolves can best be explained through MCEC's organizational success in South Carolina using the Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing model (Tuchman, 1965) which is also a group theory model used in military leadership courses.



STAGE ONE

FORMING

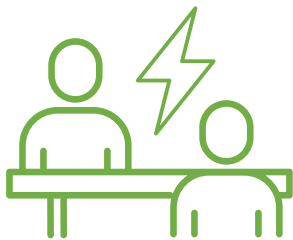
Finding One's Identity and Role

This most critical stage was spearheaded by Ashley Schlicht, MCEC State

Coordinator of South Carolina.

Under Ashley's exemplary leadership, building a coalition of the willing (or as I like to refer to the group as The Dream Team) has been her top priority. Every individual has been vetted and shares the universal vision to serve. Ashley posited, "Trust comes from understanding the team, what skillset or ability each team member contributes to the group, and how their experiences can spawn synergy based on the collective shared values and trust. We work very well together for the same mission of supporting our military community, and we support one another while we get the job done." This philosophy has led to progress of epic proportions which can best be described in stage two.





STAGE TWO

STORMING

Resolving and Manifesting Influence

The South Carolina Department of Veterans Affairs (SCDVA) is one of the state's most influential partners who mitigate action in a variety of focus areas pertaining to the enhancement of quality-of-life issues for the military community. SCDVA Quality of Life Coordinator, Jason Fowler, explained, "Governor McMaster's two annual events, the Governor's Summit on Veterans' Affairs and the Commanders' Brief, are a credit to the leadership in South Carolina and really show how we value our military's presence in the Palmetto State and their importance to the Nation. In South Carolina, we truly care about our military -- past, present, and future. Governor McMaster encouraged those in attendance at these forums

to communicate, collaborate, and cooperate – a message that is in keeping with his policy. I am proud of the relationships that we have forged across the state that continuously work to improve quality of life for our servicemembers and their families stationed in South Carolina."

Improving Educational Opportunities for Military Children, one of Governor McMaster's top four areas of concern, was addressed by four presenters: Dr. Kim Priester, South Carolina's Commissioner for the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), MCEC's Ashley Schlicht, and SCDVA Director of Military Affairs, Sandy Claypoole. Improving Educational Opportunities for Military Children intends to

make South Carolina a station of choice for service members by addressing the long-standing concerns about public education. Governor McMaster explained, "All of this just reinforces the doctrine that we have in this administration... to acknowledge anywhere there is a silo and take it down." Progress has been achieved toward this goal by building awareness of alternatives to traditional public schools available in the state as well as by increasing the number of Purple Star School Districts to better support military-connected children and their families.

Storming leads to stage three by recognizing the character of the group and how members of the group treat one another, work together, and execute improvement.



STAGE THREE

NORMING

Resolving Levels of Relationship Operation

Because no two people possess the exact same skillset, the team in South Carolina is purposely comprised of leaders in a variety of fields: government, military, finance, law, education, etc. This diversity in professions, skillsets, and expertise fortifies an unmistakable cultural alignment as the team consistently communicates the same message. The nature of southern culture creates an environment that breeds respect, generates deliverables, and provides action-based leadership with accountability at all levels of operation. The commitment and shared investment from South Carolina's leadership coalition has built a solid framework and sustainable model for other states to follow. Each member participates and makes things happen.



STAGE FOUR

PERFORMING

Task Accomplishment

A group can only perform at their best when they have mastered Stages One through Three. South Carolina's group mission, along with MCEC's, is to ensure inclusive, quality educational experiences for all military-connected children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition. This organizational culture based on the power of relationship-building has provided South Carolina a platform to connect MCEC partners and community stakeholders in service to those who serve our country.

Aligned with the governor's priorities, Purple Star Schools have been identified as a highly effective instrument for supporting military-connected children and are spreading across the state. Just recently, Horry County School District in Conway, SC, hosted a two-day MCEC 360 Summit, October 3-4 with nearly 300 school district representatives, educators and administrators, and students in attendance. The MCEC 360 Summit is a community-wide, multi-faceted event which brings insight and understanding about the unique challenges and needs of military-connected students and provides tools to help address issues associated with a military lifestyle. The 360 Summit model includes training components for students, parents, educators, and other youth-serving professionals and can assist a school or district in fulfilling the requirements needed to




achieve the Purple Star School designation. "With 145 school administration leaders taking advantage of the professional development opportunity and 126 student leaders receiving the Student 2 Student training, Horry County has raised the bar for future summits not only in the state, but across the country," explained Sarah Schackleton, MCEC Community Coordinator - Charleston. Now that Horry County School District successfully completed all five Purple Star School requirements, their Purple Star School recognition was

hosted at the Horry County School District Board of Directors meeting on November 13th.

By creating a climate of trust through relationship-building, the Palmetto State's collaboration efforts have yielded high performance numbers that are growing day by day. Research shows that leaders who spend most of their time and energy developing relationships produce the highest levels of engagement and success. South Carolina continues to be On the Move and raise the bar on progress.

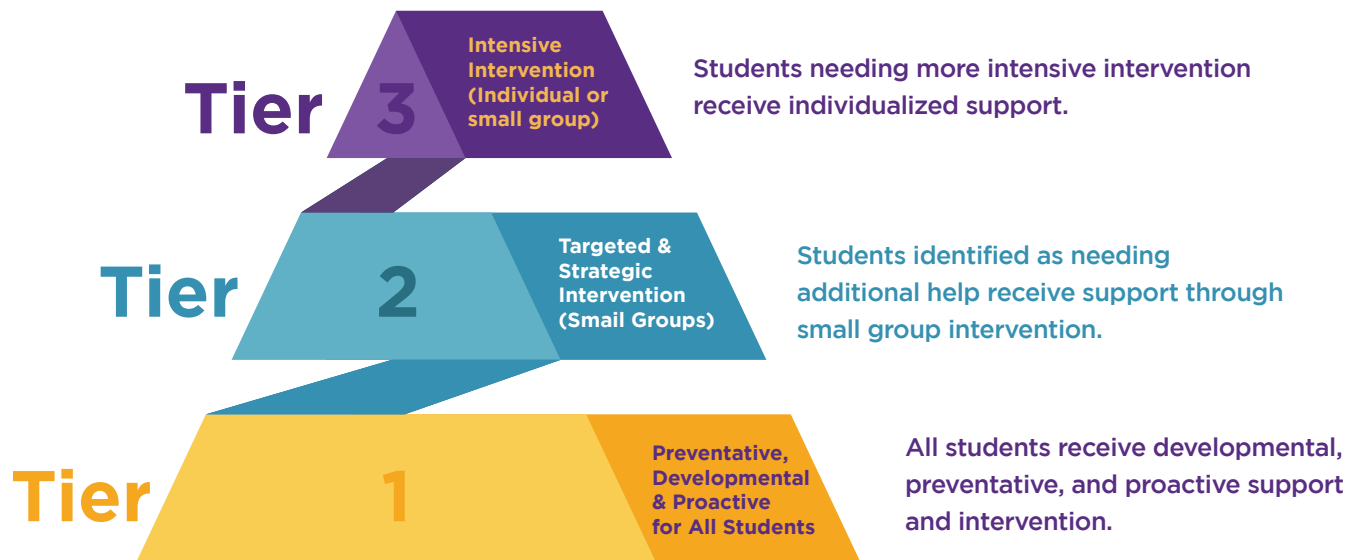


Supporting Behavioral Health Needs of All Military Students

BY GREGORY LESKIN, Ph.D., National Child Traumatic Stress Network, MCEC Science Advisory Board Member 
& SUE LOPEZ, M.Ed., Military Child Education Coalition

Since 2014, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) has been in close collaboration with the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) to address the unique challenges faced by military-connected students. This partnership culminates each July in a pre-summit professional training, held in conjunction with MCEC's Global Training Summit, bringing together a diverse group, including military leadership, educators, professionals, and students. The latest forum, convened in July 2023, focused on training participants in supporting the behavioral health and social-emotional needs of military-connected students, emphasizing the implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).

MTSS is a comprehensive model for education and behavioral health service delivery. It offers a structured approach, enabling school staff — teachers, administrators, school counselors, and psychologists — to actively identify and provide academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support to the entire school population. The MTSS framework consists of three tiers:



Source: Missouri State Department of Education. School Counselor's Guide to Multi-tiered Systems of Support. Routledge, 2019.

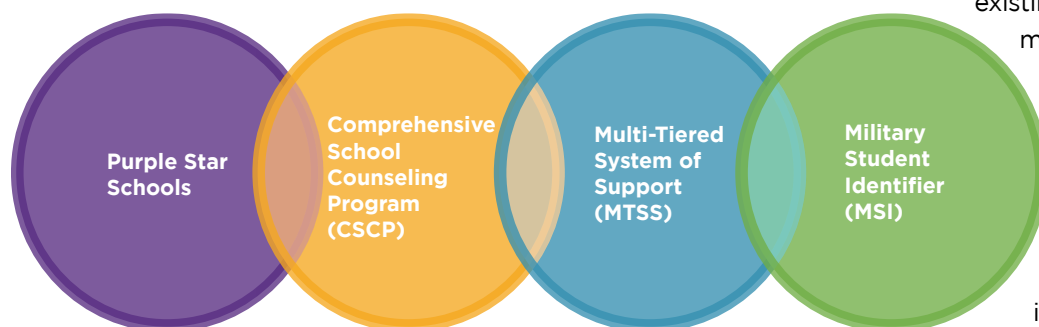
From a behavioral health perspective, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is one model incorporated into MTSS. PBIS integrates emotional and mental health literacy into daily classroom activities, fostering emotional reflection, communication of academic and social experiences, and the identification of when individualized intervention is necessary.

With 80% of military-connected students attending public schools, the importance of providing professional

development to school counselors and school psychologists cannot be overstated. These professionals play a critical role in utilizing MTSS to address the unique needs of military-connected students during academic and social-emotional transitions as well as building critical community partnerships and Department of Defense installation leaders.

Considering the frequent relocations experienced by military children and families, staff training on MTSS and PBIS programs becomes imperative for ensuring

emotionally healthy and academically successful transitions. The coordination of MTSS, comprehensive school counseling programs, and initiatives such as the Purple Star School initiative can establish opportunities for educators and staff to implement school-based behavioral health and counseling programs, fostering an inclusive school climate.



and school counseling programs, specifically tailored to support military-connected youth and families.

Gather, issue, and develop resources and strategies related to the effective implementation of MTSS for military-connected youth.

Discuss alignment and coordination strategies with existing comprehensive school mental health systems, using tools such as the Military Student Identifier (MSI) and the Purple Star School initiatives. Establish a framework for the coordination of school, installation, and community behavioral health providers working with military-connected youth.

Comprehensive School Mental Health

In response to this year's NCTSN/MCEC Pre-Summit conference, a dedicated workgroup has been formed, co-led by prominent figures such as Dr. Gregory Leskin, Director of NCTSN Military and Veteran Families and Children Program at UCLA, Dr. Sharon Hoover, Co-Director of the National Center for School Mental Health, University of Maryland School of Medicine, and Sue Lopez, M. Ed., School Counseling and MCEC Instructional Designer.

The workgroup aims to achieve the following goals:

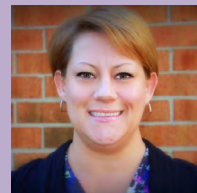
Identify and adapt national best practices for coordinating comprehensive mental health systems

The collaborative discussions within the workgroup will culminate in a presentation of outcomes at the 2024 MCEC Global Training Summit. Additionally, recommendations will be shared with key stakeholders, including the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), and MCEC leadership. This ongoing effort reflects a commitment to continually improving the support systems for military-connected students, ensuring they receive the tailored assistance necessary for their unique circumstances.



DR. GREGORY LESKIN is a licensed Clinical Psychologist and serves as Director, NCTSN Military and Veteran Families and Children Program and the NCTSN Academy on Child Traumatic Stress at UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles). He developed and directed an online training and social media platform to train

DoD Family Advocacy Program staff clinical skills related to child trauma and behavioral health prevention for military families and children. He has written, consulted, and lectured on several clinical topics, including risk factors facing military-connected children, combat-related PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), impact of deployment on families and children, and promoting psychological resilience and well-being. He is a co-developer for the MiTi Kids program bringing together Military Informed and Trauma Informed Principles for organizations to serve the needs of military and veteran families. Dr. Leskin is a member of the MCEC Science Advisory Board.



SUE LOPEZ is a licensed school counselor, a military spouse, and parent of two young adults. Since 1998, she has worked in multiple public-school settings to include DoDEA, yielding a unique set

of skills and knowledge on district, state and national policies affecting military-connected students during times of transition. As an MCEC Instructional Designer, she serves as a subject matter expert on curriculum development, design analysis, and evaluation for MCEC professional development. Sue remains devoted to enhancing school district, military installation, and community leader partnerships, professional collaboration, and consultation to effectively support transitioning military families.

FAQ: UNDERSTANDING the MILITARY STUDENT IDENTIFIER CODE

With the adoption of the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**, military-connected students are now recognized as a distinct subgroup, including students with a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces on active duty. Over 80% of military-connected students attend U.S. public schools. Students with parents/guardians who serve full-time in the military move and change schools frequently. In addition, they experience separations from a parent/guardian due to their parents' service to the military. **The Military Student Identifier (MSI)** provides educators with critical information to personalize attention to military dependent children. This article addresses frequently asked questions about the MSI and provides examples of effective implementation for state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs).

What is the purpose of this FAQ on the Military Student Identifier (MSI) Code?

- To restate the ESSA definition of a military-connected student.
- To describe a school's responsibility to collect MSI information upon student enrollment.
- To provide examples of appropriate collection methods.
- To summarize procedures.
- To provide examples of constructive uses of MSI information.
- To provide the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) description of the MSI.

What is the definition of a military-connected student as required by ESSA?

The Military Student Identifier Code (as it is commonly referred to in the field) indicates a student with a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces (defined in section 101(a)(1)(4) of title 10, United States Code) on active duty (as defined in section 101(d)(5) of such title).

What about students of National Guard parents?

Students of parents who serve on full-time National Guard duty, where "armed forces," "active duty," and "full-time National Guard duty" have the same meanings given them in 10 U.S.C. 101(a)(4), 101(d)(1), and 101(d)(5) are also provided with an MSI code.

"National Guard" means a member of the Army National Guard of the United States or the Air National Guard of the United States in the member's status as a member of the National Guard of a state or territory, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the District of Columbia.

What are a school's obligations for collecting MSI data?

- Schools (LEAs and public charters) must include the MSI question in their student enrollment procedures.
- Each state or LEA will determine additional collection and reporting requirements related to their pupil management systems policies and processes.

How should a school ask the MSI question in an easy-to-understand way?

A straightforward way to ask the question is to break it into parts:

- Is the student a dependent of a member of the United States military service in the Active Duty Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force or Coast Guard? Check "yes," "no," or decline to answer.
- Is the student a dependent of a fulltime member of the National Guard or Reserve force of the United States military (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force or Coast Guard)? Check "yes," "no," or decline to answer.
- Is the student a dependent of a member of the National Guard or Reserve force of the United States military (Army, Navy, Marine Corps or Air Force)? Check "yes," "no," or decline to answer.

What if a parent or guardian declines to provide the requested information?

- Parents/guardians may decline to respond to this voluntary question. If a parent declines, the answer is reflected as "no."
- No parent/guardian should be asked to verify their military status by showing a military identification or other DOD documentation. Verification of military membership may be required if the school has a special program for which eligibility is a requirement, such as state-funded prekindergarten.

How can this data be used?

- ESSA regulations (section 200.2) require states to be able to disaggregate assessment results within each LEA and school by "Status as a student with a parent who is a member of the armed forces on active duty or serves on full-time National Guard duty, where "Armed Forces," "active duty," and "full-time National Guard duty" have the same meanings given them in 10 U.S.C. 101(a)(4), 101(d)(1), and 101(d)(5)."
- States (SEAs) may choose to require LEAs or public charters to include this information in their school report cards.
- Schools regularly disaggregate student demographic and performance data to determine program effectiveness to identify areas requiring attention or resources and to detect students in need of specific academic assistance. MSI data provide an additional dimension that more finely attunes the schools' programs to respond to the needs of children.
- The MSI is essential to improve and personalize academic and social/emotional responses for the unique military student population which is highly likely to move and frequently change schools during their K-12 education years.
- Just as schools consistently concentrate on the unique needs of all students (e.g., English language needs, learning disabilities, economically disadvantaged), they can now add another unique group of students to consider in their planning, programming, and curriculum design.
- For example, schools can review their welcoming practices, transition planning, and need for enrichment or additional catch-up tutoring for mobile military-connected students.
- By effectively using MSI, schools can also consider programs that recognize contributions of the military to their community as they do for other groups.

Can schools get these data from the military rather than having to ask parents/guardians at registration?

- No. There is no current process available to connect students enrolled in schools and districts with their military parents. As you may expect, there are privacy and permission as well as national security implications associated with sharing data among governmental agencies.

Is the MSI designation connected to Impact Aid eligibility?

- No. The MSI has a separate and distinct purpose from Impact Aid. Just as identifying a subgroup of students as economically disadvantaged is separate from student groups such as ethnicity, gender or special programs, the purpose of the MSI is to provide local educators with quality, actionable data concerning their military-connected students.
- See ESSA Title VIII, SEC. 7003. PAYMENTS FOR ELIGIBLE FEDERALLY CONNECTED CHILDREN. (20U.S.C. 7703) for definitions of students identified for Federal Impact Aid. Several different criteria are used in this process. Federal Impact Aid encompasses military, Native American, and civilians working on federal installations, making it difficult to accurately determine eligible students from only military student identifier codes.
- For more information about Impact Aid, go to the U.S. Department of Education, **Office of Impact Aid Programs** at <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/impactaid/index.html>.
- Email address: ImpactAid@ed.gov

What is an example of a school's MSI data collection form?

- See the example below for how one Texas public school district asks for MSI information:

Please fill out the following form, sign, and return to the campus for your K -12th grade student.	
Military-connected Student	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student is a dependent of a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps or Coast Guard on Active Duty
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student is a dependent of a member of the Texas National Guard (Army, Air Guard, or State Guard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student is a dependent of a member of a reserve force in the U.S military (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps or Coast Guard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	None of the above

Is there a Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) data definition for the military student identifier?

- Yes. The CEDS includes the definition below for military-connected students in the national standards.

<https://ceds.ed.gov/elementsCEDS.aspx>

Military Connected Student Indicator (Updated)

Definition:

An indication that the student's parent or guardian is on Active Duty, in the National Guard, or in the Reserve components of the United States military services.

Option Set:

Description	Definition	Code
Not Military-connected	Student is not military-connected	NotMilitaryConnected
Active Duty	Student is a dependent of a member of the Active Duty Force (full-time) Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard or is a dependent of a member on Full-Time National Guard Duty.	ActiveDuty
National Guard or Reserve	Student is a dependent of a member of the National Guard (not full-time duty) or Reserve Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard).	NationalGuardOrReserve
Unknown	It is unknown whether or not the student is military-connected	Unknown

You may explore the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34 § 200.2, State responsibilities for assessment here:
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/section-200.2>

C.F.R. § 200.2(b)(1)(ii)(D) (2022)

C.F.R. § 200.2(b)(1)(i)(I) (2022)



THE VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership demonstrates commitment, connection, belonging, investment, and a sense of community. As a coalition, MCEC creates an alliance of people and organizations working together on behalf of military-connected children and their families. As a member, you are an active participant in the fulfillment of our mission, an insider experiencing the joy of our success together.

	Individual			Business		School/University/Military	
	Community Member	Sustaining Member	Champion (Lifetime) Member	Business/ Organization	Corporation	Associate	Patron
Receive all information digitally	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Printed Calendar		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ x2	✓ x4
Electronic Membership Letter		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Member Packet			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Printed OTM			✓	✓	✓	✓ x4	✓ x10
Membership Recognition in Newsletter				✓	✓	✓	✓
Complimentary MCEC GTS Registration					✓		
Voting Member						✓	✓
Eligible to Receive a Scholarship to GTS (valued at over \$900)							✓
	FREE	\$25/year \$60/3 years	\$250/ lifetime*	\$75/ year \$200/ 3 years \$2,000/ lifetime*	\$1,500/ year \$3,000/ 3 years \$50,000/ lifetime*	\$100/ year \$275/ 3 years	\$750/ year \$1,500/ 3 years

Join NOW — before prices increase January 1, 2024.

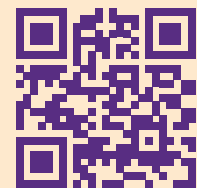
And the Givin' Is Easy

MCEC not only maximizes your donation to benefit military-connected children, their families, and the schools and other youth-serving professionals who support them, we make giving easy and customized to the method most beneficial to you. Consider the following:

- Giving cash (via check, credit card, or electronic funds transfer) is always a popular method, but did you know you could set up your gift as recurring so that a small amount each month can add up to the level your heart would like to give but your wallet can't accommodate?
- Utilizing your employer's gift-matching program can easily add to – or even double – your gift! Check with your human resources department to see if your employer offers a matching program.
- Donating stock not only saves you from being taxed on any capital gains, it also frees you from paying taxes on proceeds from the sale.



- Retirement accounts (IRAs, 401(k)s, etc.) provide a tremendous win-win. Anyone over age 70 can withdraw from their account without penalty and anyone over the age of 73 must withdraw a percentage from their retirement account; if your withdrawal is donated directly to MCEC, you pay no taxes on it, and it may reduce your overall tax liability as a contribution.
- Including MCEC as a beneficiary in your will may be the easiest method of all! You can name MCEC as the primary beneficiary or allocate a percentage of your estate to MCEC.
- Maximizing your non-probate assets (those outside your will and testament like life insurance and your retirement account) is another easy way to support MCEC. Simply include MCEC as the primary beneficiary or allocate a percentage of the value to be given to MCEC.



[MilitaryChild.org/Donate](https://militarychild.org/donate)

Just give us a call if you have any questions or need additional information. We will help you make giving easy and rewarding.

Your gift to MCEC builds a generation of future adults who aren't hindered by the challenges they face and are equipped to tackle adversity and thrive in their community. And what's good for military kids is good for all kids because it's done for the sake of the child.

Military Children's Corner



In September 2023, in the East Wing of the White House, First Lady, Dr. Jill Biden christened the brand new art display, The Military Children's Corner. This custom art case is one of the first things visitors see when they enter the East Colonnade. Designed to look and feel like a school bulletin board, the display case is a large, black, glass-fronted structure secured to the wall, with dark blue background behind the glass. The eleven pieces of art it holds were created by military children from installations the Bidens visited through their years of public service. The art will be changed quarterly, to continue to reflect the lived experiences of military children.

This inaugural exhibition includes art from 11 children aged 8-19, living in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Missouri, and Japan. Dr. Biden believes in the power of art to tell a story and build connection, "They may not wear a uniform, but they serve our country too." Every branch of service is represented with the hope that visitors to the White House will be offered a window into the lives of military children and families. Dr. Biden is herself a military child. She is the daughter of a Navy signalman, and was stepmother to Beau Biden, who served in the Delaware Army National Guard.

Included in this new and exciting East Wing art exhibit is a familiar artist to MCEC. Asha Agrawal is a 17 year old Space Force child who won the Spotlight Award in MCEC's Call for the Arts contest in April 2023. Asha's digital artwork of a blue Earth, wrapped in a red ribbon, in a sky full of stars is a beautiful depiction of her family's Air Force and Space Force experience. Asha's father serves as a Colonel in the Space Force, and her whole family joined MCEC at our 25th Anniversary Global Training Summit in Washington, DC, this past July, where she, and other winning artists were feted for their talent and service. Asha's art was proudly chosen for the Military Children's Corner, and we are so proud of her.



Purple Star is Now from the Atlantic

Hundreds of Purple Star Educators, Leaders Convene for a Second Year

The Purple Star National Convening of Schools and Communities was hosted once more and online by Ashland University in Ohio on Thursday, October 26, 2023, and attended by military liaison educators from across the country. Every Purple Star School has a Purple Star Liaison-Educator – a local educator to champion our “MIL kids.” These leaders are in the hallways and classrooms of their schools in support of their military-connected families... who serve, too. The service member volunteers, but their family and kids are drafted.

As of this publication, our country has 40+ Purple Star States with more than 3,000 Purple Star Schools. Gathering as a national network provides an opportunity for connecting and empowering parents, schools, and communities to support and strengthen resiliency in our military-connected youth. State and local leaders from Kentucky, Alaska, Virginia, South Carolina, Oklahoma, and the Purple Star founding state of Ohio served on the Planning Committee for 2022-2023.

More than 400 “PreK12-MIL” educators, students, parents, and leaders attended this second national gathering which also included designates of the recent Collegiate Purple Star – now supported in Ohio, Florida, and Indiana. States represented included Alaska to Arizona, Florida to Virginia and everywhere in between. Attendees participating in this National Convening were provided a day of professional development in topics including:

- The identification of military-affiliated families
- Best practices and engagement opportunities
- Using data to support implementation
- The importance of recognition and appreciation events hosted in our Purple Star Schools and communities

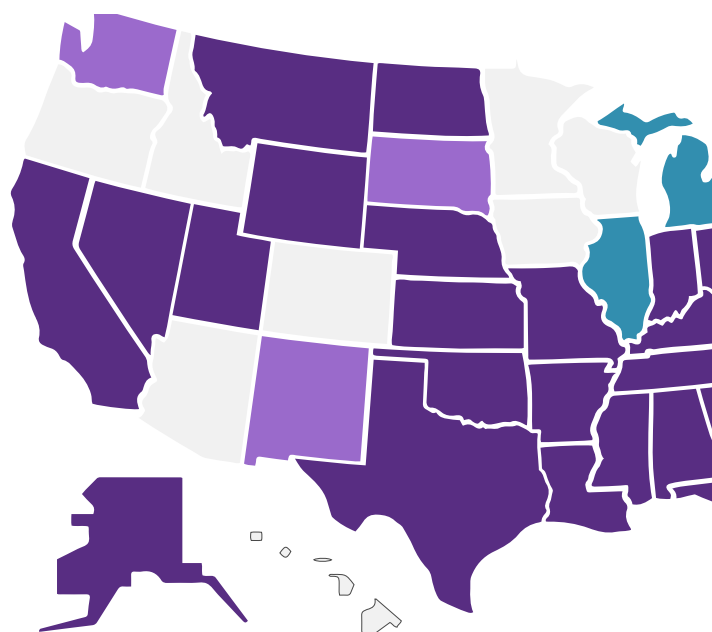
To highlight and witness the value of Purple Star Schools, the First Lady of the United States, Dr. Jill Biden, addressed the National Convening with opening remarks. Dr. Biden joined the First Lady of Ohio, Mrs. Fran DeWine, in visiting Amber Farkas’ 3rd grade class at Beverly Gardens Elementary School. Located near Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Riverside, Ohio, more than 75% of the enrolled students are military-connected.

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) was proud to report on the results of the 2022 research conducted by Columbia University Law School on America’s Purple Star Schools.

“Purple Star (embraces and challenges) high mobility by setting standards for and publicly designating Military-friendly schools.” -MCEC and Columbia’s 2022 Report

The Purple Star mission is a grassroots, localized framework organized by state governments, professional educators, and involved communities. Its genius is that it is genuinely “boots on the ground” – an all-volunteer force inspired by a caring vision.

According to the U.S. Department of Defense regarding America’s Purple Star Schools, in a



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ic to the Pacific

BY PETE LUPIBA, Commissioner, Ohio Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), Pete.LuPiba@obm.ohio.gov and
JENN DAVIS, Educator, Studebaker Preschool (First Purple Star School in the nation!), Jennifern.davis@myhhcs.org

“(Purple Star is a) well-designed, galvanizing effort that has already reaped benefits for students, families, schools, districts, and communities.”

— MCEC and Columbia's 2022 Report

relatively short period of time, Purple Star has become the nation's “purple standard” for how a military-serving and family-friendly school and community should support the families of our Armed Forces.

Purple Star Schools also benefit non-military students. Since its inception, students belonging to non-military families have seen the climate, culture, and sense of civics rise at their Purple Star School, learned ways of supporting their local military community, and considered enlisting in the Armed Forces (Academy Selection, College Scholarship, Career Enlistment, etc.) as a career.

If you feel you missed out, *On The Move* readers, Ohio's Ashland University (A Collegiate Purple Star Campus) recorded all twenty sessions from this October, as well as the sessions from the Fall 2021 event, the first ever convening of Purple Star Schools:



Team USA Purple Star Schools hopes to see you at next year's convening!

State of Ohio Thomas D. Rutan Military Interstate Children's Compact Council (MIC3)



- Purple Star Designation Programs
- Recently Approved
- Proposing/Pending Legislation
- No Current Programs/Legislation

Since 2020, MCEC and the Center for Public Research and Leadership at Columbia Law School (CPRL) have partnered together to study the implementation and impact of the Purple Star School initiative throughout the United States. CPRL's initial study, conducted in 2020, assessed the strengths, challenges, and potential areas of growth of Purple Star School programs in four states. A follow-up study conducted in 2022 expanded the scope of the research to include programs in six states and focused on the evolution and continued implementation of Purple Star School programs over time. The results of these studies are two comprehensive reports: The Purple Star School Designation Program Summary Report, released in 2021, and the Purple Star Schools Program Report, released in early 2023. Both reports provide findings and insights drawn from CPRL's research, as well as recommendations for maintaining and expanding rigorous, sustainable Purple Star School programs at a state, district, and school level. As the National Advocate for Purple Star Schools, MCEC created these reports with CPRL to serve as a valuable tool for any school or district working towards establishing or maintaining a military-friendly designation.

A Journey of Success – Guided by a Military Student Consultant

In 2020, MCEC created its Military Student Consultant Service Center – an elite cadre of first responders with unique skills in navigating the ins and outs of domestic and overseas education systems. Military Student Consultants (MSCs) help military-connected families from all over the world and all branches of the military.

Military families face infinite challenges in their everyday lives. They might be relocating with a child who has special needs, dealing with care for a service member, grappling with the stresses of separation, or other difficult disruptions. Or, they may simply need to understand the best ways to handle school requirements that can be drastically different from one location to the next.

Mark Patton, our MSC based in North Carolina, related his experiences in guiding one military-connected family – and the life-changing impact it will have on their child's college education and career aspirations. Here is his account:

This particular case was as complex as any I have handled. The family lived off-base overseas after the father took a civil service job upon his retirement from the military. As a result, their son had attended local schools in a system that was a very different system from U.S. schools. Now a senior, he had earned acceptance into a prestigious U.S. university. His goal was a career in aerospace, and he knew that internships with companies like Boeing or Lockheed-Martin could improve his potential.

At first, the family's questions focused on financial aid opportunities, and the pros and cons of attending college overseas versus accepting a scholarship to

a large U.S. university. We explored all the options together, including VA-sponsored financial aid. To understand all the variables and determine the best course, we outlined actions and research we would all undertake.

The result was quite a journey! My steps included:

- Calling a well-known expert in the student's desired field to explore how the choice of school might impact his professional aspirations.
- Learning about the importance of attending a college with a certified professional program, which was essential for the student's desired internships.
- Finding that the overseas college did not have that certification nor did the country have a reciprocal agreement with the U.S. – which would have limited the student's internships and ongoing career opportunities.



Since the U.S. university was clearly the better choice, my next call was to a Dean/Advisor there to help pave the way for the student's success. The school needed to understand that he was not a typical U.S. or international student, but what we think of as a "Third Culture Kid."

What difference would that make? In one example, it meant that the family could not follow through on requirements like attending mandatory in-person orientation that was held prior to the student's



graduation from high school overseas. Having a real conversation helped me gain the Dean's understanding – which might not have happened over email. The Dean was so receptive that we even discussed training for the university's staff on understanding Third Culture Kids, and about what a Purple Star School designation could mean for the university.

In the process, I also confirmed that since the student had already been accepted, he would not need to provide his transcripts again (which had been in question due to a simple administrative oversight). This was quite a relief; the additional transcript request had caused uncertainty for the family over the student's acceptance status.

The university stepped up to be both welcoming and accommodating for the student's situation. By the time I reconnected with the family, the university had already contacted them with a better plan for the summer, including a virtual orientation followed by a "move-in" orientation with two other students with third-culture backgrounds.

All of us — myself, the family, and the university — learned a lot along the way, but the student was the real winner. We are all now in sync, working on his behalf while he finishes his overseas high school career.

The Military Student Consultant Service Center is made possible with the support of USAA.



Third Culture Kids

Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are children who live in a culture other than their country of nationality or their parent's country of nationality for a significant part of their childhood. There are many great books and podcasts to help further understand the issues and impact of global mobility on individuals.

Here are several MCEC Podcasts discussing the topic:

Understanding Third Culture Kids:

Chris O provides insight on topics surrounding Third Culture Kids (TCK) and how understanding this concept can help military kids use the skills essential to navigating life successfully.



Purple Up: Meet Alana, A Third Culture Kid

Military Kid Alana shares the highlights and the challenges related to being a Third Culture Kid.





Join the STUDENT TRAINING at the 2024 MCEC Global Training Summit in Washington, DC!

Don't miss this fantastic opportunity for MCEC Student 2 Student® teams and all other peer-to-peer student transition teams from around the world to network and collaborate with each other at the 2024 MCEC Global Training Summit (GTS).

Learn from some of our nation's most influential leaders, subject matter experts, and educators and explore our nation's capital and its rich history.

When: July 28-31, 2024

Who: S2S Elementary Sponsors

S2S Middle and High School Students
and Adult Advisors

Peer-to-Peer Student Transition Teams
(High School and Middle School, and
Elementary faculty/team sponsors)

**For more information or if you are
interested in attending this year's
MCEC GTS with your students,
please complete this form by
February 1, 2024**



- Completing this form does not lock in your attendance but will allow us to better plan and explore funding opportunities for your team, if needed.
- Middle and high school teams may bring students and adult sponsors (up to 10 people per team). Students must be 12 and older to attend.
- Students will share a room with other students from their school, so schools must bring an even number of boys and girls (ie, 2 boys and 2 girls, 4 boys).
- Elementary-level teams are limited to adult sponsors only.
- If you have questions or need further information about this event, please email Rollie.Sampson@MilitaryChild.org

Tentative Student Agenda

Events listed are subject to change

Sunday July 28, 2024

9 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Student teams arrive in DC
3 – 5 p.m.	Student team registration and hotel check-in
5 - 7:30 p.m.	Dinner on your own
7:30 - 9 p.m.	Welcome to the MCEC GTS w/ dessert bar

Monday July 29, 2024

7:30 - 8 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30 -10 a.m.	Student Training
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Student Outing & Lunch
5 - 6 p.m.	Return to hotel
6 - 8:30 p.m.	GTS Opening General Session – Dinner served

Tuesday July 30, 2024

7 - 8:15 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Student Training
12:15 -1:45 p.m.	Lunch & Learn Student Training
2 - 4:45 p.m.	Student Training
5 p.m.	Dinner on your own & evening activities

Wednesday July 31, 2024

7 - 8:15 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30 – 12 p.m.	Student Training
12:15 -1:45 p.m.	Lunch & Learn Student Training
2 - 3 p.m.	GTS Closing General Session & S2S Team of the Year Awards
3 p.m.	Free time and dinner on your own w/ potential team departures

Thursday August 1, 2024

Breakfast on your own –
All student teams depart



Calling all Presenters to the 2024 MCEC Global Training Summit!

Planning for success starts with a strong foundation. Foundational learning that is accessible, focused, and nurtured boosts military-connected students' confidence early and provides them a sense of clarity about their strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations to prepare them for a global future.

Join us at the 2024 MCEC Global Training Summit to explore sessions and content highlighting three **Foundational Pillars** to build a strong framework enabling each military-connected child to thrive and unlock their full potential on their journey to being college-, work-, and life-ready:

Life-Long Learning Pillar

Nurturing a curiosity that extends outside the classroom begins both inside the classroom and the home. Clear pathways for future successes are built by students who are motivated to gain new knowledge even after their formal education concludes.

Well-Being Pillar

There is a direct relationship between well-being and academic achievement. Building a foundation to enhance well-being requires a concerted approach involving teachers, parents, and all the caring adults and professionals in a student's life.

Community-Building Pillar

The value of fostering achievement outside of the classroom cannot be overstated. Grades, test scores, and college acceptance can be measures of student success. Making a difference outside the classroom – in the community – is a key indicator of achievement and potential for all students. That's even more true for military students, who are often the "new kids" at their schools.



CLICK HERE

To learn more about the 2024 MCEC GTS Call for Presenters and/or to submit a proposal.

Proposals due by Tuesday, January 16, 2024



[MilitaryChild.org](https://militarychild.org)

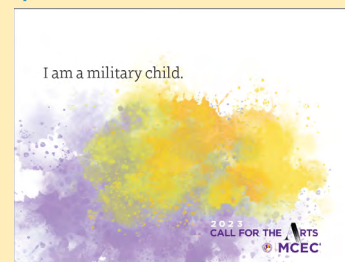
MCEC —STORE—



MCEC Calendar

Let the artwork of military children inspire you as you stay organized in the new year.

\$7.50



Call for the Arts Book

This beautiful book is a glimpse into the world of military children – as seen through their eyes.

\$35.00



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Ginsburg

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may bring
challenges.
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to meet those

challenges as a family while staying
firmly committed to raising a
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FUTURE SUCCESS.



SAVE THE DATE

JULY 29 - 31, 2024
WASHINGTON, DC