EDUCATION OF THE MILITARY CHILD IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
Current Dimensions of Educational Experiences for Army Children

"I am exceedingly proud of our Army Families, especially our children who amaze me with their strength and resilience…"

General Raymond T. Odierno
Chief of Staff of the US Army

A Report on the Research Conducted by the
Military Child Education Coalition for the U.S. Army, 2012

EDUCATION OF THE MILITARY CHILD IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
Current Dimensions of Current Educational Experiences for Army Children

The United States Army Installation Management Command, G-9, Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation asked the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) to conduct a study to develop recommendations for both Military leaders and educators on the impacts of school policies, priorities, processes, programs and systems on Military-connected children's education. The results of the Education of the Military Child in the 21st Century Study (EMC-21) are set forth in this report, along with the ancillary publications, under the provisions of Contract NAFBA1-04-D-0043.

All opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendation expressed in this report, as well as in the ancillary publications, are those of the MCEC Senior Research Team and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Army.

The EMC-21 Report, as well as ancillary publications, may be used for brief quotations in reviews, scholarly works, education-related presentations/speeches, or administrative procedures/policy development so long as the appropriate credit is given.

To obtain the more information about this report or ancillary publications, contact:

ABOUT THE MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COALITION

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, world-wide organization. A model of positive leadership and advocacy, the work of the MCEC is focused on ensuring quality educational opportunities for all military-connected children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition. The MCEC performs research, conducts professional institutes and conferences, and develops and publishes resources for all constituencies.

U.S. Army Education of the Military Child in the 21st Century Study, 2012
First printing 2012

"...In the 2001 Secondary Education Transition Study, the majority of Army parents who were interviewed reported overwhelming school transition challenges associated with relocation to a new duty station. In response, we placed School Liaison Officers on garrisons worldwide; provided training to school districts and communities; and began using social media and technology solutions for homework support, information and assistance. These initiatives have significantly improved school transitions for military children. In fact, over 75% EMC-21 study participants indicated no school transition issues. This is a significant accomplishment and validates for me the direction the Army has taken to provide school support to our Families. After all, the children of our Military Service members should have access to the best education we have to offer. They deserve nothing less."

General Raymond T. Odierno
Chief of Staff of the US Army

Letter of Transmittal

General Ray T. Odierno
Chief of Staff
United States Army
Pentagon
Washington, D.C.

Dear General Odierno,

In October 2007, U.S. Army leadership made a commitment via the Army Family Covenant to ensure excellence in schools serving Army children. In March 2009, cognizant of the challenges that children face with school transitions and separation from parents due to deployments, then-U.S. Army Chief of Staff George Casey initiated the Education of the Military Child in the 21st Century (EMC-21) Research Project with the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). It has been my privilege to be part of the senior EMC-21 research team, along with Chairman of the MCEC General (Retired) Benjamin Griffin and the MCEC Director of Research Greg Cook.

The overarching purpose of the EMC-21 Study was to develop recommendations for both Military leaders and educators on the impacts of school policies, priorities, processes, programs and systems on Military-connected children's education. A special emphasis area was to examine the effects of mobility and deployments. The research is intended to enhance the partnerships between Army installations and their local school systems. Field researchers at 11 installations and 12 supporting local education agencies/school districts conducted 923 interviews with installation leadership, Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS) personnel, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students, with a representative sample from each installation/school system. Responses to these interviews drew from over 90 different questions and resulted in more than 7,000 pages of data for analysis.

I am pleased to report on behalf of the MCEC Board of Directors and the MCEC research team that we have completed the EMC-21 Research Project. In accordance with the Army's charter, guidance, and provisions, this research project is presented for your consideration.

It focuses on the five following areas:

- Follow up on SETS 2001: conducting a comprehensive study of the unique challenges and overall effects of transition on Military children throughout their school experience; a follow-up of the Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS, 2001).
- Unique Learning Needs: considering school program transition complexities related to gifted student and enrichment programs, including advanced academics, as well as special needs; discovering what options and opportunities are available along with barriers.

- Home Schooling: examining homeschooling in the Military community, looking at support programs and available systems; this section focuses on exploring the reasons that Military Families choose to home school, how they undertake the task, and how transition effects their education.
- Deployments: studying the implications and impact of multiple deployments on the educational experiences of Military-connected students.
- National Guard and Reserve Families: exploring the challenges that National Guard and Reserve Families face in regard to the education of their children when their Military Family member deploys.
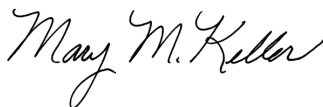
We trust that we have been faithful in meeting your expectations. We believe that the issues, challenges, successes, and concerns raised in our report can be understood and addressed by all in a united effort for the sake of all highly mobile students.

Throughout this study – and from the voices of the parents and students – the research team saw evidence of many Army programs working. For example, when addressing the issue of transition, over 75 percent of the parents reported no school transitions issues, a change in pattern from parent responses from the SETS 2001 Study when the majority of parents reported transition challenges.

Although many individuals have provided constructive comments, support, and suggestions, the responsibility for the final content of this report and the related EMC-21 products rests with the senior research team and with the Military Child Education Coalition.

Thank you, General and Mrs. Odierno, for your unwavering commitment to education and for your confidence in providing us with this opportunity to serve our children and our country.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary M. Keller

Dr. Mary Keller
President & CEO
Military Child Education Coalition

Notes From the Research Team:
Perseverance, Pride and Dedication

"This is his third deployment and he's somewhere in Afghanistan. I have three little brothers and I know it's affected them and me because the war did change my father and he came back different. I know that there is counseling that Soldiers and their Families can have when they come back, but my dad's stubborn and he doesn't think we need that. So I'm going to try to ask him if we can get counseling when he comes back, just to readjust."

Student [whose father has been deployed three times]

Since the inception of EMC-21 in March 2009, the research team has collected over 900 interviews and hundreds of supporting documents. Six hundred hours of recorded interviews have been transcribed to create over 7,000 pages of written text. We have been honored to see students, parents and educators supporting one another during transition and deployment. The research team cannot express how humbling an experience it was to read the stories of students, parents and educators, each of whom plays a critical role in support of the Army's soldiers and their loved ones.

Exploratory research of EMC-21 led to profound findings.

Students portrayed pride in their parents; many spoke with wisdom of the multiple deployments they experienced and talked frankly about how their behaviors changed during their adolescent growth from shock and dismay to acceptance and helping. Researchers in some cases were touched by the words of children speaking with the wisdom of adults. When the team saw this we realized that military education systems about deployment and separation were filtering down through the stay at home parent to the children. When asking students what advice that they would give other students they would talk about "keeping the faith" and "sticking it out", words that typically come from Military Family values and culture. With the separation of loved ones came increased levels of stress, and it was highly evident from the research that children are serving to support the family unit along with their parents.

Parents overall were not negative about the multiple deployments and transitions rather they displayed attitudes of acceptance, perseverance, and commitment. Researchers could see weariness from parents who had experienced multiple deployments. There is controversy on whether multiple deployments build resiliency. From the EMC-21 research we saw that resiliency depended on many factors: the number and ages of children, surrounding support structures, and the environment of the deployed love one. We can draw on the wisdom of those parents who have experienced multiple transitions and deployments to help other military-connected parents work through the complexities they face.

Educators are faced with many pressures when faced with school polices, fluid education environments, and accountability. The research team observed a strong commitment to serve students; they showed a wiliness to support when they were aware of a problem. The research found that two-way communications between parents and educators, required constant attention from both parents and educators and was critical to the educational success of the children. Researchers found and affirmed (current research) that schools and educators play a critical role in the normalcy of military connected student's lives. Social connections such as clubs and sports are hugely important for students. Educators fill a critical role of not only teacher, but mentors, coaching and guiding adults.

"I think that year he missed two of my birthdays and all of the holidays in between. He'd been to every one of my football games - and then all of a sudden not to see him there... But I never felt upset, more pride that he was doing something better than most people had ever done in their lives, and that's what helped me get through it."

Student

Appendices

EMC
-21

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"The first time my dad got deployed I think I was in the 5th grade. I just remember walking into the classroom and putting my head down. I just started crying and crying. The first one, oh, I was heartbroken; I was so sad."

Student

Introduction and Central Themes

For many Military Families (especially U.S. Army Families) multiple and extended deployments have been a routine part of life since 2001. The U.S. Army has deployed over 1.1 million soldiers since 2001 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) (Casey & McHugh, 2011)[1]. This means that approximately 700,000 U.S. Army school-age students have had a parent deployed. Emerging research has begun to look at the emotional and behavioral impact of repeated deployments on students (See Appendices A and B).
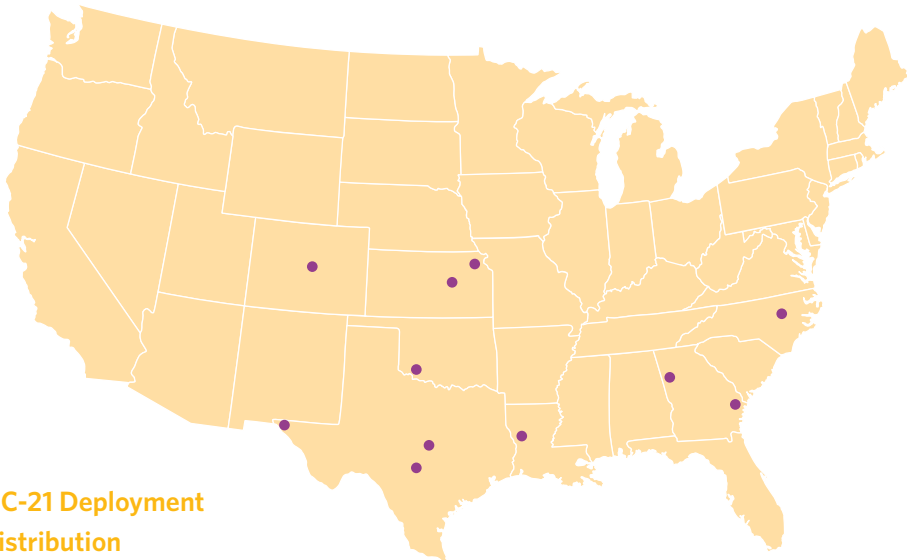
Figure 1: EMC-21 Deployment Response Distribution

Installation	Students	Parents	Administrators	Educators
Fort Benning	31	28	18	17
Fort Bliss	19	27	10	15
Fort Bragg	31	4	10	9
Fort Carson	24	23	13	16
Fort Hood	27	20	18	10
Fort Leavenworth	23	16	19	16
Fort Polk	25	18	21	18
Fort Riley	31	29	21	18
Fort Sam Houston	5	1	9	14
Fort Sill	26	22	22	19
Fort Stewart	16	7	14	10

1 Effective 1 September 2010, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) transitioned to Operation New Dawn (OND) aligning with the change of mission for U.S. forces in Iraq.

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The EMC-21 Study fundamentally focused on analyzing whether multiple deployments were causing stress on the education of Military-connected students. The perspectives varied, and in many cases significantly diverged, between students, parents, and educators. Students graduating from high school today were in the second grade when deployments began in response to the attacks of 9/11. Generally, this group of students has likely experienced multiple deployments of a parent throughout their education. Comparatively, parents of younger students currently in the primary grades may have deployed multiple times, but the child's needs and ability to understand and cope with the impacts could be significantly different, simply due to their age.
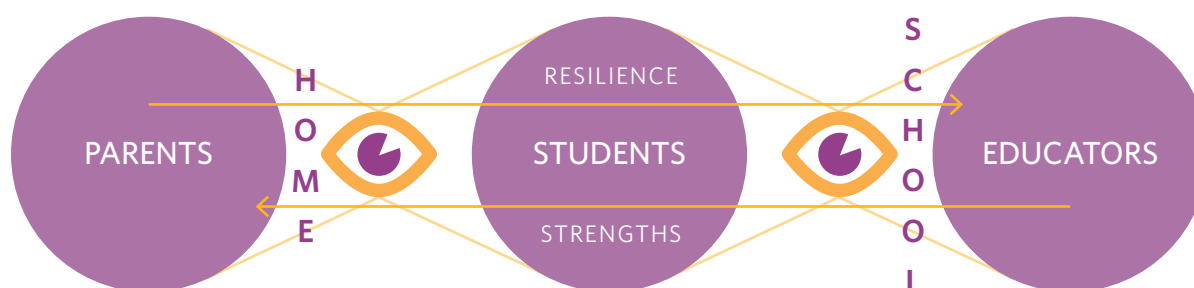
Figure 2: Perspectives on the Impacts of Multiple Deployments

The educator's assessment of the educational impacts of multiple deployments reflect their views through the lens of the "business of school" (i.e. attendance, enrollment, and support) and the impacts to the student's life outside of school hours (i.e. the home life dynamics when one parent is gone). The parents' view tended to be dependent on their assessment of how well their child's school provided support and responded to any concerns during a deployment, and their ability as the sole parent to respond to the "business of home" including their child's educational requirements outside of normal school hours.

Under the culture of deployments, the EMC-21 Study examines some of the stressors and challenges related to the education of students as well as some of the strengths and resilience characteristics demonstrated by the Military-connected child. Specific topics addressed were:

- The impact of deployment on the child's education
- Families' experiences with multiple deployments
- Communication technology and its role in the Family experience
- The impact of deployments on schools
- The impact on the day-to-day work of teachers
- School policies that address situations related to deployment
- Support programs in schools that address deployment
- The impact of multiple deployments on stress, resilience, and coping for students, parents, and educators

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Deployment Findings and Themes

WHO	THEME	FINDINGS
Students (268)	Support Programs and Services Students Offer Advice and Wisdom that is Realistic and Hopeful Factors that Influence Coping	• Less than half of the students interviewed accessed any type of support program. • Students who have experienced deployment of a parent speak about the realities of deployment but express a hopeful and resilient attitude along with pride in their service member parent. • School-based extracurricular activities, especially sports programs, were most frequently mentioned by students as their venue for finding support during a parent's deployment. • A child's response to a parental deployment is determined by a combination of factors-age, environment, previous experiences, and perception-which are constantly evolving.
Parents (195)	The Challenges for the "Suddenly Single" Parent at Home How Students Respond to Deployments Educational Impact of Deployment Use of Support Programs and Services	• Taking on the role of a single parent presents challenges that exist and are significant across all ages of students. • Some parents observe an adverse change in the behavior of their students, but quick intervention is effective in returning the child to normal. • The majority of parents reported deployments had no impact on the education of the child. • Parents were cautious about allowing students to participate in support programs citing concerns with victimization of students.
Families (Students and Parents)	Definitions of Deployment are Different Common Threads of Resilience Reintegration	• For the Family, "Gone is gone." Deployment is not always defined as an assignment to a combat zone; Families consider all separations as a "deployment." • The common threads for Families that are coping well with deployments include: connectedness to the community, the maintenance of routines and extra-curricular activities, and the competence and confidence that comes from experience. • Reintegration produces a unique set of challenges that differ from deployment and that affect all Family members • Taking on household responsibilities in the absence of a parent may be beneficial to the student and enhance his resilience.

WHO	THEME	FINDINGS
Educators (Administrators and Teachers) (337)	Deployments Do Impact Schools Deployments Have Become "Normal" for Educators Educators' Concerns with their Students' Home Environment Educator and Support	• Deployments impact the "business" of running a school and the education of the Military-connected students attending the school. • Teachers expressed their opinion that deployment-related issues were something they had to manage every day. • School Administrators and teachers expressed the phenomenon of "Parentification" – students taking on extraordinary responsibilities at home – as a concern. • Schools offer a variety of support programs and services but educators, specifically teachers, are not always knowledgeable about these resources.
Parents and Students	Technology, Communication and the Deployed Parent	• Advancement in technology has changed the communication landscape for the good; however, easy access to information without filters can be stressful. • Parents tend to guard the younger students from media coverage on the war but the high school aged students have access to news 24/7.
Overall Finding	Need for Quantifiable Data	• The lack of quantifiable data to determine where the needs are greatest impedes a school district's (and to a certain extent, the supported installation's) ability to maximize the available resources and support currently available for Military-connected students.

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Voices of the Students:
Deployment, Schools, and Support

"There is this one lunch group that helps with your emotions with your parents being deployed. It helps you not feel alone. It's very helpful."

Student

The EMC-21 research yielded rich data gleaned from comments, opinions, and ideas from students about their experiences with having a deployed parent. Ideas relevant to their education experience primarily centered on support from teachers and programs offered through the school. Students were asked the following:

- What kind of activities or groups did you participate in related to deployment? (If the student answered "none," they were asked if any programs were available, and if so, why they didn't participate.)
- What type of deployment-related programs/groups would you like to see for students your age?

"In elementary school they had groups for kids that had deployed parents that would hang out, comfort each other, play games, and be a little more comfortable. I learned that I should be really happy when Dad calls and keep bad news to a minimum and keep cheerful."

Student

"Once a week in elementary school there was a program for anyone who had a deployed parent and it was about the best program. We'd talk about how deployment affected us and do activities that would help us and get boxes for soldiers. It made us realize everyone else is going through what we're going through, we're not alone."

Student

Twenty-five percent of the students responded they had participated in some type of deployment-related activities at their school including individual meetings with the counselor, activity centered get-to-gathers with other students (usually after school), and counseling groups that meet and talk. A smaller subset of the students in this 25 percent had attended some type of group counseling one time and decided it was not for them. A large percentage of the students at one installation mentioned participation in the school districts' deployment support group, a monthly activity-based program in which the students make something for their deployed parent or assemble "care packages" for other deployed Soldiers. Often the students who were interviewed reflected on the experiences when they were younger (elementary school), remembering those programs as helpful. A recurring theme in the respondents' comments about the school support programs is that it is beneficial to "know you are not alone." Connecting to other students who are going through a similar experience provides a sense of comfort.

Twenty-nine percent of the students reported that they participated in some type of deployment program outside of school. Participation with a parent, in this case always a mother, in a Family Readiness Group (FRG) was the most frequently mentioned activity or program. The students who were attending the FRG meetings often spoke of babysitting while the parents had their meetings. They also helped with care packages, fundraising, and a few of the students said they had a teen group that got together in a room while the parents met and they just "hung out and talked." The following quotes are typical of the comments about experience with participation in FRG meetings:

"My mom was in charge of a lot and she would drag us to everything, and I pretty much baby sat for every FRG meeting."

Student

"We just participated in my mom's FRG. Every month we have something different that we do."

Student

A small number of the interviewed students said they were able to attend special summer camps (Camp Warrior and Camp Purple) with other students who had a deployed parent. Other types of activities, programs, and services that were mentioned with less frequency were:

- Service projects with Wounded Warrior Units
- Unit support group meetings with other teens
- Unit parties
- Private counseling
- Informal neighborhood parties
- Strong Bonds Retreat
- Free classes through Child, Youth and School Services

Nearly half (46 percent) of the students responding to this question, reported that they did not participate in any type of programs or activity related to deployment. The most frequent response was "I don't know" or "I just didn't." When the students did articulate a reason, they fell into the categories below which are listed beginning from the most frequently reported:

- There wasn't (or student wasn't aware) anything available
- Did not have a need to participate
- Did not like the idea of support groups or did not think they would be interested
- Too busy with other activities
- Parent was no longer deployed
- No other Military kids in the area
- They were not sure what went on at the meetings
- Did not live on-post where the programs were occurring

"I stayed in sports and those helped me get through the deployment."

Student

Several students reported that they participated in some type of sports program during their parents' deployment. Many of these students and youth expressed the belief that the best thing to do when you had a parent deployed was "stay busy" with sports. Even though participation in sports may not be considered "deployment support," it is one way to deal with stress. A 2005 study for the Department of Defense reported various ways students dealt with stress included participation in sports. (Huebner & Mancini, June, 2005)

"I played soccer for [Team]. I got to meet some new friends and I got to focus on soccer and not worry about where my dad was and still have a good time."

Student

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When asked about the type of programs they would like to have available, the overwhelming majority said that some type of support group would be a good idea. Even if they did not personally feel the need for support, students expressed a belief that it was important for this type of support to be available to those who need it. They also liked the idea of less formal support groups that were organized around some type of fun activity like bowling or preparing care packages for single Soldiers but allowed you to be around other kids who were going through some of the same experiences.

"I think that students my age aren't really comfortable talking about that kind of stuff. I think that high-schoolers don't want to be singled out. I think that it should be more of a student support group."

Student

How students cope and the type of support that is helpful to them is as different as each child's Family, situation, and age. The majority of the students do agree, however, that it is important to stay busy, and talk to someone if help is needed – such as a friend, a parent, a counselor, or a teacher. Students also recognized that sometimes they have the responsibility to find help for themselves.

"I would definitely find someone an adult or a mentor you can talk to about it. It is stressful if they're going overseas and you don't know what's going to be happening. Talk to someone about it. Get together with some friends or something like that."

Student (Parent Deployment Count: 1)

High school students also mentioned that they would like more information about their parent's deployment. They want to be informed about "what is going on over there." Some of the students also mentioned that there is a need for programs and information to help students understand more about the reintegration process.

"There needs to be a program telling them to give their soldier time; that it's going to take them a while to finally come back to the United States and realize, "I'm not being shot at every ten seconds." You need a program to be able to tell them how to react when they come back home."

Student (Parent Deployment Count: 2)

In 2002, Dr. Richard Lerner launched the longitudinal 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development and to date has collected data on 7,000 fifth through twelfth grade 4-H students in 43 states. His research indicates that students in 4-H (85,000 U.S. Army youth participate in 4-H programs) score higher on positive youth development. They have more competence, confidence, and caring for other people. They are connected to their community, and academically have higher grades and higher expectations about attending college.[2]

2 Dr. Richard (Rich) Lerner is the Director of the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development, Tufts University.

Coping with Deployment Stressors: Resilient Students

Deployments, especially repeated deployments, can significantly shape the experiences of Military-connected students. Challenges included experiencing sadness about a parent leaving or missing milestone events; lack of help with homework; and transportation issues. Students' perspectives varied on whether first deployments were more difficult than second deployments, and whether it was more challenging to have a parent deployed as a younger or older student. The variables of the environment, the age and stage of development, and the situation contribute to making the experience of a deployed parent dynamic. Every child has a unique story.

"This is his third deployment and he's somewhere in Afghanistan. I have three little brothers and I know it's affected them and me because the war did change my father and he came back different. I know that there is counseling that Soldiers and their Families can have when they come back but my dad's stubborn and he doesn't think we need that. So I'm going to try to ask him if we can get counseling when he comes back, just to readjust."

Student (Parent Deployment Count: 3)

"My dad has been deployed three times all to Iraq. The last time he was deployed in 2005 it was very hard…I was young. I think I was in the 6th or 7th grade. It was different. I hadn't had my dad around in a while because my parents got separated. The second time that he left…I didn't stay. I went back with my mom. And I think that that helped because I could relate with my mom better than my step-mom and I could tell her things. And the third time I stayed here with my step-mom and I have a little brother now. And it's easier now because it's his job and you just kind of have to deal with it."

Student (Parent Deployment Count: 3)

"Have someone you can express those feelings to because if you keep all those feelings bottled up you're going to be a mess."

Student (Parent Deployment Count: Multiple)

"My stepfather was deployed in Iraq. My mother was deployed in Korea and I believe Iraq and another country, Kuwait. I miss my parents, I miss them a lot. Yeah, it's hard."

Student

Older students relate the increased difficulty of the deployed parent missing the big events in their lives. Family celebrations are just not as joyful when a parent is missing.

"I think that year he missed two of my birthdays and all of the holidays in between. He'd been to every one of your football games and then all of a sudden not to see him there. I never felt upset, more pride that he was doing something better than most people had ever done in their lives, and that's what helped me get through it."

Student

"When I got into my middle and high school it was hard because I really needed that fatherly figure. And he's missed my whole volley ball and cheer season, so that was hard."

Student (Parent Deployment Count: 4)

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Students recognize that the parent left at home is stressed. The responsibilities of managing activities for multiple children may mean that students do not get to do everything they want to do.

"My mom gets really stressed because there isn't that extra parent around. And I can't do a lot of the free things that I like to do because I don't have a dad to take me there."

Student (Parent Deployment Count: 3)

"If they're having trouble these teachers don't hesitate to give counselors a call and we do have a student assistance program that if they're struggling we can get them connected with a group that will meet every other week or so and really just work with them individually."

Administrator

"The school is the constant in these kids' lives when parents are gone, or when parents are constantly coming and going."

Administrator

As a child gets older, parents need to understand that the child is more aware of what their deployed parent is doing. Parents must determine the appropriate amount of exposure to news and what information to share with each child. Parents and the other caring adults in the lives of students should be cognizant that a child's thoughts may be preoccupied with worry for the deployed parent, even if the child is not talking it.

"About the third grade I didn't really see much of my dad. We didn't have a lot of communication then, so my mind would always wander to, 'I wonder what he's doing now, if he's okay. I haven't talked to him in a long time, what's going on? Is my mom not telling me something? How am I going to find out for myself?'"

Student (Parent Deployment Count: Multiple)

School can be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing stress and disruption at home. The daily routine, the known expectations, and the social outlet that school provides can be a respite for students whose home life may be in upheaval due to a deployed parent. School may be one thing in the life of students that remains constant. A 2008 study by the Rand Corporation reports school staff "believed as a result of their situation at home, students are relying on the school and school staff for social and emotional support at unprecedented levels" (Chandra, Martin, Hawkins, & Richardson, 2010). This idea is substantiated by the educators interviewed in the EMC-21 Study and further explored on page 33 in the "Views of the Educators" subsection of this chapter.

Perspectives of the Parents: Home and School

In the EMC-21 Study, parents and students were asked to respond to the following question:

Has anyone in your Family ever deployed, and if so who, how many times, and where did they deploy?[3]

Husband Deployed	Wife Deployed Deployed	Self Deployed Deployed	Dual Military, both have deployed	Other Family Member *
148	1	25	6	11

*Other Family members included brothers, dads, moms, sisters, and students

Table 1: Parent Response Regarding Deployment "Has anyone in your Family ever deployed?"

No Experience	1 Deployment	2 Deployments	3 Deployments	4 or More Deployments*
15	39	54	34	53

*A spouse of a Special Operations Soldier reported the largest number which was 20.

Table 2: Number of Deployments (Parent Response)

No Experience	Father Deployed	Mother Deployed	Step parent Deployed	Both Parents Including Parent and Step Parent (dual Military)	Other Family Member (sibling and grandparents)
7	224	6	15	17	14

Table 3: Student Response Regarding Deployment

1 Deployment	2 Deployments	3 Deployments	4 or More Deployments*
58	87	61	56

Table 4: Number of Deployments (Student Response)

*(Note: This is the number of times a student reported having had a parent deployed. If a student has two parents in the Military and they each deployed one time, this would be reflected in the column "2 Deployments.")

3 The OIF "surge" of five additional U.S. Army Brigade Combat Teams was announced in February 2007. In April 2007, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates announced an interim policy change that tours of Active U.S. Army units deployed (and scheduled to deploy) to OEF/OIF would be increased to 15 months. Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and U.S. Army Reserve Component units were not affected. Upon conclusion of the "surge" in September 2008, the Defense Department announced that beginning in January 2009, deploying Active U.S. Army units would return to 12-month deployments. In August 2011, the U.S. Army announced its intention to institute nine-month deployments effective January 2012.

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Defining Deployment

The Military defines deployment as "the relocation of forces and material to desired operational areas. Deployment encompasses all activities from origin or home station through destination, specifically including intra-continental United States, inter-theater, and intra-theater movement legs, staging, and holding areas."[4] In the past ten years, the Military has most often used the term in reference to individuals or units going to Iraq or Afghanistan in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)/Operation New Dawn (OND) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

For some parents, deployed meant anytime the Military Family member was away from home, while for others it meant being in Iraq, Afghanistan, or another area of combat to include peacekeeping missions to Bosnia and Kosovo.

The EMC-21 Study responses reveal that for many Military Families "deployment" has multiple definitions, however. For some parents, deployed meant anytime the Military Family member was away from home, while for others it meant being in Iraq, Afghanistan, or another area of combat to include peacekeeping missions to Bosnia and Kosovo. There were 195 parents interviewed in this study. The parents most frequently mentioned deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, followed by Kosovo and Bosnia. Unaccompanied tours, usually to Korea, were included in the response to this question by 19 percent of the parents. Other non-combat deployments mentioned included Kuwait, Egypt, Germany, and several state-side locations.

Different definitions of deployment might reflect the different Family experiences. Twenty-eight of the parents interviewed were Active Duty service members who talked about deployment from their own perspective. Fifteen of the parents interviewed had never experienced a deployment or were getting ready for a spouse to deploy in the next few months. The interviews also included the spouse of an Active Reservist (AGR) who talked about her husband's "deployments" to Texas, Massachusetts, and California.

Students responded in a similar manner: twenty-seven percent included unaccompanied tours in their response. The majority of the students had experienced a father being deployed.

For the Family – "Gone is gone."

In terms of the Family, experiences with deployments to non-combat zones, (i.e., Germany and California) are described in many ways like deployments to war. With the exception of worry related to the safety of a service member, spouses left at home shared that they have many of the same issues: communication, losing the support of the second parent for homework or transportation duties, changes in behavior of students, and the myriad of challenges that come with single parenthood. The challenges are the same whether the service member takes an unaccompanied tour to Korea or is deployed to Afghanistan.

"It's challenging for me as a parent…my students are involved in a lot of (activities). I don't have Family here; I have friends here that help me out. I'm a full-time mother, a full-time worker, I'm in school full-time. It's tough just having to take care of everything by yourself."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 2)

"It's just been hard because the last two (deployments) have been back to back. It's just hard being a single parent."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 4)

4 (Joint Publication 1-02: DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms)

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Families do not differentiate between the types of separation, only that their loved one is no longer available. The child whose parent is in Korea will experience the absence at high school graduation, band concerts, birthdays, and holidays just as if that parent were deployed to a combat zone. Even with modern technology, some factors such as time zones, different access to technology in theater, and mission requirements make it difficult to maintain contact when physically separated. Moreover, a parent on a long-term TDY (temporary duty) to California is equally restricted in their ability to pick students up from extracurricular activities or attend a soccer game as is the parent deployed to Africa. Programs and services that specifically serve only students with parents deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan are missing the opportunity to engage Families with many of the same issues despite different circumstances.

	Combat Zone Deployment	Other "Deployment"
Roles renegotiated	•	•
New lines of communication established	•	•
Milestone events missed	•	•
Physical support and help maintaining the Family's daily routines	•	•
Worry about safety	•	
Reintegration	•	•

Not all deployments are the same. There are several factors that may affect the Families' experiences with deployment. These may include the length of deployment, whether or not the service member deploys with a unit or as an individual augmentee, and the mission itself. For the Family, an important factor is the age of the child when the first, second, or subsequent deployments occur.

Parents interviewed for the EMC-21 Study reported individual challenges and situations such as moving immediately prior to a deployment, dealing with the illness or death of a Family member during a deployment, receiving a diagnosis of serious illness, change in the employment status, and various other life stressing events too nervous to include. They recognize that these things happen and they work through them the best way they can.

"I had a baby by myself. I had a miscarriage by myself. I drove myself to the hospital for both births by myself. He's in the Army and that's what you do."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 3)

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Deployment and Students' Academic Performance

A study by the Rand Corporation published in 2011 found that the cumulative amount of time a parent was deployed, rather than the number of deployments, had a negative impact on the academic performance of elementary and middle school students when that time exceeded 19 months (Richardson, et al., 2011). The majority of parents and students in the EMC-21 Study long passed the cumulative 19-month mark in addition to experiencing multiple deployments.

Seventy-five parents of high school students and 101 parents of elementary (grades K-7) students were asked to share their observations on how frequent and repeated deployments have impacted their child's education, specifically academics, behavior, and relationships with friends. The responses were often multi-faceted and complicated. Overall, slightly over half (53 percent) of the parents of high school students expressed the belief that deployments **did not have any impact** on their child's education.

"If his grades would drop a little we would talk about it on the phone and I would tell him what exactly he needed to get done; and his grades were always still good, so..."

Parent (Deployment Count: 3)

But because one must consider the child's age, siblings, where the Family was living and the length of time in the area prior to a deployment when evaluating the student's overall experience, one deployment may have significantly impacted grades while the next one did not.

One trend seen in the responses was the idea of a "dip" in grades: initially the child's academic work suffered, but then it returned to normalcy. Twenty-eight percent of parents who said deployment impacted academics singled out an initial decline in grades followed by a return to normal. Grades tended to slip at the beginning of the deployment or when the parent returned to the deployment arena after the mid-tour Rest & Recuperation (R&R) leave. Parents reported that, upon realizing their child's grades were slipping, they would have a conversation with the child, the child's teacher, or enlist the support of friends and extended Family to help get the child back on track. When parents were aware, the problem was addressed before there were any long-term consequences or issues.

"At first he slacked off because I wasn't there to push him, but my wife got involved and her dad got involved and a couple other parents in the neighborhood helped to get him back on track."

Parent (Deployment Count: 1)

Parents who reported a negative impact on grades cited two primary reasons their students were not doing well in school during the deployment. The first reason mentioned was the absent parent had been actively involved with the child's education and was no longer available to supervise homework or help with assignments. Several parents commented that one of the most difficult aspects of being the only parent at home was homework. If the deployed parent is the parent who helped students with writing assignments, or was better able to explain the math problems, or simply was the parent who really paid attention to the homework, then this support is gone and the parent left at home has to fill this role. Homework, in light of being a "single parent" was mentioned with some frequency about the impact of deployment on a child's education.

"I have two students with two sets of homework and they are still small students who need Mommy's help and encouragement to get homework done, and something gets missed. There's less manpower to assist."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 2)

The second reason noted by parents regarding any decline in academics was the child's worry, sadness, and the inability to focus on school when a parent was deployed.

"My kids just have so much more on their minds. They don't sit and think about homework that's due, they sit and think about the safety of their dad; and so for the last 15 months when he was gone that was one full school year, part of another school year, it takes people at school to really help them."

Parent

"It's just a lot more difficult for a single parent to do it so I think absolutely homework help is very important."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 4)

However, of the 47 percent who did note an impact on academic performance, 11 percent of those parents perceived the effect as a positive growth experience; students worked a little harder in order to make their deployed parent proud, or students focused on school to keep their mind off the deployed parent. Two parents even suggested that their students are doing better in school because they want to have more options, like college, available to them when they graduate rather than the option of joining the Military.

Deployments as a Challenge

Less than eight percent of parents interviewed reported they had a difficult experience with deployments or saw them as a challenge. Parents who reported that the experience was especially difficult for them or their Family fell into two broad categories. The first category was those who experienced other significant, stressful events like health issues, change in Family structure, or the death of a Family member or friend. This is consistent with the literature that addresses multiple stresses and mental adjustment of the Family to deployment. The absence of the physical support and help from the deployed spouse exacerbated the stress during this time.

Secondly, parents of elementary school-age students who noted difficulties in the deployment experience cited behavioral changes in their students such as:

- Withdrawing
- Rebellion
- Crying
- Physical manifestations of stress, and
- Regression in developmental milestones

A review of scientific evidence about resilience and Military Families in 2008 stated that the focus of resiliency has shifted from solely individual to the interactions between the individual and the environment (MacDermid, Samper, Schwarz, Nishida, & Nyaronga, 2008). Even though a stressful deployment experience may be described as "hard," parents acknowledge the difficulties they may face, admit that they will not necessarily be easy, but accept they will get through them. They are facing the challenges and figuring out how to cope. Resilience is discussed further in this chapter of this report, under the subheading, "Opportunities to Foster Resilience."

"It was a terrible deployment. He was with the 82nd and there were a high number of casualties and I had to lead the FRG. It was physically and emotionally exhausting."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 2)

"The younger ones don't understand why he is not here and the older ones worry about him. It's hard to suddenly become a single parent and answer questions like, 'what do we do if daddy dies?'"

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 3)

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Repeated Deployments: Do They Get Easier?

The parents' perspectives differ as to whether or not deployments get easier. As one parent noted: **"Each deployment is different. Some people say that they get easier, they don't. They're just different."**

Each deployment feels different because a student's response to a parental deployment is a dynamic process. Parents commenting on the challenges and concerns of deployment defined these by the age of the students, the number of deployments, and the environment. These factors are unique to every Family and these factors can change frequently.

My mother passed away, and I had major surgery during the time he was deployed. So, it was very traumatic, for not only me but for the children, because there is no Family to come in and take care of them."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 2)

A student may be resilient and display coping skills during one deployment, but not respond similarly in subsequent deployments. Conversely, a student may struggle during the first deployment yet manage quite well for a second or third deployment. As Dr. Paula Rauch notes: "Most often behavior and communication reflect a combination of a child's state of development, temperament, and the specific ways the events in his life affect his routine"[5] (Rauch & Muriel, 2006).

"I think this last one was more difficult because my in-laws moved in with me right before he left. After a month and a half he got hit by an IED. How many more do we have to do? This one was hard because with him getting injured so early in the year that weighed on my mind throughout the year."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 4)

"I think the second one is harder on the kids because they know what to anticipate. Those couple months right before deployment are always the most stressful for the Family."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 2)

"The second deployment everyone knew what was going on, they knew what to expect, and they knew my dad might never come home, but we were too little to understand that in the first deployment. So the second deployment was much tougher."

Student (Parent Deployment Count: 2)

There are parents who say deployment is easier when students are young because the students do not understand what is going on. Conversely, parents will say deployments are difficult when the students are young for the same reason – they don't understand. Older students are able to understand more of the purpose of deployment, and in some cases this can make things easier: They are proud of their parents and appreciate their service to the nation. Older students are also able to better understand the inherent dangers associated with a deployment; they see the news and when coupled with normal adolescent developmental issues, this may cause the deployment to be more stressful.

One explanation that may shed light on why deployments get easier for some Families is the Inoculation Theory (Rutter, 1993). The Inoculation Theory suggests that navigating through a small challenge helps inoculate you against larger challenges. When one applies Inoculation Theory to the Military environment, experiences such as overcoming transition challenges like moving and changing schools inoculates Families against larger more stressful events like a year-long deployment. Likewise, the initial deployment may prepare Families to deal with subsequent deployments.

5 Rauch, P.K, and Muriel, A.C. (2006). *Raising an Emotionally Healthy Child When a Parent is Sick*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

"The first one was easier on me and harder on the students because they were all very small and they missed their daddy. This last one was easier because they all knew what to expect and they were all a little older and able to express their emotions."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

"It was a little hard for her to understand why Dad was gone a lot but now she's older and understands and appreciates what he's sacrificed for us and for his country."

<div align="right">Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 6)</div>

Deployments: Emotions and Behavior

Parents reported various types and degrees of emotional and behavioral responses to deployment in the EMC-21 Study. Fourteen percent of parents reported acting-out behaviors, and 23 percent of the parents reported abnormal emotional behaviors. These percentages align closely with a study published in 2010 in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry on the severity and prevalence of psychological distress on students whose parents were deployed. This study found approximately one-third of students whose parents were deployed demonstrated "clinically significant symptoms of self-reported anxiety compared with community norms" (Lester, et al., 2010).

The parents responding in the EMC-21 Study reported many behaviors and displays of emotions with varying degrees of prevalence and severity. These included:

- Crying
- Moodiness, withdrawal, and sulking
- Depression
- Anger, frustration, and tantrums
- Fear
- Acting out or misbehavior at home or school

- Apathy about school
- Overly sensitive
- Headaches and stomachaches
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares
- Overeating

In most cases, these behaviors were very temporary and students quickly returned to what the parent considered normal. In more extreme cases, parents have turned to mental health professionals to help their child work through the issues causing the behavior. The vast majority of parents, however, expressed belief that they were effectively dealing with any behaviors or emotional displays and they were not a major concern.

"...my boys, (ages 13 and 15) struggled, but we were able to talk to counselors, to get the support that they needed and just having close friends was really helpful too."

<div align="right">Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 5)</div>

"I was pretty selfish. As I think back on it, it was dumb of me; I should have been helping out instead of, 'I want this, I want that; if you don't give me that, I'm going to go to my room and not talk to you'."

<div align="right">Student</div>

"The second time he left I was in the 9th grade, so it was easier for me to handle it because I had already been through it. The second time I didn't take it as hard but I was still sad. I always knew there was the possibility something could happen but it wasn't as detrimental as the first time."

<div align="right">Student</div>

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Reintegration: A New Set of Challenges

Reintegration begins when a deployment ends and the Soldier returns home and assumes their pre-deployment roles. The reintegration experience is another area that reveals a range of challenges and experiences for Military Families. Parents and students of the EMC-21 Study were asked one question specific to the reintegration experience: *"Tell what it is like when your spouse (or parent) comes home from a deployment."*

"It's the most fabulous thing in the entire world. The minute they walk in the door, all your stress just kind of melts away."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 4)

Interview subjects who were experiencing their first deployment were unable to answer this question since they had not experienced a "homecoming." For those spouses who had been through at least one homecoming, many prefaced their response with a statement that reflected the spouse was very happy to have their service member home and safe. At first, there is an overwhelming sense of relief.

"You just feel relief, they are home, they're safe and you know they are going to be there tomorrow. It just seems like all this stress flows off of you."

Parent

After the initial response of relief, additional comments revealed that more than one-third (38 percent) of the respondents viewed their experiences with reintegration and reunion in a positive light. They talked about re-connecting as a Family and expressed the idea that it was a happy experience. The question elicited responses like "Pure joy," "It's amazing," and "It's exciting and very positive."

Student responses about the reintegration experience were overwhelmingly positive. They, too, report that there is an enormous sense of relief to see their parent home safe. Students also expressed relief as a result of less stress for the parent who has been home alone and not having as many responsibilities once their deployed parent returns.

"Very happy, very comforting, you always feel relieved whenever you see them."

Student (Father and Brother Deployed)

"I remember we all gathered in the gym and saw the plane landing on the big screen. And I think it was a feeling of relief to know that it was all going to be okay, that he was going to be back."

Student

Forty-one percent of the parents' (both Soldiers and the spouse who remained at home) responses expressed some difficulty, challenge, or problem with the reintegration. These responses further revealed a set of specific challenges. A few of the parents who stated reintegration was difficult or challenging shared multiple reasons. A small number (10 percent) of the students shared that the reintegration is sometimes stressful or challenging, citing many of the same reasons the interviewed parents shared. The table below lists the reasons reported most frequently.

"You're excited to get him home. My mom doesn't have to carry the whole load so it's nice."

Student

> "It's that moment of relief when my mom gets to relax. She's got a lot of kids and when my dad comes he'll take over. And then that's when me and my sister can get back to hanging out with our friends."

Student

Description of the Challenge	From the spouse left at home	From the Student	From the Service Member
The Family does things differently since the deployment and the returning Family member has to figure out how to fit in.	"It's hard when he comes back because we have gotten used to doing things a certain way without him; then he comes back and time has stood still for him, so he comes right back to where it was. Meanwhile time has moved on and we are not there anymore and so job duties, the way we do it, little things like that have changed."	"When he comes back he doesn't quite understand everyday things that happen or how things function. The adjustment period was a little rough. To get him to understand how things worked or how our Family decided to function while he was gone to get things done."	"You feel like an outsider looking in, because the Family continues on. The Military person feels like they continued on in the Family but things have changed."
The spouse left at home has developed a sense of independence and may not be ready to give up some of the areas where they have had control.	"We call it the 'retraining phase.' And it seems like with each one it's harder... I think it's more for me the wife because we're so used to doing everything and it's so hard to let go." "I was used to running the show and I liked it and I didn't have to answer to anybody. I felt bad for my husband, he was an outsider and he really saw it that he was an outsider. And we loved him but it was like he didn't have a place. And he wanted a little bit more of his place back. And that was an adjustment for us."	"Me and my mom adjusted to us two... and when he came home for R&R or came home permanently we had to readjust to him being around. When he was gone my mom had all authority and we had to readjust to him having some authority because he came back."	It's wonderful when you get home. But then, when you settle into everyday life here it's a lot harder. You know, they didn't need me for seven months and I felt that way when I got home, like they didn't need me anymore.

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Description of the Challenge	From the spouse left at home	From the Student	From the Service Member
The returning service member needs time to decompress.	I've had to learn not to expect him to jump right back in with us — he's got to have that time to kind of decompress and relax, and kind of figure out where he is, and so... I've had to learn and understand what he needs..."	"We kind of rest for a couple of days, and let him rest. And we try not to do anything loud that might scare him. Because my mom said that he might freak out. I guess he freaks out in bed and he will jump up."	"You have such a heightened awareness when you're over there and you tend to be very stimulated and you take in everything around you and that's very hard to turn that off when you get home. I think sometimes the kids weren't prepared for the fact that I just had to go and have my own time because I just couldn't deal with everything at once."
Getting re-acquainted with the students presents some challenge.	"Especially when they were younger. When he came back from Korea the kids wouldn't even go near him; even now there is a distance a void that can never be closed between them."	"It was kind of hard because I don't know if she's changed since she's been there or if she's like the same so I don't know how really to act around her now."	"I have to get to know my son over again."
The returning service member is edgy, moody, somehow emotionally "different."	"This last deployment, he would tell you that for about a year, he was not himself, and the kids felt that too. Quick to anger."	"Well, he seemed very stressed. And so we would just try to keep him calm, that way he wouldn't get upset."	

Description of the Challenge	From the spouse left at home	From the Student	From the Service Member
The reintegration disrupts the Family routine.	"Chaotic. My whole schedule was messed up. When he comes back it's hard to allow him into our routine. Because when he is gone me and the kids have a routine to get through the day. But when he comes back he kind of disrupts all of that."	"It's just different because you live this one way with your other parent for so long and then they come back and we got to readjust. Mom does one thing and dad comes back and is like what's going on. We've been doing it like this for a year. And it starts things up and you just have to get used to it."	"I'm a single parent, my children usually have to be re-located or they stay with the long term care provider. It's harder on me I believe. The children are happy to see me come home. Once we get home and reality strikes "mom is back" and there's a little bit of resistance there. Teenagers resenting the fact that I was gone, now I'm here. They're used to one routine and then when I comeback I try to pick up where I left off and it's very hard because it's not that you adjust to being in a combat zone to trying to be a mother all of a sudden."

Student participants in a focus group study published in 2005 also reported that the primary difficulty with reintegration centered in part on the changes in routines and responsibilities of which the returning parent was not aware (Huebner & Mancini, June, 2005). This is consistent with the most frequently mentioned response from the EMC-21 Study. The challenge to everyone is re-organizing roles and responsibilities. Students who have "stepped up" and taken on additional responsibilities may be happy to give them up, but they may also be resentful if their new-found maturity is not recognized and appreciated by the returning parent.

In spite of the challenges, most of the parents and students state that they work through the problems and in only a few cases report that these things are still a challenge or have been insurmountable obstacles. Parents who said the reintegration was "easy" were comfortable with the idea of making adjustments and re-negotiating roles at home. Those who have had multiple experiences with reintegration often report that they have "figured out how to do it."

"We're used to my husband being the head of the household so when he was gone, I was in charge of everything. When he came back it was a little bit of adjustment because he played his role as a father. He had to get readjusted to us."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 2)

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Families understand the reunion is not permanent and that another deployment may be looming in the future. Since 2003, mission requirements drove the operational tempo of deploying units, generally resulting in a series of recurring deployment-dwell-deployment cycles of approximately 12 months each[6] despite the U.S. Army's goal of 24 months at home for each 12 month deployment.

"We have to still get used to the fact that it is going to happen again. So when they come back you have to put them back in your life and then don't get too close because they are going to go again."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 1)

"...but there's always that thought that it's just a temporary visit and he's going to be leaving again."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 2)

Of Note

Understanding the landscape in the home during a deployment is an important piece to discerning how the absence of a parent who is fighting in a war or on a long-term duty assignment may or may not be affecting a child when it comes to their education. Stress and disruption of normal routines at home are potential risk factors for a student functioning at their best in class. Tension at home has been identified as one of the most prevalent stressors of the Military culture (Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, Mmari, & Blum, 2010). That stress and its resulting physical, mental, or emotional manifestations, go to school with the students.

While the topical review of the literature about deployments over the past ten years tend to focus on specific problems and challenges, overall the Families interviewed for the EMC-21 Study conveyed a message of resiliency and hopefulness.

An interesting note is that when parents and students were asked to respond to a statement about deployments (*"Tell me about the differences between the deployments"*) very few parents spoke in terms of their experience with the school and their students in light of multiple deployments.

Field researchers working from a script prefaced the interview with a statement plainly saying that the intent of the interview was to learn about their child's educational experiences. It is possible that some parents did not make the connection between how deployment stresses affect the child at home and school until the field researchers ask questions specifically about their child's schools, school policies, and support. These specific questions elicited responses about how deployments may or may not have impacted their child's education. Those parents who did address their child's school in response to this statement commented on the either the presence or absence of support.

While the topical review of the literature (studies, articles, books, etc.) about deployments over the past ten years tend to focus on specific problems and challenges (see Appendix A), overall the Families interviewed for the EMC-21 Study conveyed a message of resiliency and hopefulness. While there is certainly a sense of "deployment fatigue" with seemingly endless deployment cycles, Families are not giving up.

6 The 15-month deployments from 2007-2009 only resulted in nine months "dwell time" at home.

Students and Parents:
Common Themes Regarding Deployment

The Families that are successfully navigating multiple deployments – those who have "walked the walk" – provided their recommendations and shared a meaningful understanding of what works and what doesn't work.

- **Connect.** Get connected to other people who are going through the same experience. The Family Readiness Group (FRG) is a good place to start, but there are many opportunities both inside and outside of the fence line to find other Families with deployed service members.

- **Maintain Routines.** Establishing and maintaining routines is one of the easiest things to do, and also one of the easiest things to let slide. Guard routines so students have a sense of predictability about some of the things going on in their lives.

- **Use the Technology.** Use email, social media, and video chatting (e.g. Skype or Google Chat) to enhance and keep the connection between the deployed Family member and the Family at home. Implement strategies to make the most of all available media to enhance the connection between your Family and deployed loved one.

- **Keep Busy.** Help students find ways to keep busy with pro-social activities like volunteering, sports, youth groups, and special interest lessons.

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To this point, the report has centered on exploring whether multiple deployments are causing stress on the education of Military students from the child and parent perspective. A second research objective about deployments was to examine the impacts of multiple deployments on schools. To this end, 175 administrators and school counselors, and 162 teachers were interviewed about their experiences with students who have had or currently had a parent deployed.

Hundreds of comments and observations about deployment from educators also surfaced in response to other questions during the interview that were not directly related to deployment. These responses are included in the discovery of the findings.

The Impact of Deployment on Schools – A Framework for the Discussion

The semi-structured interviews of all the educators contained both anecdotal and personal stories related to deployment. Several of the educators were Military spouses who had experienced (or currently had) a deployed spouse. The interviews elicited a wide range of responses that in order to understand how the experiences could be so vastly different, two factors must be taken into account when analyzing the data: the nature of qualitative research and the unique situation of Military-connected schools.

The first factor is the nature of qualitative research. The field researchers were asking for ideas, thoughts, observations, and opinions. When an administrator responds that "kids get off the chain" when parents deploy, he/she was not asked to quantify that information by citing, for example, an increase in disciplinary referrals. Including counselors in the sampling also has limitations. Counselors are more aware of students whom they are assisting: those who are having challenges rather than students who are coping well. In many instances, because of time constraints, generalized comments about deployment and students were made and evidenced by one particular incident or story that was memorable because of its traumatic nature.

The interviews elicited a wide range of responses that in order to understand how the experiences could be so vastly different, two factors must be taken into account when analyzing the data: the nature of qualitative research and the unique situation of Military-connected schools.

The second factor is the unique nature of the school landscape in relationship to the overall percentage of Military-connected students in both the district and at the campus level, and understanding how deployments have impacted the installation served by the district.

The landscape (percentage of Military-connected students served and the installation's deployment characteristics) of the school districts represented in the EMC-21 Study are unique. For example, an installation that has a primary mission of individual or institutional training will not deploy at the same level as an installation that has combat units. The boundaries of two of the districts in the study were coterminous[7] with a Military installation but not part of the DODEA System, serving a population that is 100 percent Military-connected students; however, the deployments from the installations served by these districts would be very small units or individual augmentees. There were other very large school districts where the percentage

7 By law, military facilities are exempt from property taxation, thus funding is provided only by the Department of Education Impact Aid funds and the State. The coterminous districts in EMC-21 (independent school systems wholly on military property) are Fort Sam Houston ISD and Fort Leavenworth USD 207.

of Military-connected students may not be high because of the total number of students served; the Military-connected population, although a large number, is diluted by the overall population of students. In these districts, individual schools may be more heavily impacted by deployments based on their proximity to the installation or neighborhoods where large numbers of Military Families live while other campuses may have very small numbers of Military-connected students. There were also districts with a high percentage of Military students in all of their schools serving installations where there are large units deploying multiple times. This same model is also applicable to individual school campuses. The ratio of Military-connected students to non-military students attending a school, coupled with analyzing and understanding the educators' responses about deployment impact, is rooted in understanding the landscape of both the district and individual campuses.

The figure below offers a high-level (LEA/ISD and Installation) way to begin the process of defining the specific landscape based on two variables: the installation's deployment experience and the overall percentage of Military-connected students assigned to the installation. This is a generic model and does not specifically represent any of the EMC-21 school districts.[8]

HIGH

% MILITARY-CONNECTED ENROLLMENT

This district has campuses in different quadrants

DEPLOYMENT INTENSITY

LOW

KEY

School District A

High concentration of Military children/infrequent deployments

School District B

High concentration of Military children/frequent deployments

School District X

Low concentration of Military children/infrequent deployments

School District Y

Overall low concentration of Military children/frequent deployments

Figure 3: Type of Support for School Districts Should Depend on the Number of Students and Deployment Tempo

8 Participating LEAs were asked to provide information on the percentage of their Military-connected students, but only four of the 11 districts were able, or willing to provide that information.

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The U.S. Army could use the model in Figure 3 to analyze the differences between installations and assess where additional resources may be needed to lessen the negative impacts of deployments. At the local level, the installation and supporting school system leaders could use a refined variant of the landscape model to analyze to the campus level within the school system and determine if only a few schools are specifically impacted due to deployments. Again, local resources could be shifted from campuses with fewer needs to those campuses where the scope of deployments is more severe, the Local Education Agency (LEA) or Independent School District (ISD) could offer additional professional development training for educators, etc. Figure 4 provides a generic model that could serve this purpose.

Figure 4: At the LEA level, Type of Support Should be Campus Specific Depending Upon Number of Students and Deployment Tempo
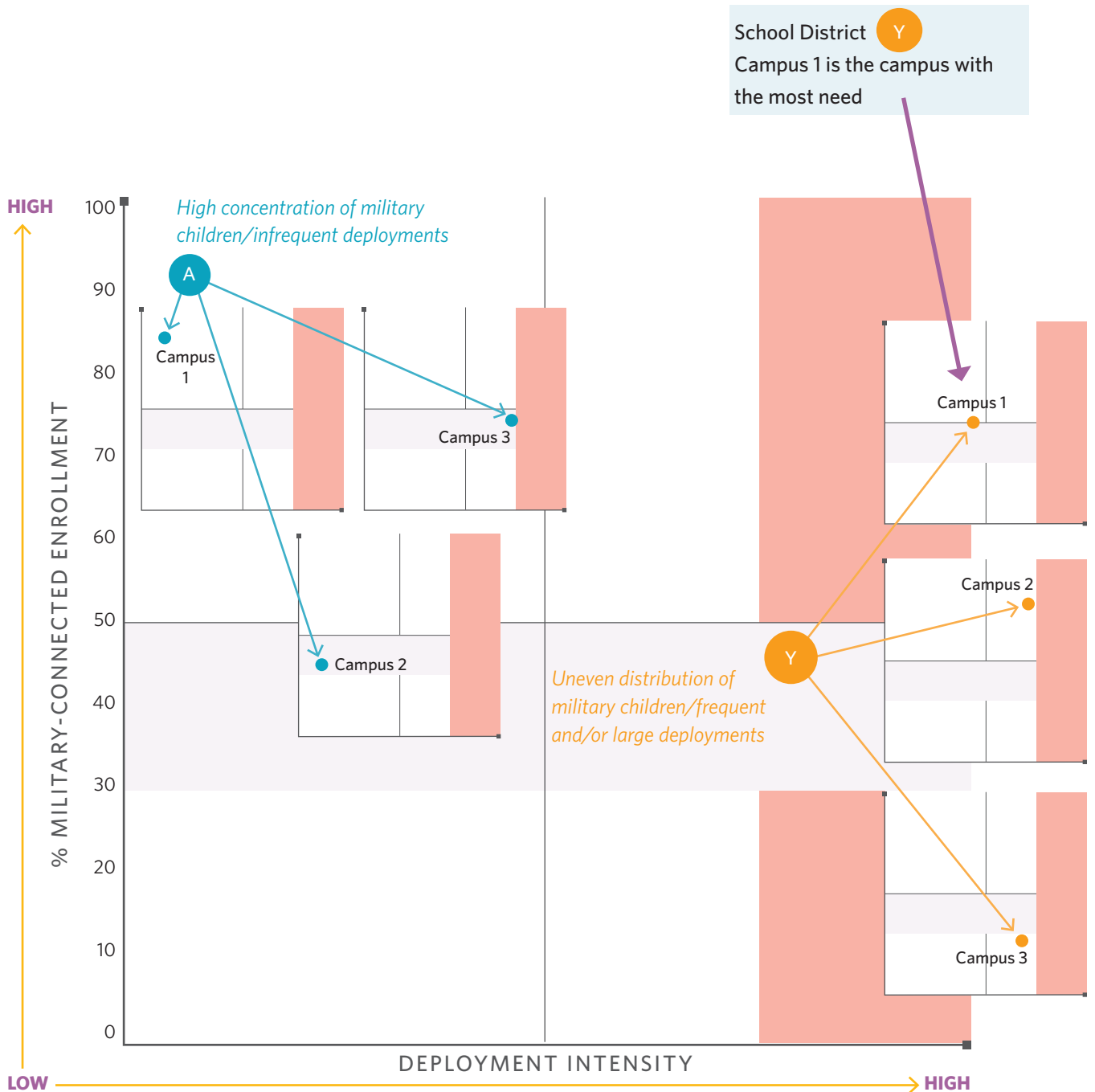
Schools Feel the Effect of Deployment in Multiple and Different Ways

Administrators and teachers were asked about the effects of deployments on their school, if any. Responses ranged from "business as usual" to the heart-wrenching stories of dealing with students who have had a parent killed or injured.[9] Educators who responded that there was an impact on their schools usually cited multiple reasons and often the reasons overlapped.

The ten categorical groupings of the educators' responses regarding impacts to their school, and the percentage of teachers' (grades K-7 and 8-12) and administrators' (grades K-7 and 8-12) responses within each category is depicted below. Examples included "students are worried and when they are worried they can't focus on school work" or "students have stressful home situations and they bring that stress to school and can't focus on school work." Responses (generally from administrators) about transition and high mobility rates of Military-connected students are not specifically deployment-related, and therefore not included.
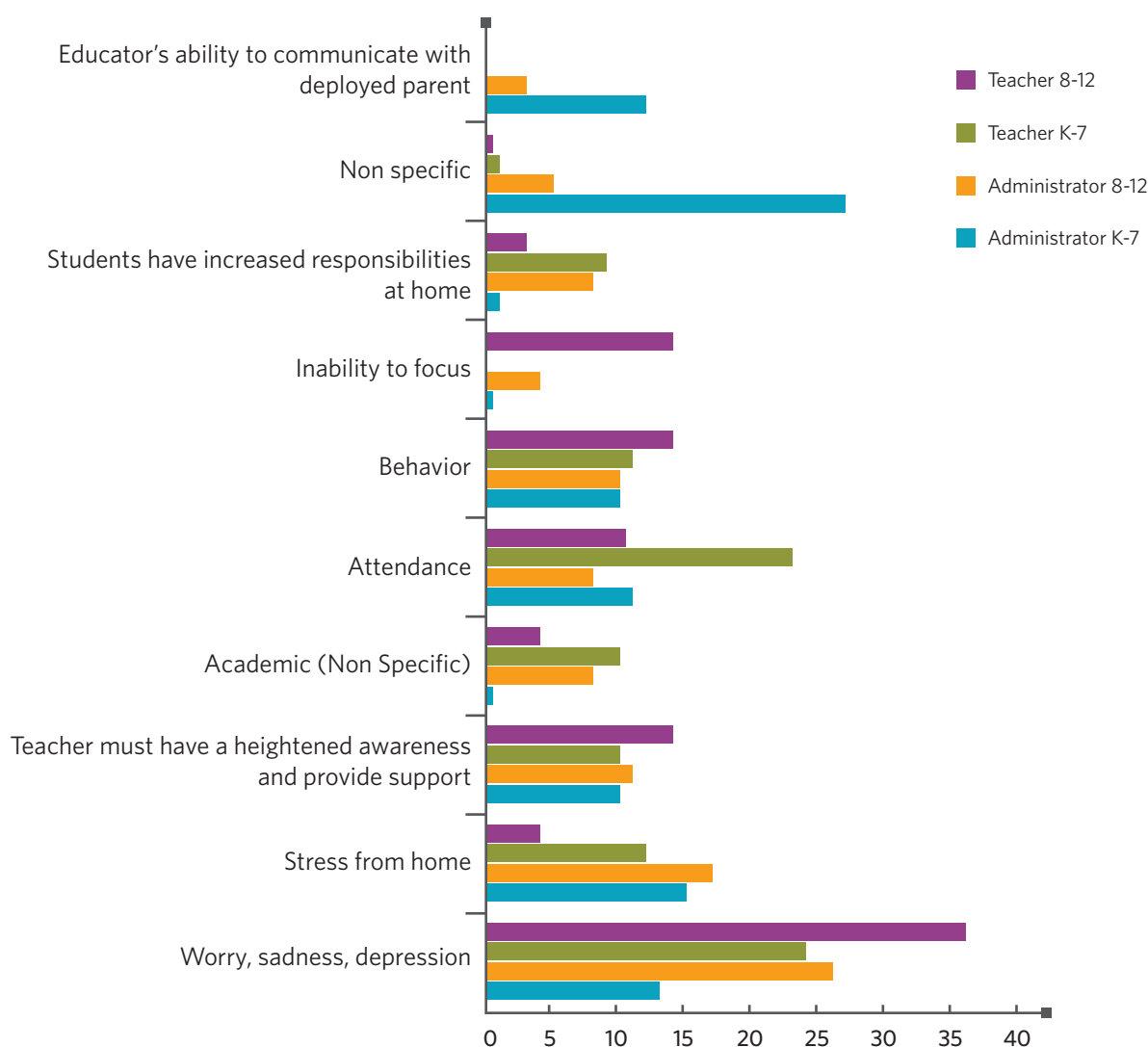
Figure 5: Responses on How Deployments Impact Your School

9 No correlation between educator and parent responses regarding injury and death as a result of deployments was attempted. Only two parent and/or student responses included one parent diagnosed with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and one parent who had been wounded. Three responses referenced unit casualties and there were two instances where friends in the military had been killed.

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Stress, sadness, or depression in students was the one effect that three of the four groups reported with the most frequency by educators. Both groups of educators – administrators and teachers – at eighth through twelfth grade level say that students may be unable to focus and give 100 percent to their academic endeavors when their minds are on a parent who is potentially in danger. The elementary teachers also reported this as an impact on education, but not with the same frequency as the high school teachers. Older adolescents, who have easy and immediate access to the news media, are much more cognizant of the nature of their parents' deployment, which may exacerbate their anxiety. Where an elementary student may not know the extent to which their parent may be in danger, students in high school are aware of the reality of war and could be distracted with worry.

"You can almost tell who's deployed and who's not deployed by their grades. So we keep an eye on their grades. It's hard on the kids. It's hard for them to focus on what they're supposed to be doing when mom or dad's over in a combat zone."

Administrator

"It has an effect on the student because you know that they are constantly worried about their parents' well-being. And I think that's got to be a major distraction for them."

Administrator

"They see things on the news, unfortunately. You know the news is a big thing. Facebook is a big thing now where you know they'll read comments from other people and it scares them."

Teacher

The percentage of elementary administrators commenting on students experiencing stress related to deployment was the smallest of the four groups at 14 percent. Even though stress was not reported very often by elementary administrators, the few who did report students being stressed expressed the belief that the stress from deployment has a significant impact.

"I would never have imagined the emotional stress that the war and the deployments have played on kids and Families unless you've been in a Military school like this. These parents have been gone, many of them four times. And now they're getting ready to go back again. They already know they're going back again. It's a huge emotional toll."

Administrator

All educators stated the stress students may be experiencing at home frequently comes to school with them. They also reported that this stress makes it difficult for students to be focused and fully engaged in learning. The idea that stress from the home accompanies the child to school is substantiated by studies on Family stress in response to deployment. Studies, including one by Major Eric M. Flake, M.D., FAAP and a member of the MCEC Science Advisory Board, indicate that mental health levels and emotional responses of the non-deployed parent as well as pre-deployment mental health levels have a substantive effect on students' academic, emotional, and behavioral levels (Flake, et al., 2009). Many of the administrators participating in the EMC-21 Study confirmed this idea: stress from home is taking an increasing toll on the daily business of school.

"I'm seeing more of it now than I did earlier. Some of these kids' parents are on their second or third deployment and it has definitely affected them emotionally. It's an understandable situation, they're in a tremendous amount of stress and then in some instances when it's a single parent that has been deployed, these students are being left with someone who is not necessarily a Family member and that makes it difficult also."

Administrator

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"There are some parents that are not coping and they don't know what is out there [to help]."

Administrator

Administrators' responses regarding how multiple deployments impact the education of Military students reflected their perceptions that the students' education was impacted, but establishing a definitive cause-effect relationship from their input is dubious. While administrators were not asked to quantify or defend their responses, the most frequently cited variables – discipline, behavior, and parenting – clearly reflect their opinion that the cause of diminished educational performance is a result of disruption to the routines of home life during a deployment. These views were more prevalent among high school administrators than at the elementary level. Respondents in several interviews spoke about the diminished capacity for the parent left at home to discipline their child. Previous research from Desert Storm supports the administrators' views on the challenges with discipline and parenting (Chandra, Martin, Hawkins, & Richardson, 2010). There were numerous mentions of inconsistent discipline, changes in caregivers, lack of supervision, and parents who do not have the emotional or physical energy to take care of their children but only two responses (less than one percent) mentioned indicators of child abuse or neglect.

"We just notice a big change; when especially our dads leave, the kids get more restless and act out more."

Administrator

"You see it in our parents - the ones that are left back are dealing with three students who are acting out because their parent is deployed and they can't control them at home."

Administrator

"The stability of discipline is what impacts the school the most when the parents come and go. The kids always go through a period of testing out the waters and trying to figure out what's allowable."

Administrator

"I'm seeing more and more kids who are giving whoever is taking care of them, a difficult time behavior-wise. They just don't think that rules should apply to them."

Administrator

"The dysfunction in the Family comes in through the doors at school. I don't think we'll see the full effect [of multiple deployments] for years to come because it's emotionally debilitating to the students."

Administrator

The Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, Uniformed Services University studied the impacts to students who experience changes in living arrangements, schedules, parenting practices, and the amount of time spent with their parents after an injury to the service member. In a clinical setting, these students appear anxious, saddened, or troubled reflecting greater distress. There was a positive correlation between spouses who reported high deployment-related Family distress prior to the injury and high child distress post-injury suggesting these Families may be more vulnerable in the face of added stressors (Cozza et al., 2010). In the EMC-21 Study, administrators did not cite injuries sustained as a result of deployment as a cause for a child's indiscipline or behavior.

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For elementary administrators, attendance was the most cited impact of deployment on their schools. There are some communities that see large numbers of students leave (presumably to go "home," wherever that may be) when an entire unit deploys. Students may miss school for several weeks prior to their parents' departure, during the deployed parents' R & R, and when the parent returns. Although most schools have adopted policies and seem to be very flexible and accommodating for absences related to deployments, attendance still "counts" and it counts both for the schools and for the students. For the schools, it is a financial issue: schools receive funding based on their average daily attendance (ADA). For the student, it is likely a learning issue. Even if a student receives the assignments to do outside of class, they miss all the teacher instruction. It can also be a burden on the teacher when they need to prepare assignments for a child to complete during an absence and manage the make-up work. Attendance, as a deployment issue, was mentioned least often by high school administrators who possibly do not see the work impact as frequently as teachers. Parents of elementary students may also take advantage of the liberal attendance policies because they do not think the child will miss anything important whereas a high school student might understand all the implications of an extended absence and not use their full allotment of deployment-related excused absences.

Some states (including Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, Michigan, and Georgia) have specific guidelines in their education codes governing deployment-connected school absences. The remainder delegates the decision authority to the Local Education Agency; many of these follow the guidance in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Students. The MCEC has published a Special Topic paper[10] on school attendance that contains recommendations for parents, teachers, administrators, and Military leaders to consider when attendance issues surface.

Both groups of teachers responded that multiple and extended student absences created additional workload. Although no teacher begrudges a child the opportunity to say farewell to their parent, welcome him/her home, or even take a few days to re-connect when the parent returns, it does

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Educators Perspectives on Attendance

"I think the biggest impact is the absenteeism of the student. It's taking away from the education, and then they come back and they can't catch up and we're in a bad situation."

Administrator

"Anytime a student misses instruction it's going to impact their learning. They can complete those assignments but that doesn't replace the instruction that goes along with it. So it does create gaps in the student's learning."

Administrator

"I wish that we could come up with some kind of code for absence due to deployment; there's no such thing that exists. A lot of our kids who have extenuating circumstances are going to fall victim of maybe not passing due to attendance."

Administrator

"Even though we do allow them to make the work up and get their work in advance, it doesn't necessarily mean they're going to be able to grasp the concepts that they're missing because they're not there to get that explanation."

Teacher

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10 Keller, M.M., *Military-Connected Students and Public School Attendance Policies*, MCEC Special Topic, *On The Move*, Fall 2010.

add an extra burden to the teacher's workload. If they don't know about the absence well in advance, then it becomes even more stressful for teachers to prepare for the student's absence. At the high school level, there is an expectation that students will be responsible to get any make-up work completed in a timely manner. This may not always happen and teachers are playing "catch-up" with the students after an absence.

> "We have quite a few students who will take days away from school to spend with parents before they are deployed and when they come back it really adds to my work load making sure they get those missed assignments within a timely manner."
>
> Teacher

> ## "I have to catch the kids up after they have been gone. That's really the only way that it [deployment] has affected me."
>
> Teacher

Teachers and administrators responded that the effects of post-deployment reintegration on the student's anticipatory emotions impacted the school due to heightened levels of perceived stress. Students may be anxious about a changed parent, or they may be experiencing stress at home relating to the Family trying to navigate back to pre-deployment roles and responsibilities. The months and weeks prior to the reunion are marked with conflicting emotions; excitement, apprehensions and sometimes worry which the child manifests at school.

> "So when the parent comes back, it interrupts that cycle they fit themselves into. It's a battle of who is taking what roles now and the parent who had been with the child can say 'wow I can take a break.' The deployed parent wants to rest awhile and the child flounders until the roles are reassigned."
>
> Teacher

> "I think you can actually see the excitement when their parents are coming home, and if you know them on a personal level they will talk to you nonstop about that."
>
> Teacher

> ## "We hear 'Dad's coming home this weekend.' I actually have kids paying less attention the week before Dad comes home than the week Dad left because they're so excited that he's coming home."
>
> Teacher

Several administrators commented on stress related to reintegration. Research on students and reintegration consistently identifies this as a stressful time for Families, such as in a 2008 study by Rand, in which school staff reported students not doing well when they had to contend with the physical, mental, or sometimes emotional changes in a returning parent (Chandra, Martin, Hawkins, & Richardson, 2010); or a report cited in American Psychologist describing the reintegration period as a time when Families renegotiate roles and areas of responsibilities (Sheppard, Malatras, & Israel, 2010). The educator observations and perceptions in the EMC-21 Study confirm them as well.

Due to multiple deployments, for many Families the reintegration process has now occurred two or three times. As stated in the previous section of this report, the repeated experiences have resulted in Families "figuring it out," and in some cases, each experience is different. The lack of data regarding the actual impacts of the reintegration experience on both the child's education as well as the child's school/classroom makes quantified findings difficult. Given that deployments will continue for at least the near-term, longitudinal data would be beneficial in addressing the impacts of reintegration.

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> "The coming home is a little more of a struggle than the leaving, just trying to reintegrate the parent back into the household."
>
> Administrator

> "It impacts us because it impacts the kids. When you have students whose parent is on their third deployment, that's just so hard. It comes with them every single day because the responsibilities in the home change when one of the parents is gone."
>
> Administrator

"Parentified" Students During Deployments

Frequent and prolonged parental absences are common for Active Duty Soldiers, and for the last decade, the Reserve Components as well. In response to this, older students and adolescents may gravitate toward taking on additional or extraordinary responsibilities at home. The phenomenon of students taking on adult responsibilities is called "parentification."[11] No parent – and less than a handful of students – addressed this issue in their responses about the impacts of deployment. However, school administrators and teachers voiced it as a concern. A feasible explanation for their perception was describing situations in which a child assumes responsibilities typically expected of a parent. A study by Rand Corporation (Chandra, Martin, Hawkins, & Richardson, 2010) also noted the occurrence of parentification including additional chores, child care for a younger sibling, or even the emotional care of the remaining parent.

When viewed on a continuum, parentification is a phenomenon that has different potential effects. At one end is an opportunity for students to mature, take on responsibilities, and contribute to their Family's wellbeing. However, at the other extreme, it may become too demanding on the child and skew the emotional balance in the Family.

They may show maturity beyond their years. Most importantly, they learn how Family members care for each other and how, when responsibility is shared, Families function well.

Taking on household responsibilities in the absence of a parent may be beneficial to the student and enhance their resilience. First, they contribute to their Family in a way that is genuine and helpful. They take pride in gaining new competencies. Second, there may be benefits to their character as they understand the importance of being a role model to younger siblings. They may show maturity beyond their years. Most importantly, they learn how Family members care for each other and how, when responsibility is shared, Families function well. Many parents and students expressed the belief that this phenomenon was quite normal for their Family.

> "...since he has been gone multiple times and since he does work long hours, it's not as big as a transition; but I do know that my mom does rely on me to help make sure that my sister's getting through when he's gone."
>
> Student (Parent Deployment Count: 2)

11 The term "parentification" was first used by Boszormeni-Nagy and Sparks (1973). Many Family therapists differentiate two dimensions of parentification – instrumental (completing physical tasks for the Family up to serving as a full-time, quasi-parent for his/her siblings and parents) and emotional (child/adolescent takes on the role of confidant for or between Family members.) Assigning chores is distinct from instrumental parentification. This phenomenon referred to as "adultification" by some experts involves a child taking assuming parent or adult roles. Other experts see the two, adultification and parentification, as two distinct, but not mutually incompatible phenomena.

The type of responsibilities that students are taking on might be developmentally appropriate. However, there are some instances when educators perceive that students are taking on too much or things that are beyond their maturity level.

"I think we see that parents often over rely on the middle school student – especially if that student is the older sibling. Those parents are depending on them a great deal to help out and support them, not realizing that they are young adults but still kids too…that they can't really handle as much pressure as is sometimes put on them."

Teacher

"I work predominantly with the older adolescents. They become a second parent to the elementary-age students. They have to set them up with homework, get dinners on the table, make sure they take their baths and have all their permission slips signed. And when you're 16 and now you're in charge of so much because one parent needs help, I think it changes their maturity level, it changes their expectations of how people should treat them because they're an adult at home. And I think that is huge in formulating how these individuals become adults."

Administrator

Parentification may also affect the reintegration process. It is possible that students who have taken on increased responsibilities enjoyed some of the independence they experienced, but no longer need to fill those roles when a deployed parent returns. The literature on the Military-connected children reveals that adolescents generally have a more difficult time with reintegration than do younger students (Chandra, et al., 2011). This is likely multi-factorial and least partially tied to the normal developmental struggle for independence that all adolescents must pass through. It may be particularly challenging to have gained more independence during a parent's absence only to lose some of it upon their return. The loss of that independence may come from a returning parent inadvertently treating the adolescent in a pattern similar to the way they were treated prior to the deployment. But a year is a developmentally long time in the life of a child, and adolescents may be resistant to being disciplined or monitored by a parent who has been absent for a long period of time and view this as an unwelcome step backward on the road to independence.

Overall, the EMC-21 findings were more indicative of respondents' positive or neutral patterns of effect on child development rather than a preponderance of reported negative effects. Nevertheless, the data does indicate that the concerns raised by educators should be taken seriously.

"When they come back after being gone for a year, the roles change and that's very upsetting; they've just coped with mom or dad being gone and now they've got 'you need to do this; you need to do that.' 'Where did that come from? I got along just fine until you got back here.'"

Administrator

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The Daily Effects of Deployment Reported by Some Teachers

Teachers were asked to respond to an additional question about the impact of deployment on their day-to-day job in the classroom. Thirty-three percent of the teachers interviewed stated that deployments had no impact at all on their jobs as teachers. The remaining group of teachers who expressed that deployments affected their work saw varying degrees across multiple areas of impact.
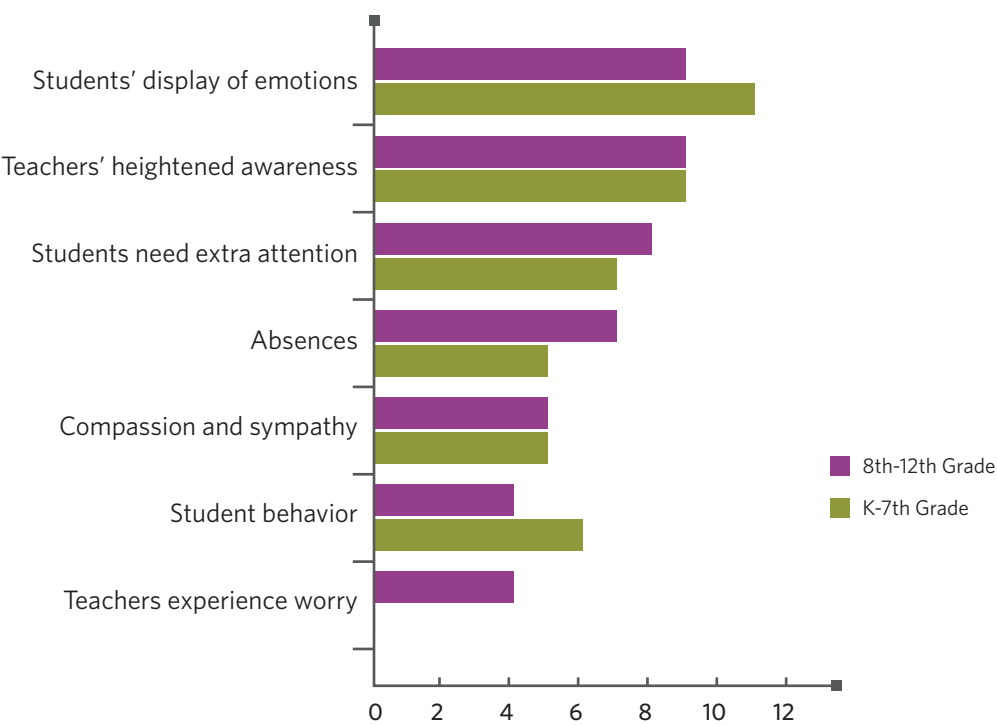

Figure 6: Most Frequently Reported Teacher Responses to the Impact of Deployments on their Job

Teachers are the first responders working with students every day of the school year. Their perspective on the impact of deployment on schools is filtered through the lens of daily teaching tasks: teaching planned lessons, record keeping, maintaining an orderly and safe classroom environment, and communicating with parents are all areas where teachers may experience challenges when students in their classroom have deployed parents.

Teachers at both levels, K-7 and 8-12, agreed that the one impact on their day-to-day work is just "paying a little more attention" to the students who may have deployed parents. This may mean taking a few extra minutes to talk to the student, making themselves available to listen, or just paying attention to any change in academic efforts and the demeanor of the student. Administrators also reported that teachers have this heightened awareness for the students who may need a little extra attention.

"...as a teacher one of the things I try to do is keep a really close eye on that student's grades, what's going on with them...try to touch base with them personally and regularly so that they know that there is an open door."

Teacher

"I need to be a little more loving toward those little guys. Some extra hugs, just be aware that they have some needs that other students don't have."

Teacher

Teachers also reported that dealing with the emotional turbulence, or ups-and-downs (such as students who may be upset or sad because a parent is leaving, students who are ecstatic about a homecoming, and students who are dealing with a range of emotions during the reintegration of a parent) that deployment brings has an impact on their day-to-day job. Teachers perceive the students bring these emotions to class along with the stress from home which has an effect on the learning environment. An unprepared teacher can be caught off-guard.

"It was my first year here at _____ and I asked him what had happened [why he was crying] and he said that his dad was deploying. It was like he couldn't hold it in any longer and it just breaks your heart."

Teacher

"I go cry my eyes out some days because I know what is going on."

Teacher

"Just knowing what they're going through and knowing that these kids are grappling with this."

Teacher

I don't know if it affects my day but it affects me. It's constantly in your mind, "Was that one of my student's parents? Was it one of their friends?"

Teacher

Behavior and discipline were mentioned, although in very general terms: "Dad comes home and it changes the kids' behavior," "dispositions change," "sometimes they act out." Comments like these are not specific enough to understand the degree to which behavior or discipline might be an issue. The teachers interviewed indicated discipline and behavior issues were not extreme in nature and most often dealt with by the counselor or by the teacher themselves.

Many teachers indicated that the biggest impact of deployments on them was the empathetic emotion they personally experienced: sympathy, compassion, uncertainty, and worry, were words used by teachers to describe their own feelings about their students and the parents of their students. Students in their classes have parents who may be in danger and this fact weighs heavily on the minds of some teachers.

Finally, a few of the teachers shared that the impact of deployment on teaching came from their own personal experience of having a spouse or child deployed. These teachers reported increased levels of stress and heightened levels of compassion and empathy for the students. The following is one example from a high school teacher and gives a glimpse at the challenge of filling the role of full-time teacher, mom, and spouse during a deployment and reintegration: "Personally, when my husband deployed, it was difficult because I was running the house by myself and teaching every day. So, I can understand the stress that these parents and these kids are under whenever there's deployment. [Reintegration] affects me as a teacher. I know it's affecting these kids when they come to school and their ability to stay focused and everything else when their whole world just gets flipped upside down."

"One group of kids would be jumping up and down with joy, "Mrs. [teacher], my mom or my dad's coming home!" and then the very next kid would just lay their head and sob, "Mrs. [teacher] my mom or my dad's leaving." That was in one classroom; I will never forget that."

Teacher

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One precautionary finding to emerge from the EMC-21 Study: a statistically-notable one-third of the teachers interviewed said they perceived no effect on the performance of their duties due to deployment. They cite three general reasons for this response:

• No knowledge of which of their students have deployed parents.
• For many of the teachers in the EMC-21 school districts, the impacts of deployments have become part of the educational routine.
• A smaller subset of teachers did not view deployments as a "special" or unique challenge, and therefore, not above what they were professionally trained to encounter and resolve.

"I've had students that I didn't know their parents had been deployed. They're afraid that somebody's going to think that they are special or that they have a problem because their parent is deployed that they won't tell."

Teacher

"Most of the time, they don't volunteer a whole lot unless you just ask them."

Teacher

"I haven't had very many open up and talk about it. I think a lot of 6th graders feel that they will be teased."

Teacher

Regarding the first reason cited, it is problematic that some teachers who responded to the EMC-21 Study were unaware of their students' parents deploying (or preparing to deploy). Several administrators responded similarly. If this is an accurate perception, it indicates all or parts of the communication system are completely ineffective. A teacher may notice changes in a child's academic performance, attendance, or behavior but the conditions set to encourage parents/students to share information about a deployed parent may be ineffective. The possibility that students do not want to call attention to themselves, especially at the junior high and high school level is understandable and consistent with what is considered developmentally appropriate at this level. It is also possible that this particular classroom or campus is an anomaly – one that is Military-connected but their supported installation does not experience significant deployments.

A second reason is that the deployments have been going on so long that they are part of the normal school climate. One teacher with seven years experience commented, "It's been going on since I've been teaching." Their perception is that the students are used to having a parent deployed and it is not an issue anymore. Teachers have become accustomed to chronic background stress rather than experiencing deployments as an acute stressor.

"Some of [the students] honestly just are indifferent. They're so used to it that they don't really care one way or another; it's just another thing to them."

Teacher

"If it does [impact my job] I don't notice it. Because it's been something that has been present especially the last six or seven years."

Teacher

"Many kids have had their parent deployed two or three times; that uncertainty is gone and I think they understand that, this is how it is. A lot of that challenge has just been overcome by time and repetition."

Teacher

Finally, a small percentage of teachers said there was no impact on their job because they were able to handle any situation: it was just part of the job. This small group did not view deployment as any "special" situation, rather, it was one of many challenges they encounter and are professionally equipped to handle.

While many issues surfaced in the research, there was no consistent singular concern that was constant to the four groups of educators interviewed. Each of the four groups (grade K-7 administrators, high school administrators, grade K-7 teachers, and high school teachers) expressed different ideas on how deployments impacted their schools. It was, however, evident from the responses that all educators who saw an educational impact due to deployments were engaged in some way with responding to the needs of the students. In their environment, deployments are normal and they are accommodating and supporting when they see the need. There were very limited responses to indicate the educators' perceptions that multiple deployments created a crisis for a student. The educators who shared these stories indicated they had sought appropriate resources and interventions to address situations when there was a concern for abuse, neglect, or a child being in danger.

"I'm a veteran teacher of 20 years so this deployment is just like any other change; it's just another thing to consider every day when you teach."

Teacher

On a potentially positive note, ten to 25 percent of educators responded that the deployments did not affect their schools. In some cases the reason for this response was the installation near the school did not have units deploying and in some cases, educators report that deployments have been going on for so long that they are simply no longer an issue.

"Our kiddos and our staff are resilient. They keep battling no matter what obstacles we face. So, we take it in stride. It is something that we deal with on an everyday basis."

Administrator

Educators Responding Deployments had no Impact

High School Administrators:	11%
High School Teachers:	14%
Elementary Administrators:	10%
Elementary Teachers:	25%

"Well I don't think it impacts us in a huge way. We are resilient. We know it is going to happen so you just prepare yourself for it. You do whatever you need to."

Administrator

"Teachers have become a little more sensitive to watching for signs of trouble, or extra needs. We tend to pay [attention] to the kids. We haven't really seen a huge impact."

Administrator

"There are very rare cases where a parent is deployed and that it becomes a distraction to their education."

Administrator

The number and nature of the effects of multiple deployments span a long continuum for educators, from very minor and not noticeable to those who perceive repeated deployments as a challenge and that educators' resilience is waning. Families and schools have contended with deployments for over ten years. For a Military-connected child graduating from high school in 2011, deployments have occurred for most of their school-age years, and it is probable that their parent has been involved in many of these deployments.

"The generation of students that have only known their Family to be involved in deployment will be an entirely different generation of individuals because of all of the movement in and out of their lives."

Administrator

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Schools and Support for Students with Deployed Parents

The support of teachers, counselors, and other school personnel is a critical piece in addressing the behavioral and emotional issues that students might be experiencing. The majority of the administrators interviewed expressed that their schools were providing sufficient support for students with deployed parents. This support is normally informal and is dependent upon teachers being aware of which students have a deployed parent and then giving them the opportunity to talk to a trusted adult if they feel the need. This type of "open door – we are here if they need us" best exemplifies what is going on in most of the schools where the EMC-21 Study interviews were conducted. There are a few schools (not district-wide)

"Sometimes we forget about the emotional side and the MFLC coming on the campus has been a big support for the kids; but we find that our students need more emotional support than most other students this age in dealing with the deployments and that sort of thing."

Administrator

that have formal programs for students who have parents in the Military or a deployed parent. These programs meet regularly and have an activity for the students such as making cards or putting together care packages for deployed parents and other Soldiers. Formal support programs where students met for the purpose of talking about issues were only mentioned twice. Overall, administrators stated that the schools were doing a good job with supporting Military students. Military Family Life Consultants (MFLC) are located in schools in three of the districts where the interviews occurred.

With only one exception, the educators who spoke about the MFLCs had positive comments about them and generally considered the service they provided helpful.

"And we have an MFLC that helps our students and Families as well."

Teacher

Over 50 percent of the educators interviewed responded that their schools had no programs or they were not aware of any programs for Military-connected students. The remainder said either counselors provided services, there were services on-post, or mentioned a specific program like the MCEC Student 2 Student (S2S) program or a similar school sponsored program.

When asked what type of programs they believed would be helpful, the responding administrators and teachers had several ideas. Among these were group counseling sessions, programs that brought the parents and students together, programs that focused on reintegration, informational programs for students presented by the Military to help all the students understand the mission of the deployed parents, and additional counseling support. Another idea was to expand on existing programs. Finally, there were a few respondents who did not see a need for additional programs or initiatives.

"I think we have done wonderful. We are probably over-programmed if anything."

Administrator

"I think it is sufficient if they have someone to talk to. I think what we are doing is sufficient."

Teacher

All groups of educators reported that there was a need for their schools to provide support to students with deployed parents. This support might be formal or informal. Informal support usually referred to a heightened awareness on the part of the staff that students may be dealing with an absent parent. Although not specified, the costs of this informal support might only entail additional time. Educators may take time outside of scheduled classes – their lunch time or planning time – to talk with students or assist with make-up work from an absence. At the high school level, being tuned in to the students who have deployed parents may be more challenging because school personnel frequently indicated they are not aware of which students have deployed parents. Students are sometimes hesitant to disclose information that may make them appear "different." Additional support also referred to formalized support programs that school counselors were conducting as well as providing access to the Military Family Life Consultants (MFLC) available at a few of the schools.

"We've really tried to identify the kids that have had parents deployed. We spent a week the last few years with counselors going in and talking in every English class and telling them, 'We want to have this little group. We want to meet on this certain day at lunch. We're going to feed you lunch. Come in. Let's talk.'"

Counselor

"I do believe we have to keep a close eye on the students whose parents are deployed and our teachers are sensitive to it. Parents have to maintain open communication with us so that we will know what's going on and we will be able to provide maximum support for their students."

Administrator

A heightened level of awareness was also mentioned not only by the teachers but by the administrators interviewed. These educators report that they have to pay a little bit closer attention to what is going on around them. They watch students more closely, and are ready to intervene and offer support. They pay attention to students' grades and intervene quickly when they see the grades slipping. They watch for changes in behavior or disposition.

"It requires me to be more conscious of what I say and do with an individual student. If I begin to see problems that I haven't seen before and I start talking to the student to discover that daddy or mommy is deployed I think this is something we need to know."

Teacher

"I think you need to be always aware of what that child may be going through, what that child may need. Try to help maintain normalcy as much as you can but to keep an open door if they just feel like they need to talk."

Teacher

Parents, too, had varying views on support such as what was useful and what they would like to see. The EMC-21 field researchers asked the parents if the school had done anything to assist their child or students during a deployment. Over one-third of the parents said that the school had provided extra counseling, a regular support group, or an activity-based program for the child during the parent's deployment. These types of programs were viewed as positive and helpful. Twenty percent of the parents said that the school had nothing in place to support students during a deployment. This was most frequently mentioned when the child was going to a school that was not in a Military community or adjacent to an installation; for example, a Family who moved to be near extended Family during the parent's deployment and were no longer close to any Military installation.

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Respondents indicated that support does not always come in the form of regularly scheduled counseling sessions or monthly meetings. Parents shared that even though the school did not have any formal programs or counseling, the teachers or another staff member had been very supportive and helpful to their child. This informal support is comforting to both parents and students. Many parents confided that their students may not always talk to them so having other trusted adults in the child's life eases some of the stress for the entire Family.

"My kids knew who they could talk to."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 6)

"They were very caring for the kids without what I call 'victimization of deployed kids;' helping them be resilient, understanding that they may have a bad day, but not allowing them to wallow in self pity."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 5)

A small percentage of parents said that even if programs were available their child would not participate. There were various reasons for this including parents not wanting their students to be singled out, or "victimized." Other parents expressed that their students did not need any support, the Family was self-sufficient, or the student had expressed that they did not want to participate.

"My fear is that they do these little group things and the kids that are crying may rub off on your kids."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 4)

"They offered a deployment group, [but] he didn't want to go. He didn't want to cry in front of people."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 3)

One high school student expressed a common response that they did not care to participate in support groups.

"I remember we were forced to go to these meetings and talk about our feelings and I just hated those. I'm sure there was a good intention but just the way they presented it was like "circle time" where everyone just talked about their feelings and I'm just not into that kind of stuff."

Student

One form of support that is seen as helpful is flexible attendance policies. All of the schools involved in the study had a policy that addressed additional excused absences for students with deployed parents. These policies allow for students to attend farewell events, take some days off during R&R, attend the homecoming events and be with their parents during block leave time after a deployment. Even though the elementary administrators reported absences due to a deployment as having the greatest impact on their schools, administrators were very supportive of these policies and for the most part, did not see any major issues with excessive absences. In fact, many said that parents used very few of these days.

"We'll give a Family five days with extenuating circumstances and I'm never going to take credit away from a kid who's spending time with his father who he hasn't seen in fifteen months. I'm not going to take credit away from a kid, and I don't think anybody in this community would expect me to."

Administrator

There are parents who inform the school as part of their preparation for deployment and there are also parents who may not consider it necessary. As noted earlier, effective parent-teacher communication not only helps the teacher understand their students, it could help them avoid the small embarrassment this teacher experienced when trying to communicate with the parents:

"You have to be sensitive when you send an e-mail to a parent and they reply to you from Afghanistan; if you didn't realize they were there, it's a little embarrassing. Once I e-mailed a mom and I got an e-mail back from the dad who was in Iraq because she had forwarded it on to him. Those were both kids that I didn't know their parent was deployed until that happened."

Several teachers, especially at the high school level, reported that students will frequently share their excitement when a parent is coming home, but tend to not tell the teachers that a parent has left.

Keeping teachers informed is a critical piece to understanding and supporting the child. When teachers understand what "normal" looks like, when they are informed of changes in the child's life, they can respond appropriately to the needs of the child.

> "I hear about a parent coming back, but not so much about leaving."
>
> Teacher

> "You know they don't really talk about it a whole lot; you can just notice the change in their behavior."
>
> Teacher

"And for the first time for the whole two weeks, every morning she cried. She has awesome teachers and they all know what she's going through and knew what was happening. We already told them ahead of time that this was coming."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 2)

"They [teachers] did help me keep an eye on their mood, demeanor, and anything that was out of the ordinary they knew could have been because their dad was gone. So we had good communication."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 5)

Communities are also receiving high marks in supporting Military Families. Although usually not focused on education, the type of informal support (such as scouting, church, sports, etc.) is important in alleviating stress on the parent left at home. Studies on Family stress in response to deployment indicate that the mental health levels and emotional responses of the non-deployed parent have a substantive effect on student's academic, emotional, and behavioral levels or symptoms (Flake, Davis, Johnson, & Middleton, 2009). Stress at home equates to stress at school.

One outlying idea that warrants further investigation is the possibility that the "school community" response to deployment has had a positive and lasting effect on relationships within the school. One administrator shared that the deployments have caused his staff to come together and another administrator said the deployments have given them an opportunity to connect with students and get to know them on a more personal level.

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Communication Impacts Students and Parents

Communication is another factor that impacts the deployment experience. Many of the spouses on their third or fourth deployment recall the lack of communication infrastructure in the first deployments to Iraq compared to today where the deployed parent may have access to email or video chat on a regular basis.

"Back then you didn't have the technology that we have now; you used to have to wait forever to get in touch with each other. Sometimes they didn't write back."

Technology has made it easier than ever for Families to stay connected during deployment, and the ability to communicate in "real time" is important. Never in the history of any U.S. conflict have deployed service members had such frequent access to their Family members. Both parents and students responded that the ability to communicate has made a difference in alleviating some of the stress and worry that Families have when their loved one is deployed, as well as helping parents and students stay connected with the day-to-day events.

Family communications and individual student and spouse communications with the deployed Solider can use any of several mediums depending on availability and the degree of personal interaction desired. Social media (such as Facebook) and e-mail allow the deployed parent, student, or spouse to provide updates without the real time constraints imposed by different time zones. Webcams and video teleconferencing make sharing major events with the deployed parent possible. Likewise, cellular phones provide a real time way to communicate albeit without the benefit of the video images provided by the former means.

The ability to communicate with a service member garners a sense of safety and security for the Family or Guardian, and allows the Family to retain intimacy.

Modern communications make it much easier for the deployed parent to remain engaged with the child (including the child's education) and spouse despite the physical separation caused by the deployment.

The ability to communicate with a service member garners a sense of safety and security for the Family or Guardian, and allows the Family to retain intimacy. The respondents shared that technology can be a double-edged sword for Military-connected students during times of deployment and they are grateful for the opportunity to communicate via phone calls, e-mails, and web-chatting. One drawback is connectivity issues due to weak infrastructure can create fear and frustration. In some cases, however, the prevalence of technology can make it seem like a deployed parent really is not "out of the picture" at all. As one student responded:

"We talk to her every day on the web-cam. My dad keeps a web-cam up [at home] and so it's just like she's home. Anytime I need help with school and she's awake, I'll ask her and she'll help me. If I'm going through something it's like she's there. It helps a lot. It makes it easier."

Student

Technology, Communications, and the Deployed Parent

The use of technology to keep the deployed parent involved in schools has continued to develop. From parent portals that allow the deployed parent access to the daily progress of their child to the video teleconferencing used by many schools for high school graduations, even in absentia, deployed parents can still play an active role in their student's education.

Between all persons concerned, one of the hardest areas to figure out is how much information is appropriate to share with the Family member who is deployed. This seems to be especially an issue between schools and deployed parents. Many parents and teachers are grateful that relatively easy access to email means that a deployed parent can stay engaged with a child's education during times of separation. However, a service member's chief responsibility is to the mission; therefore information about what may be considered a problem that cannot be addressed from a distance becomes more of a frustration than a benefit. One previously deployed parent felt that all of her child's teachers handled the deployment well except for one (see quote).

> **"All the teachers knew I was deployed and my husband was here. One teacher could have talked to him about anything but she would send me e-mails about my son chewing gum in class even though I was 6000 miles away. It just didn't seem like she cared that we were deployed or what was going on."**
>
> Parent

Teachers mentioned the changes brought about by technology and communication in the school. This has proved to be both an asset and a burden. Media coverage has been a proverbial thorn in the side of teachers who deal with distractions in the classroom caused by events in combat zones, as well as unrestricted access to news and gossip via social networking sites.

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Along with negative emotional effects, parents note that in response to a deployment sometimes students display more maturity, or gain a sense of responsibility and awareness of others. Parents report positive outcomes from deployments like students focusing more on academics so the deployed parent will be proud. They also say deployments have helped students to:

- Gain emotional strength
- Value friendships
- Have closer connection with friends or siblings
- Be more sensitive to others
- Be more helpful and responsible at home
- Appreciate the parent
- Display patriotism

The students, again, speak about these positive emotions and behaviors when they reflect on their deployment experiences.

"It's always tough, but you know that eventually, that at least they're going for something good. They're helping in some way and that gives you peace at night to be able to sleep."

Student

"My mom is always telling us it's very blessed to have our dad and everything, but I really never realized it until he was gone and then I miss him."

Student

"It's always heart-wrenching to see him go, but you know he's doing it for a greater cause so it makes things okay."

Student

Schools can also provide an environment that fosters resiliency by setting and communicating consistent and high expectations for students plus providing them with the social context for friendships and adult connections around areas of interest (such as sports or the arts). Setting and holding students to high expectations is a key component for resilience (Ginsburg & Jablow, 2006). Teachers at the high school level expressed this idea when they said they did not let youth use deployment as an excuse for not completing work or doing substandard work. The following excerpt in response to the question "How does deployment impact your school?" also addresses a delicate balance between holding students accountable and being compassionate about the child's situation.

"[Deployments have] demanded for me to be more compassionate, and identifying the difference between an excuse and reason. We talk a lot about that in my class... excellence, consistency, not over reacting without knowing what's going on."

Teacher

In the book, *Building Resilience in Children and Teens: Giving Kids Roots and Wings*, resiliency is defined as:

"The capacity to rise above difficult circumstances; the trait that allows us to exist in this less-than-perfect world."

Dr. Ken Ginsburg

Resilience is about moving forward and finding new purpose when one has experienced any difficulty in life. One way schools have an opportunity to foster resilience in students is by providing an environment where caring adults set high expectations and believe in a child's ability to reach those expectations. School provides students with structure, caring adults, and – although teachers and administrators indicate they are flexible and accommodating in certain situations – it is a place where the expectations are the same whether a parent is deployed or not. A positive school environment is a protective factor that research on resilience suggests can help a child overcome adversity. It is one of the "ordinary" things in a child's life that can have extraordinary power (Masten, 2000). The importance of a child's day-to-day experience in school is critical to their resiliency.

"They understand that even though mom or dad is gone, there are still certain expectations. So, we just have to make sure that we reinforce that with the kids."

Teacher

Teachers are in a unique position to influence resiliency through their day-to-day contact with students. They have the opportunity to fill the role of a trusted and caring adult in the child's life. One theme that bubbled up in the course of EMC-21 interviews was the importance of the relationships between the students at the high school level and their teachers. This is consistent with findings from a study by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health which found "the way in which school staff members interact with Military students can either buffer or exacerbate the stress that students experience" (Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, Mmari, & Blum, 2010). Teachers at the elementary level not only talk about the relationship with the students, they also talk about the relationship with the students' parents as part of the support they extend to the students. This relationship is reciprocal; in the EMC-21 Study, parents of elementary students spoke about relationships with the teachers and high school students spoke about relationships with teachers.

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HIGH SCHOOL

From Teachers	From Students
Relationship	
I want to know each of them. Every one of my students has my cell phone number. Every one of my students knows if you have any trouble, you call me. Whatever, it doesn't matter. So I think, I think just that openness just being able to establish that relationship from early on.	My old algebra teacher, "_____," she's pretty cool. She helps students with TAKS and I know other teachers…they're easy to talk to. "_____", she was my junior English teacher, and I can talk to her about a lot of stuff. If I text her or something, she'll actually let me talk to her if I'm having a problem or something like that.
Academic Support	
I know that they so appreciate having one of their teachers either show up at their games or working with them and you establish really an academic relationship where they always try to do their best and they're very dependable, they're looking for some positive reenforcement and in that way you can give it to them	My eighth grade Math teacher, Miss "_____." She used to stay after school every day for the entire 8th grade year and she would let us come in there and study and everything. And most of us were all Military students some of the kids who need extra help.
Transition Support	
I realize that I could really connect with them and find out there's always a story going on at home with the students-that you have to take that into consideration and it's not just more important, but it's our job to know the students a lot better and to understand where they are coming from-to talk with them more. Find out how we can help them both inside the school and outside the school, because we know all the Families have a lot going on too.	Well a lot of teachers that I had they had told me that they are used to the Military life so they understand how you move, it's hard to transition …they'll try to help you get caught up, some teachers they be like, oh you might as well just start where you at, no reason for you to get caught up. Other teachers would actually sit there as you go over the material that you have missed so you can feel like you are already caught up, instead of just throwing you into the work and you don't know what you're doing.
Deployment Support	
I realize the Military students have a certain level of stress because of the occupation of their parents, and I also realized the random changes in the household. Dad or Mom may be there for a week and then all of a sudden something happens and just up and go. I know how to help because it's not only personal but makes its way into the classroom.	Some teachers here are retired Military and some have worked with DOD's , if they understand that you're Military they kind of have a different mind-set and they understand it a little more with deployment issues but some of them care a lot, it seems.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

From Teachers	From Students	From Parents
Deployment Support		
I think it's important to have that special relationship with the Military students, because as a Military spouse that has gone through deployments, I know the extra care that these kids need. So I always, I've always worked with Military kids. I've always worked on the Military post, or at a school right off of post where we service Military students, and I think it's important for them to have that connection with someone that's going through the same thing that they are going through.	The guidance counselors are very, very nice. And the teachers are really nice too, and they're always there for you if you need someone to talk to. I remember Mr. "_____" he was my favorite history teacher at "_____" Middle school and he really helped me get adapted to the school and if one day I wasn't really in the mood because I was sad about my dad being deployed or something or moving he would understand.	The school itself, I don't think necessarily did anything, but her teachers were great. Her teachers would write to see how we were doing, and they would send little letters and like when my husband came back the teacher had the whole class do a poster board project. I mean the teachers were very thoughtful I thought for the deployment. I think they went above and beyond.
Transition Support		
I think I'm a lot more patient. When they start crying because they are about to move I understand.	The teachers had other kids that were in most of my classes help me out, show me where to go to my next class.	

The relationships between the parents, students, and educators go beyond a simple connection; these relationships are part of a complex network of support that fosters resilience and provides students with a safety net. Students, of all ages, have the reassurance that there are adults in their lives to help them through the day-to-day struggles as well as any large obstacles that may encounter during the deployment of a parent. Parents can be reassured if they have relationships with their child's teachers that another set of eyes is watching for the best interest of their child.

Deployment and reintegration experiences place stress on Families and schools. It is important for school officials, teachers in particular, to remember that a deployment is a uniquely experienced phenomenon for each Family. Teachers experience deployment on a much larger scale than individual Families, as many of them have had multiple students with deployed parents in their classroom over the last decade. Toward that end, a teacher may be on their innumerable classroom deployment experience, and thus, may feel the desensitization inherent in such a "routine" occurrence. However, a Family on their first, second, or even fifth deployment is keenly aware of the absence of the service member and certainly sensitive to the effect of that loss. It is always a "first time" for some child

> **It is always a "first time" for some child and even if it is a second or third time the child has had a parent deployed, the experience will be different in some way.**

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and even if it is a second or third time the child has had a parent deployed, the experience will be different in some way.

The findings are clear that parents must communicate with their child's teachers and school administrators about this issue in order to give the student every advantage for as positive an experience as possible. Equally, in order to increase the likelihood that both parents and students feel comfort and see the need to include school personnel, educators must set conditions that demonstrate they are interested in the deployment experience in order to better support the child. This includes "asking."

The Deployment Experience and Resilient Families

"Our goal was not to survive, it was to thrive."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 1)

"Challenging," "stressful," "difficult," "interesting," and "different" are a few of the wide range of words used to describe the experiences with the multiple deployments U.S. Army Families have been dealing with since 2001. Each Family's story is both different and personal. In their responses, parents and students indicated elements of resilience, despite encountering deployment challenges. While each situation is unique, common elements of resilience – the "Seven Cs" are clearly evident.

The Seven Cs of Resilience[12]

- Competence
- Confidence
- Connection
- Character
- Contribution
- Coping
- Control

Connection

"Connectedness" emerged as a key factor. Twenty-nine of the parents interviewed had a service member spouse deployed when the interview took place. Of those, eighty percent responded that they were not having a difficult and challenging time with the current deployment. None of the respondents indicated any problems were overwhelming or causing a serious crisis. The majority of those who described their experience in a positive manner were either connected to their Family Readiness Group (FRG) or their Military installation.

Keeping connected to people who are going through a similar situation is helpful to both adults and students. This is consistent with findings from a study published in 2010 which found that students whose parents were in the Military thought it was important to connect to other Military youth when moving to a new school. Additionally, parents reported a strong sense of trust and support when living on the installation among other Military Families (Mmari, Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, & Blum, 2010). One parent commented that her teenage sons do not talk to her, but they do talk to each other and they have really enjoyed meeting with other teens during the FRG meetings. These meetings for the teens are not set up as support groups as much as a casual gathering with games and food. Other parents shared that they

12 Ginsburg, K.R., *Building Resilience in Children and Teens*, American Academy of Pediatrics (2006). 22. Dr. Ginsburg is a member of the MCEC Science Advisory Board.

had relocated during previous deployments to be near extended Family, but were staying on-post or near the installation for the current deployment so they could be around other spouses from their unit. They also wanted their students to remain in schools that had experience with Military-connected students and that recognized their students may need a little extra support during the deployment of a parent. Numerous spouses in the EMC-21 Study mentioned how a deployment is easier when the Family was living on-post. The sense of camaraderie, although present in many off-post communities, seemed especially strong for those Families with on-post housing.

Connecting to groups and organizations in the local community is another way Families find support and assistance during a deployment. The faith-based communities near many installations have reached out to Families with deployed service members in various ways to offer encouragement and help. One of the many examples of how a church community pitched in to help out in a meaningful and significant way was expressed by a spouse with two elementary-age students. This Family had recently moved on-post, gotten settled in, and the husband left for a 12-month deployment.

> "Deployments are hard but I think when you live on-post it lessens the anxiety that I see people feel when they've lived off post or away from post."
>
> Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 5)

> "We're doing fine. We stay busy and I don't let them use it as an excuse. We live on-post here and it is the norm for all our neighbors."
>
> Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 1)

> "I felt extremely fortunate living on-post. If there is anything I can share with the spouses that I am involved with it is having those bonds made all the difference in those 15 months going by quickly. We all took care of each other and I think that really benefitted the students as well because they felt very loved by the community and very safe."
>
> Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 1)

"I got a letter in my mailbox that said I had to move (to another housing area). The U.S. Army was not at all helpful with my fence, shed, and backyard playground. Luckily I had a fabulous support system in my church with a men's ministry who dug out my fence and moved it, the shed, and the kid's playground."

Routines

A second common thread of the parents who report they manage deployments well is maintaining routines. This was mentioned by several people as their "best advice" and rightly so. Routines help students feel safe and secure. The predictability that routines provide gives everyone in the Family a sense of control, even if it is over small things, and control is an important element of resilience. Students especially, need to know that while they cannot control changes – like the absence of a parent for a year – some things in their lives will remain constant and predictable. Healthful meals eaten as a Family and regular bedtimes are two daily routines that are easy to maintain but equally as easy to let fall to the wayside when a parent is away.

> "It took a while, but he finally got used to it and we got into a routine. The second time he deployed it was a little bit better since they were in high school. I kept them involved. You need to do something. I keep myself busy and the boys active. We just stay active to make time pass."
>
> Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 5)

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Continued participation in all the activities that were part of the schedule prior to a deployment is also part of a child's routine. Parents and students both stated that staying busy is one of the keys to getting through a deployment.

"This past deployment has been awesome. I was the FRG leader so that was great. I think that the more you know and the more you get involved with, the better the deployment will be for the Family."

Parent (Spouse and Multiple Family Members Deployed)

Being Involved

"Stay busy" was the recurring advice from Families who report they are coping well. Adolescents who are successfully involved in school, jobs, or community activities are more likely to show resilience (MacDermid, Samper, Schwarz, Nishida, & Nyaronga, 2008). Being too busy, however, carries the added risk of adding additional stress to the daily management of the home. Multiple parents reported the greatest challenge with keeping students involved in activities outside of the home is the logistics of transportation. This is especially true when there is more than one child and students are involved in multiple activities. Couple this with full-time employment, and it is easy to understand that even the most organized parent could experience stress related to being the sole "taxi" service.

"It's challenging for me as a parent. My students are involved in a lot. I am a full-time mother, full time worker, in school full-time so it's tough to take care of everything yourself."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 1)

Confidence and Competence

"The second time around I felt more comfortable, and this third time was 'we got this.'"

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 3)

"Although it was hard on the boys, we got into our own routine and once you've been through a couple [of deployments], you figure out the best way to go about dealing with things."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 5)

"You know you can do it. You've done it once, and you may not like it, but you can do it."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 3)

A third common thread reported by Families who considered themselves as managing well is twofold: competence and confidence. These two resiliency traits are closely interwoven. As Families successfully and competently navigate a deployment experience or a challenge, they gain confidence in their ability to do so. This confidence, in turn, is used when they are faced with another deployment. They have the experience that tells them they are able to cope with whatever comes up at home while their spouse is away.

Interdependence and Independence

Interdependence and independence both have value in the coping arena. Some Families speak positively about their experience and how being connected to others and having support systems through the Military is important to them. There are also those individuals who express the view that they do not need these connections. This small group of parents said they (or their spouse) coped well because they were independent. Life experiences and "know how" have equipped them with the ability to handle a deployment experience. This idea was seen most frequently from parents who spoke about being independent, not needing anyone else. These parents tended to speak positively about the deployments or did not see a deployment as particularly challenging.

"Thankfully I'm a very independent person and I adjust everywhere we go, as long as the Family is together."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 3)

"We didn't stop just because he left or came back: if you're handling it well, doing things, and showing your children they are gone but life doesn't stop."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 3)

Deployment Implications

When parents and schools are proactive and effectively work together, they can best support those students who may be experiencing difficulties adjusting to a parent's deployment or the reintegration period. This adjustment period may encompass the pre-deployment and notification phase, the actual time the parent is in theatre, and an undefined amount of time when the parent returns. Keeping lines of communication open, sharing information, and addressing concerns immediately is one way to prevent small problems from becoming major issues.

What Parents Can Do

- Communicate with the school. Let the school know the student has a parent who is going to be deployed, currently deployed, or returning home.
- Give the school and teacher as much notice as possible if the student will be absent from school. If the student is going to be out for an extended period of time, communicate with the teacher about policies concerning make-up work and obtaining assignments in advance. Follow up with the teacher when the child returns to make sure they do not need any additional help with missed assignments or class work.
- Set high but reasonable expectations for school and communicate those expectations to the student. Let teachers know what "right" looks like in terms of academics, behavior, and social connections, along with updated contact information. Ask teachers to communicate any changes or concerns.

What Schools Can Do

- Administrators can seek out opportunities for staff professional development to be informed specifically about the deployment experience. These opportunities should be repeated.
- Actively seek information about students with deployed parents.
- Communicate. Develop strategies that communicate the message to parents and students that the school wants to be helpful and supportive during the deployment of a parent. It is possible a parent may not even think this is necessary – especially as their students get older – so schools must convey the message that sharing this information is still important at any age.

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- Inform parents about deployment-related policies. Let parents know about policies that address attendance and make-up work when a parent is deployed. Maintain updated information on websites regarding these policies so they are easily accessible and current.

- Keep parents or caregivers Informed. Practice "early intervention" when there are concerns about the academic performance of a student with a deployed parent.

- Be informed about resources. Schools should equip staff with knowledge about all the available resources and support available; if they see a child struggling academically or emotionally during a parental deployment they know how to help them.

- Use the technology available to keep parents connected to their child's education. E-mail, parent portals, and video conferencing are valuable tools that foster meaningful connections for the parent, child, and teacher.

- Be consistent with academic standards but flexible and responsive to the student when the need arises. One size does not fit all.

Findings

Findings from the Student Interviews

- **A majority of students do not participate in school sponsored support programs.**

  Overall, only twenty-five percent of the students participating in the study reported that they had accessed some type of school support program. Although the majority did not seek out services, the preponderance expressed belief that support groups and counseling is important to have available, it is just "not for me."

- **Participation in extracurricular activities, specifically sports, is the primary venue through which students access their support system.**

  Extracurricular activities fill two needs for older students: Keeping them busy so they don't worry about their deployed parent and providing them access to their primary support system outside the home – their friends. The students who participated in the interviews were involved in a variety of extracurricular activities but sports were mentioned most frequently.

- **Students are realistic but demonstrate a resilient attitude about deployments.**

  The experiences shared by students indicate that even though having a deployed parent can be stressful and worrisome, they have been able to carry on with the business of school and being a child. The students speak about the realities of war and deployment but also speak about the pride they have in their service member parent. They speak about all the events their parent missed, but also tell about the ways they keep the deployed parent involved in their life through technology. They offer the advice of "staying busy" and "not worrying." They also offer the advice of seeking help and not "holding in things" that are bothersome.

- **The caring adults in a student's life are critical to their resiliency.**

  Students, especially high school students who do not find support through formal channels, reach out to friends, siblings, or caring adults like coaches and teachers to help them when they may be struggling with the deployment of their parent. These adults are critical to students' resiliency and help them cope with the daily stress or challenges they may be experiencing.

- **A child's response to a parental deployment is not predictable.**

  There are various factors that influence the deployment experience for any child. These include the age and developmental level of the child, the environment and support in the environment, the number of deployments and previous experience with deployments, and the child's perspective on the deployment. Two students of the same age who have experienced the same number of deployments may have a different response to a parent deploying when the support in the environment is different. It is important to understand that just because a child has successfully navigated two deployments, a third could be entirely different. It is especially critical for educators to understand that each experience could be different and may require a different level of awareness and support from them. It is also important to understand that these factors can change, resulting in a change in the child's response.

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Findings from the Parent Interviews

- **Taking on the role of a single parent presents challenges that are significant across all ages of students.**

  One of the most frequently mentioned challenges related to deployment is the challenge of becoming a "suddenly single" parent. Parents of very young students report that it is difficult because they may be the sole caretaker for the students and it is physically exhausting; parents of elementary-age students say they are sometimes overwhelmed with trying to keep up with all the homework and school projects, especially if the deployed parent had been active in that role. Parents of older students find the logistics of transporting students and managing their busy extracurricular activities trying.

- **Connectedness, maintained routines, and confidence were three commonalities that surfaced when parents reported they and their students cope well with deployment.**

  Parents reported they were coping well with the challenges of multiple and extended deployments when they were connected to their community (on-post and off-post) especially when these connections were to others who had a deployed family member. In some cases these were formal connections like Family Readiness Groups or support groups in the community; in other cases they were informal groups like neighbors and friends. Parents report that one important thing they do when their spouse is deployed is maintain their routines, keeping everything as normal as possible. Parents who report they are coping well also believe in their own ability to manage. Sometimes this comes from the confidence gained from previous deployment experiences; in some cases parents maintain that they have always been independent.

- **Parents are wary about their students participating in support programs.**

  A small number of parents did not want their students to participate in support programs at school or on the installation because they viewed these programs as victimizing their students. They expressed the belief that these programs were not helpful and their students did not need to sit around in a room of "doom and gloom."

- **Parents attribute deployment for a range of responses from students.**

  There were a range of behaviors observed by parents in their students; however, those parents who were quick to intervene with adverse behaviors reported that their child returned to normal. A few parents reported that the deployment resulted in severe behavioral issues, but these parents were addressing these concerns with mental health professionals. Parents also report positive behaviors from students. Students may be helpful, get along better with their siblings, and behave more maturely when one parent deploys. Overall, even when things are not "perfect," the parent at home recognizes that their child may have a bad day now and then, but it is not a pattern of behavior that concerns them.

- **The majority of parents did not see any impact of deployment on their child's education.**

  The impact of deployment on the education of students represents a long continuum. One extreme is a child having to repeat a grade, on the other end is the child who excels when their parent is deployed. The majority of students fall in the middle, with parents expressing the belief that, overall, there is no impact. There were parents who reported their students had a "dip" in grades when the parent first deployed, or immediately following the deployed parent's mid-tour leave, but quick intervention from teachers or parents helped alleviate this situation.

Findings from the Educator Interviews

- **Educators (administrators and teachers) expressed a variety of concerns related to deployments and the "business" of school.**

  Deployments impact the "business" of running a school. Students may have extended absences when their deployed parent comes home for a mid-tour leave. These absences impact the daily attendance numbers for the school as well as placing an extra burden on teachers to prepare work for a student prior to an absence (when they know about it) and catch the student up when they have missed instruction. There were a few administrators who reported deployments impacted enrollment numbers because students were withdrawing to move when their parent deployed. All educator groups expressed the idea that they had to provide emotional support for students who are not coping well with the absence of a parent.

- **Educators expressed concern with the home-life of the student and how that impacted the student's ability to function well at school.**

  Many educators expressed concerns about their students' home-life. Concerns reported by educators included students taking on adult responsibilities; stress from home; diminished parenting; and changes or uncertainty about who was taking care of students. Educators also reported that when students bring stresses and concerns from home to school, they are detrimental to the student's academic endeavors.

- **Deployments have become routine and are no longer considered a significant event by educators.**

  A very small number of educators reported that deployments had no impact at all on their schools or classrooms. One reason given for this is that they have become so common place that it was normal. There were teachers interviewed for this project that have never known a time when the parents of their students did not deploy; teachers told us they don't know who has a deployed parent and who does not.

- **Educators were not always knowledgeable about the support resources that are available for their students.**

  Educators, most specifically teachers, are not always informed of the various support programs and services available for their students, even programs in their own schools. All school personnel need to be informed and updated on available programs and services, who they serve, and how these resources can be accessed.

Findings from Students and Parents

- **For the family, "Gone is gone."**

  There were many parents and students who considered any long-term absence of the service member as a "deployment." When responding to a question about who had deployed, it was not uncommon for the field researchers to hear "my spouse was in Korea and Iraq," indicating they considered the unaccompanied tour to Korea as a deployment. Places like Germany, Egypt, and even stateside locations were included in the response to this question. Parents and students experience some of the same challenges when the family is not together no matter where their service member is assigned.

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- **Reintegration presents new challenges for families.**

  The reintegration experience is different for every family. Students, the caregiver left at home, and the deployed parent all shared ideas that pointed to each person experiencing some of the same challenges from differing points of view. A parent who has managed the home for over a year by themselves may have a new-found sense of independence that they do not want to lose; a returning parent may feel they are no longer needed; and the child in this family has to readjust and figure out who has the authority as parents renegotiate roles.

From Students, Parents, and Educators

- **Technology has changed the communication landscape for all parents, students, and educators.**
  Parents, students, and educators have all seen how advancements in communication and technology have allowed the deployed parent to stay connected to the family and the school while they are away. A deployed parent can communicate with their child's teachers via e-mail or view academic progress through parent portals; parents and students report they are able to video chat, call, and e-mail sometimes daily with their deployed service member. In a few instances, students reported that they had too much communication with their deployed parents, but the vast majority said the ability to easily communicate made a deployment much easier. Deployed parents were helping with homework, reading books with their students, and able to stay informed about the daily events of the family.

Implications of Findings

Institutions and individuals who desire to support the Military-connected child through the deployment of a parent need to carefully evaluate how they market their programs and services. Students do not want to be singled out as "different" and parents do not want their students victimized. Providers of support services also need to consider that deployment may be defined differently, and a child whose parent is on an unaccompanied tour may be encountering some of the same challenges as the child whose parent is in a combat zone. Programs should continue to focus on fostering resiliency and coping through connecting students, helping them feel confident, and giving them opportunities to contribute.

> By setting high expectations, communicating with the student's caregiver, and becoming aware of some of the challenges faced by each student, educators can provide an environment that is safe and gives a student a sense of normalcy.

Educators are in a unique position to influence, daily, how a student may respond to the absence of a parent. By setting high expectations, communicating with the student's caregiver, and becoming aware of some of the challenges faced by each student (and each child's situation will be different), educators can provide an environment that is safe and gives a student a sense of normalcy.

The findings in this report are based on the opinions, ideas, and stories shared by the participants. The lack of objective data specifically related to the education of the Military-connected student impedes the efforts of schools and installations to focus available resources and determine what resources are most critical to support the Military-connected student.

Conclusions

While it is difficult to forecast with complete certainty, evolving and diminished missions in Iraq and Afghanistan portend that deployments will be shorter in length with increased "dwell time" between deployments. It is absolutely clear for the near future that Military-connected students, spouses, teachers, and administrators will continue to be affected by deployments.

Defense-related spending will be reduced by at least $350 billion over the next ten years. It is too early to predict with any precision which, if any, U.S. Army Family Covenant programs will prove to be simply unaffordable given the U.S. Army's strategic priorities in this new fiscal reality. While the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation New Dawn (OND) missions are changing,

> **...a thorough "bottom up" objective review of recent deployments can aid both U.S. Army and education leaders to identify long-term impacts on readiness and implement measures-based programs to improve the educational system for Military-connected students.**

operations are not complete, deployments will continue, and comprehensive data is lacking regarding the effects of a decade of deployments on students, spouses, U.S. Army Families, and educational systems that support Military-connected students. Just as the Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm deployments were the catalyst for initiatives such as robust Family Readiness Groups, a thorough "bottom up" objective review of recent deployments can aid both U.S. Army and education leaders to identify long-term impacts on readiness (including Family readiness) and implement measures-based programs to improve the educational system for Military-connected students. Longitudinal data would aid the U.S. Army in its understanding of where the needs are greatest.

In terms of the specific impact of deployments on the education of Military students, the lack of student identifiers makes it difficult for schools to target resources where they are most needed. The observational data gathered in the EMC-21 Study is not sufficient to assist districts and installations in supporting these students. In order for schools to better serve their Military-connected population, specific, quantifiable data such as parental Military and deployment status, transition history, and academic and behavior indicators would all enable district personnel to substantiate the need for resources and allocation of those resources to better serve and support the Military-connected child.

This information could also lay the foundation to launch a meaningful dialogue between school districts and installations about how they can partner to address the concerns unique to their communities. Despite significant funding challenges both inside and outside the installation fence lines, the EMC-21 research has provided a limited "snap shot" of what "is" and what needs to be done.

As a learning organization, the U.S. Army has consistently and effectively demonstrated its willingness to introspectively apply lessons learned to improve the institution. The current conflicts afford the U.S. Army an opportunity to examine the impacts of multiple and repeated deployments over an extended period of time with an All Volunteer Force.

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"The best thing about home schooling? I get to be around my family. The worst thing? I love my parents but I get tired of them very quickly."

Student

Background

Military Families are part of a home schooling movement that has grown steadily for the past ten years. It is important to understand the broader culture of home schooling in order to provide the best possible support for these Families so they can, in turn, be successful in their endeavor to provide the best possible education for their children.

The number of Families home schooling their children has grown considerably in the United States over the past 11 years. In 1999, approximately 850,000 children (1.7 percent of school-age children) in grades Kindergarten through 12 were home schooled. In 2003 that number had increased to 1.1 million and in 2007 the National Center for Educational Statistics estimated the number of home schooled children at 1.5 million. (Hussar, 2010) This number represents 2.9 percent of all school aged children, an increase of 74 percent over the eight year period. The National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI), a private research organization, estimates between 1.73 to 2.35 million children were home schooled during the spring of 2010 in the United States, an estimated two to eight percent per annum growth over the past few years. (Ray, 2011) Although there is clear growth, it is difficult to know the exact number of home schooling Families. This is in part due to the fact the many states do not require home schooling Families to register their home school or even report that they are home- schooling.

The EMC-21 Home School Study (EMC-21 HSS) is an exploratory study that was designed to examine the current landscape of home schooling and Military Families. There are two areas of interest specific to home schooling for Military Families that the study considered: their education and their response to deployment. EMC-21 HSS is the first study on home schooling by the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) and possibly the first study of its kind to look at the Military Child and home schooling. The study is comprised of 40 semi-structured

Home schooling as an alternative to public or private school is not as foreign to many adults as it might have been in the past.

interviews with parents and children who were home schooling at the time of the interview. In addition, questions regarding home schooling were also embedded in the Education of the Military Child in the 21st Century (EMC-21). The responses of 923 administrators, teachers, parents and students from EMC-21 study are included in order to provide a broader context of education of Military children. Home schooling as an alternative to public or private school is not as foreign to many adults as it might have been in the past. The current home schooling movement began in the early 1960's and was viewed as a radical alternative to public school; it was an educational revolution and the homeschoolers were the dissidents. In the 1970's much of the home schooling movement was in response to the secular nature of public schools. Today, Families with diverse reasons and backgrounds are electing to educate their children at home.

Before 2000, when home schooling was fairly uncommon, many adults' knowledge of home schooling was most likely limited to an occassional encounter with a home schooling mom and her children at the grocery store or post office during school hours. It may even have been viewed as a bit of an oddity. This is not the case today. A Harris Poll conducted in April of 2006 found that one-third of adults in the United States knew someone who home schooled their children (*One-third of U.S. Adults Know Someone Who Home Schools Their Child*, 2006). Based on the responses from the parents and students interviewed for EMC-21, it is possible that home schooling may be even more prevalent for Military Families.

Parents participating in EMC-21 were asked if they had ever considered home schooling or if they had home schooled their children. Nine percent of the parents said they had home schooled one or more of their children at some time, and 31 percent of the parents responded that they had considered home schooling at some point. Two of their reasons for considering home schooling were concern with the public school options at a new duty station and anticipation of a mid-year move. The children participating in EMC-21 were asked if they had any friends who were home schooled . This question elicited an affirmative response by 43 percent of the children and seven percent of the children reported that they had been home schooled at some point in their education. Based on the responses of the parents and children participating in EMC-21 (which represented eleven U.S. Army installations), it is possible that Military children are home schooled at a higher rate than their civilian counterparts. Further examination of this would be necessary in order to ascertain if this is the case throughout the Military.

The Study

The main subjects of the EMC-21 Home School Study were Active Duty U.S. Army Families who were currently home schooling one or more child and children over the age of 12 who were currently home schooled . A child was considered to be home schooled if one or both of the parents were providing the education for the child at home independent of a public or private school program. Children enrolled in online public school program that they complete at home were not considered home schooled for this study.

The researchers interviewed home schooling parents and children in four communities:

- Leesville-Fort Polk, LA
- Fayetteville-Fort Bragg, NC
- Killeen-Fort Hood, TX
- El Paso-Fort Bliss, TX

A total of 41 interviews, representing 26 Families, were conducted. Twenty-five adults were interviewed. The adults represented 23 Families (two adults were spouses of another interviewed parent). Sixteen children between the ages of 12 and 18 were interviewed and only three of these children had no relation to any other interview participant. The parents in the study were home schooling as few as one child and as many as five children. Families had between one and eight children.

Home schooling 1 child	Home schooling 2 children	Home schooling 3 children	Home schooling 4 children	Home schooling 5 children
8	11	5	1	1

Table 1: Home Schooling Demographics

Four parents had home schooled a child or children who had completed high school; five had other children at home who were not yet school age. Two of the 23 Families had a child who was attending public school rather than being home schooled with their siblings.

The following chart shows a breakdown of the grade equivalents represented in this study. These numbers include children of the parents who were interviewed and the children who were interviewed, a total of 53 children.

Pre-K	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
7	3	3	7	1	4	5	2	10	3	1	3	1	3

Table 2: Grade Equivalents of Home Schooling Respondents

Home Schooling Themes and Findings

Researchers asked home schooling parents for their advice on home schooling in addition to their ideas on what the U.S. Army could do to support home schooling Families. Answers to the interview questions and the stories embedded in the interviews provided some rich insights into the world of home schooling and Military Families.

In this mixed methods qualitative study, researchers identified several themes and findings related to home schooling and Military Families, including:

THEME	FINDINGS
Home School Decision Factors	• One option considered when seeking an alternative to public schools. • Continuity during transitions. • Cost of Curriculum/Program of Instruction • Legal and regulatory variations between and within states pose challenges.
Technology	• Curriculum more accessible, especially at HS level. • Variety of on-line resources available.
Transitions between Home Schooling and Public Schools	• Educators perceive inconsistencies in academic preparation. • Decreased socialization opportunities and "doing school" norms.
Extracurricular Activities	• Lower comparative participation rates by Military-connected homeschoolers for a variety of reasons.
Post-Secondary Planning	• College admissions accommodate home schooled children. • Home schooled children perform academically equal to or better than their non-home schooled cohort. • Military enlistment classification challenges.
Impacts of Deployments	• Except for perceived time constraints, deployment impacts are negligible. • The organization/structure of home school mitigates post-deployment reintegration and increases flexibility.
Support and Resources	• Families are aware of and accessing deployment support programs. • Home schooling parents don't expect the U.S. Army to support/assist them, but desire accurate information about regulations and access to standardized testing.

Home School Landscape

"It's a commitment.
Our school hours are from eight to twelve and that is my job."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

The Decision to Home School

No Family takes the decision to home school lightly. While in a few cases parents made the decision to home school quickly in response to a critical need, most parents reported that they spent several months preparing to home school their child or children. Home schooling requires a commitment of both time and finances. Parents have multiple reasons for home schooling their children. Many of the reasons Military Families give mirror those of civilian Families who home school. Based on their 2007 survey, the National Household Education Survey (NHES) conducted by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics reported the following seven reasons for home schooling:

- A concern with the school environment
- A desire to provide religious or moral instruction
- A dissatisfaction with the academic instruction in the public school
- Other reasons such as: Family time, travel, distance to school, financial
- To provide a non-traditional approach to the child's education
- Child has a special need (other than physical or mental health) that the parents feel the school cannot or will not meet.
- Child has a physical or mental health need

Comparing the responses given by the parents in the NHES study and the EMC-21 HSS is somewhat thorny. As an exploratory study, the field researchers asked parents an open-ended question about why they started home schooling. In addition, in EMC-21 HSS, parents were not given a list of options. Some of the parents responded with only one reason while others responded with two or three reasons, and in a few instances, noted which response was their primary reason. The NHES study offered the parents an extensive list of possible reasons to select from and asked them to indicate a primary reason. Table 7 depict the breakout of the responses from both studies. The percentages in the *NHES Primary Reasons* column are similar to the *EMC-21 HSS*.

"One of my kids had a hard time in school, did not have a lot of teacher support during the deployment of my husband. He's an average student and needed a little bit more attention."

Parent

One notable difference that reflects Military life and mobility, "continuity with education during transitions," was mentioned by one-fourth of the EMC-21 HSS study, but not by the general population. Military parents most frequently mentioned issues surrounding deployment as a special need other than physical or mental. This most likely explains the greater response among Military Families compared to the general population for this category.

REASONS FOR HOME SCHOOLING	EMC-21 HSS	Primary Reason NHES
A desire to provide religious or moral instruction	32%	36%
A concern about the school environment	20%	21%
A dissatisfaction with the academic instruction in the public school	32%	17%
Provide a non-traditional approach to education	8%	7%
Other reasons (including travel, Family time, distance to school, financial)[1]	20%	14%
Child has special needs (other than physical or mental health) parents feel school cannot or will not meet.	24%	4%
Child has a physical or mental health need	4%	2%
Continuity in education during transition (EMC-21 only)	28%	

Table 3: Reasons for Home Schooling

1 Parents in EMC-21 Study mentioned "Flexibility" for time with the Family

Thirty-two percent of the Military home schooling Families stated they desired to provide religious or moral instruction, and it was the most frequent reason given by Families who had over five years home- schooling experience. Religious beliefs encompass teaching children about the faith traditions of the Family and character education, as well as using a curriculum that aligns with those beliefs.

> "We wanted to make sure they had a good faith-based approach to their education, and we wanted the flexibility too."
>
> Parent

> "Primarily religious beliefs… we knew that what they were getting was according to our beliefs. Also we could work with them at their own pace and challenge them and also instill Godly beliefs and character traits".
>
> Parent

School environment (including safety and discipline) was a concern for 20 percent of the Military home schooling Families. Parents stated concern for the child's safety or that schools were not addressing issues in an appropriate or timely manner. Other related reasons that parents gave for home schooling included the lack of support or the apparent unwillingness to accommodate their child when a special situation existed. Comments related to support almost always centered on a specific incident with a teacher or an administrator.

"I really had not planned on homeschooling, but she was having trouble with reading and the teacher didn't really seem that she was very interested in helping."

Parent

Transitions are a part of the mobility of Military life and 28 percent of the parent respondents cited that as a reason for home schooling. Mobility was not mentioned in the NHES study. Recognizing that curriculum is different from school district to school district, parents said home schooling provides the child with the continuity the child needs to be successful. Military parents in particular viewed home schooling as an alternative when the Family was going to be living somewhere for a short period of time and they did not want their child to have multiple school transitions in one school year.

Concern with the quality of education available in the public school was another decision factor for 32 percent of the Families in the study, higher than the NHES responses. Military parents cited concerns with the lack of time spent on specific subjects and rigor of academic instruction as reasons they were home schooling their children.

"[Flexibility is] one of the advantages of home schooling. I think when you look at some of the benefits of home schooling that's probably been one of them that has had a direct link to post-deployment activities."

Parent

"The first two years we were supposed to move halfway through the school year, so therefore it was going to work a whole lot better to home school."

Parent

"A multitude of reasons; the first one was we were not happy with the academics."

Parent

"I actually started homeschooling him when he was three. He just had a voracious appetite to learn so that's why I just kept doing that. The public school did not have any programs that were going to challenge him, and he was bored."

Parent

Several Military parents in the study expressed that one advantage of home schooling was the scheduling flexibility it allowed the Family. Nearly all the interviewed parents in this study at some point commented on the idea that home schooling allowed them to work around a spouse's leave schedule, Family vacations, temporary duty assignment, or, in one case, visits to an ailing parent. The idea that you can "take school with you" or you can just "put it aside" appealed to people who wanted to be able to spend time together as a Family. This was often mentioned in conjunction with re-connecting as a Family after deployment or during rest and recuperation (R & R) during a deployment. Although only one Family stated this was the primary reason to home school, almost all the parents viewed it as one of the reasons they continue to home school or as a benefit of home schooling.

Some Families even capitalized on the travel opportunities and incorporated travel experiences into the curriculum — the ultimate field trip.

"We traveled a lot with my husband when he came from Iraq. He had schools to attend. We went to West Point, toured New York City, Concord, Lexington, and then spent the month in Washington D.C. We would try to get our work done by basically two o'clock and then go site seeing."

Parent

Curriculum and Cost Considerations

"I like to pick my curriculum and then I map it out for the year."

Parent of Five Children

One of the biggest decisions a Family makes after deciding to home school is the selection of a curriculum or program of instruction. The process of selecting curriculum for home schoolers is important not only to the success of the home schooling endeavor, but also to the child's long-term education plan whether it be a continued home school environment or a transition into a public or private school.

State laws differ in the subjects required at each grade level; variations in these requirements impact a Family's curriculum decisions. (See Appendix D) This magnifies the impact for a mobile Military Family. For example, if a Family begins home schooling their elementary student in the state of Texas, the required subjects are reading, math, spelling, grammar and good citizenship. A move to Colorado would require them to add science, literature, history, speaking, writing, and the U.S. Constitution to the course of instruction. Because of the range of state policy and curriculum requirements, mobile Military Families are likely to encounter differences every time they move and therefore have an even higher need to be aware of the changes that may occur when they move.

"In Charlottesville our cousins came (they're also homeschooled), so we all took a month off and went to all these different Civil War sites and so that was cool for both of us to go see all these places we'd just read about."

Student

Home schooling style, the way parents teach their children which reflects their views of how their children learn, is also a consideration when selecting a curriculum. There are many approaches to home schooling that parents may consider. Styles vary from very structured and traditional in terms of pedagogy and academic content to very unstructured and creative. Some popular styles are (not inclusive):

- Unit Study
- Unschooling
- Eclectic
- School at Home, also called School-in-a-Box
- Charlotte Mason

Detailed explanations of these styles can be found in Appendix C.

"There's not just one curriculum anymore. There's thousands and sometimes that's overwhelming."

Parent

"I did a lot of research. I had multiple curriculums that I was checking out, some with biblical foundations some without."

Parent

"I talked to several different home schooling moms, I went to some curriculum fairs, I read several books on home schooling; we researched a lot."

Parent

All of the parents in the EMC-21 HSS who have home schooled more than one year said they have changed curriculum programs or adjusted their style of teaching. Through a process of trial and error, often supplemented with advice from veteran homeschoolers, these Military parents sought a curriculum that "works" for their children.

The curriculum selection process can be daunting, given the choices available to parents. The interviews in this study mentioned 12 different programs by name. Add to this the ever increasing number of on-line options and it is easy to understand how this choice can be a time consuming process.

Cost is another factor parents consider when selecting a curriculum. In 2007 the median amount spent on home schooling materials ranged from $400 to $599 per child (Ray, 2009). However, research by the National Home Education Research Institute has shown that the amount of money spent on home schooling materials has little impact on the student's performance on academic achievement tests. The data collected by NHERI for the 2007-2008 school year on the academic achievement for home schooled children included the test scores of 11,739 home schooled children from all 50 states who took three well-known tests: California Achievement Test, Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, and Stanford Achievement Test. The data showed that children whose parents spent more than $600 scored in the 89th percentile (overall composite on reading, language, math, science and social studies) while students whose parents spent less than $600 scored in the 86th percentile, (Ray, 2009) This insignificant difference suggests that the amount spent on curriculum does not have an effect on the student's overall acacemic performance.

"We went through three programs before we found a great math program, and each child has a different learning style so what has worked for my oldest is different for my second."

Parent

"...consideration of my teaching style and my child's learning style. Then trying it out and evaluating it and having the freedom that if it didn't work for us or didn't work for me or the children then we were able to switch and try something different."

Parent

"School-in-a Box," one popular and widely used program, provides the parent with everything they need to teach one grade. For a year of third grade, for example, this program retails for $631.90 on the company's website, but home schooling Families have found that they can use the internet to hold down costs. Via the internet, they can find used curriculum programs from a Family who had purchased a program only to find it

did work for their children and were selling it at a reduced cost. In addition many home schooling support groups hold curriculum exchanges and sales which allow parents to shop around. Regardless of the cost of materials, experienced home schooling parents would advise that if a program is not a good fit for a particular child, cease using it and try something new. One parent in this study said selecting a curriculum was "*hundreds of dollars of errors.*"

The parents interviewed in this study discussed researching curriculum and two resources that assisted with the selection process. The first resource is other home schooling parents. Home schooling parents are happy to share their experiences with the curriculum process, and they frequently use the internet to engage in these discussions with other Families.

"I did a lot of research on the internet the summer before our oldest son would have started kindergarten, talking to people online about what curriculums they use and what they tried and what worked and how things worked and just really sorting it all out."

Parent

The second source is the curriculum publishers. They are easy to find online, and advertisements for curriculum on home schooling websites abound. A few parents said they attended home schooling conventions in their area before they started home schooling so they could view the curricula offered by the many vendors.

"...they also have home school conferences in every state and all kinds of seminars that you can attend; they have all kinds of curriculum vendors out, so that's one place you can go to [select curricula]."

Parent

An advantage for many home schooling parents is the ability to select a curriculum specific to their child's learning style. It is common for parents who are new to home schooling to select one program to start, but seasoned homeschoolers typically use a variety of programs, utilizing their favorite elements of each curriculum to create a course of instruction for their children.

"As we've grown in it, we've learned different curriculum, the strengths and weaknesses of each of those curriculums, and how our daughters learn; that makes an incredible difference picking curriculums to match our daughters, too."

Parent

Measuring Student Progress

"…she was in the 50th percentile in math in Kansas when she was tested with (public school district) and she went up to the 89th percentile the next year (after one year of home schooling)."

Parent

Parents, especially those new to home schooling, are interested in how their children are progressing academically compared to their public school counterparts. According to the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), children who are home schooled out-perform their public school peers on standardized tests in all subjects. In 2007, the HSLDA commissioned Dr. Brian D. Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI) to conduct a nationwide study of home schooling students.

This purpose of this study was to capture the demographics of homeschoolers and their Families and analyze how certain variables may impact student academic achievement. (Ray, 2009) The sample included 11,739 students from the 50 states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. In the study, homeschoolers scored 34 to 39 percentile points higher than the norm on standardized achievement tests. The mean scores for homeschoolers in math, language, and social studies were in the 84th percentile and the mean score for reading for homeschoolers was in the 89th percentile. (Ray, 2009).

The EMC-21 HSS did not specifically ask parents about standardized testing. However three of the parents interviewed in this study specifically mentioned administering, or having their children take, a standardized test and their scores on those tests. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills was the specific test mentioned by two of the parents; the third parent did not specify which standardized test her child had taken. Although there are only three examples, they do align with the NHERI study.

"…my kids were in the top 80-90 percent of everything."

Parent

The procedure for accessing and administering tests differs depending on where the Family lives. These procedures vary from state to state and district to district and may also vary within a local school district. An on-post home schooling Family at Ft. Bragg, NC may elect to have their child tested free of charge at the local school on the installation but a Military Family living off the installation does not have the same access. Some states required that in order for parents to continue home schooling, the home schooled children be tested and pass the standardized test with a minimum score. This is another example of the various policies and regulations that differ from state to state or even district to district.

Although parents may be able to order a test online, or pay for testing through a school district if the district has a policy and procedure in place to support such testing, parents mentioned that it could be potentially useful for installations to help obtain or arrange, administer, and score state or standardized norm referenced tests like the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

"…if we could have standardized testing done on post for eighth grade down, that would be really helpful."

Parent

A valuable piece of information for a home schooling child's portfolio would be standardized test scores that come from a testing environment that adheres to the recognized testing protocols. It could assist with placement if the student transitioned to a public or private school as well as giving the parent a good picture of how their student is faring academically.

For the mobile Family, the rules and requirements can change as the Family's location changes so it is critical

that information about testing requirements be easily accessible, current, and accurate. Many parents rely on The Home School Legal Defense Agency (HSLDA) website for this information; however in some cases, a district may have a policy that is different from the state policy. HSLDA has accurate information for each state and territory but may not have district specific information.

The procedure for accessing and administering tests differs depending on where the Family lives. These procedures vary from state to state and district to district and may also vary within a local school district.

Extracurricular Activities

Critics of home schooling frequently cite the lack of opportunities for socialization with other children as a disadvantage for home schooled children. Participating in organized sports, group lessons, and clubs affords home schooled children the opportunity to socialize with their peers. Both parents and students interviewed in the EMC-21 Home schooling Study indicated participation a variety of clubs, sports, lessons, and other peer group activities. In their 1997 *Report Strengths of Their Own*, NHERI also surveyed home schooling parents about their child's participation in activities outside of home school. The results in the table below indicate that Military connected home schooled children are not participating in extracurricular activities at the same rate as their civilian counter-parts.

ACTIVITY	PERCENT OF STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED	
	EMC-21 Home School Study	NHERI Study
Competitive Sports	34.5%	48%
Group Lessons (Dance, Martial Arts, Art)	33 %	42%
Church Related Activities	18%	35%
Other Regular Group Activity (includes volunteering)	9%	33%
Scouting	7%	8%
More than one group activity	38%	98%
Reported no participation in activities outside of school	14.5%	

Table 5: Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Note: Source of NHERI statistics-Ray, Brian D. (1997). *Strengths of their own-Homeschoolers across America: Academic Achievement, Family characteristics, and longitudinal traits*. Salem, OR: National Home Education Research Institute, **www.nheri.org**

With the exception of scouting, participation in extracurricular activities is significantly lower for the Military connected home schooled child than for home schooled children nationally as reported by NHERI. There are several factors that may account for the disparity.

- **Length of time in area:** On average, Military Families spend three years in an area. Twenty-one of the 53 children represented in the study had been in their current locations for one year or less. The process of settling into a new community takes time. Finding the right dance studio, martial arts class, or getting your child involved with a local community drama group are parts of the settling in process and that can sometimes take several months or longer. For example, Families who regularly attend church may visit many congregations before formally joining a church and the children would not be participating in youth groups until that time. Getting children involved in extracurricular activities when you are new to an area simply takes a little time.

- **Time of transition:** Transitioning during the traditional school year may also limit participation in extracurricular activities because many group lessons and team sports follow the local the school calendar. Enrollment in these activities may be open in some locations to allow all children the opportunity to participate, but a child who arrives during the last weeks of a seasonal sport may encounter challenges in feeling as though he/she is truly part of the team. Anytime during the year, there is the comfort factor of starting when everyone else does. Therefore, a child who has not transitioned prior to the start of a sports season may wait an entire year before he/she can fully participate.

- **Availability of activities:** The availability of activities varies by location. Many Military communities offer a wealth of choices, but some communities, particularly those that are adjacent to a smaller, less urban area have a limited selection from which to choose.

> "There is a huge lack of cultural and religious activities for us because we're Jewish. And it's very, very isolated."   Parent

> "…availability needs improvement for the children to participate in sports that doesn't involve driving an hour."   Parent

- **Transportation:** Managing a transportation schedule for two or more children who participate in multiple activities can be challenging for any parent. Frequent and repeated deployments further complicate this issue for Military- connected home schooling Families. While children in public school who participate in extracurricular activities after school may have the option of school provided transportation (the "activities bus"), home schooled children do not have this option.

> "The biggest challenge for me with the deployments was I felt like I was in the car 24/7."   Parent

> "If you're resourceful here in (_____) there are a lot of activities you can access if you're willing to drive a little bit."   Parent

For home schooling Families living on post, the Youth Centers may be within walking distance so utilizing opportunities for team sports, private lessons, or group instruction (if offered) can possibly alleviate some of the stress of transportation depending on the age of the child. Approximately 50% of the parents interviewed for EMC-21 HSS lived on post (which is a higher percentage than the U.S. Army average) and 50% lived off post. This is possibly due to the snowball sampling method used to obtain the interviews.

When it comes to participation in extracurricular activities, a home schooling Family that has lived in an area several years has greater opportunity to make connections to groups and organizations. In this study one home schooling Family had lived in their current location for over eight years and the student was involved in seven extracurricular activities. Another Family that had almost seven years at their current installation had two children, each involved with three competitive sports teams, private lessons, and 4-H. Longevity in an area affords

Mobile home schooling children lack Family history connections in a new area, and depending on the state and school district may not have access to school sponsored extracurricular activities, both of which impact their ability to make social connections.

the opportunity to get connected to the extracurricular activities that are available. A non-mobile child may even belong to the same scout troop his or her parents were members of, may be member of the same faith based community as their extended Family, or may have participated in the community sports league since he or she was old enough to play. Mobile Military children attending public school do not have these Family or extended Family connections but often use the activities offered by their new schools as a means of becoming involved in their community. Mobile home schooling children lack Family history connections in a new area, and depending on the state and school district may not have access to school sponsored extracurricular activities, both of which impact their ability to make social connections.

Access to public school extracurricular activities, particularly sports, is one part of the home schooling landscape that is changing. In 2010, the Louisiana State Legislature passed a law granting home schooled children access to participation in interscholastic activities with the permission of the principal. In 2011, a bill was presented to the Texas Legislation to allow participation by private school students in the University Interscholastic League; passing of this bill would open a door for home schooled students to also participate.

"I know there are multiple co-ops. I don't participate with any of these."

Parent

"I'm not personally involved in any specific co-op or home school group mostly right now because of lack of time because I am also in school."

Parent

Most communities have home schooling co-ops that offer opportunities for students to participate in many of the same type of extracurricular activities as public school peers. In addition to classes, co-ops may offer home schooling yearbook, prom, and honor society. We found only one home schooling Family in our interview population that participated in their community based co-op. This Family had lived in the local area for eight years. When asked about participation in community co-ops, Military home schooling parents know they exist, but for various reasons decline to participate.

Conversely, depending on location and availability, on-post co-ops are used by Military Families to a greater degree.

"I went to the one on-post; it's well- supported by the YS. I go to their (on post co-op) Park Day so I get to talk to other home school moms and my kids get to interact and have fun outside."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

"I take advantage of their (on post) PE time and their co-op group. I haven't really got too involved but I know and talk to the parents."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

Mobility, Transition, Deployment

"There needs to be somebody who can actually talk to us about what the state really requires and how requirements may be different from other states."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

Home Schooling and Mobility

Military-connected children, whether home schooled or attending public schools, will experience an average of six to nine moves during their school years. (Keller, 2001) The Families interviewed in the EMC-21 HSS had moved between one and eleven times with an average of five Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves. As previously noted, many home schooling parents feel that home schooling provides continuity for their children. Not only do students continue with a particular curriculum but they also know their teacher. Moreover, they do not have the issue of being behind their classmates because they have missed content, or being ahead of the class because they have already covered the content. It is also possible that house hunting becomes less stressful when parents do not have to consider school attendance zones. One parent summarized her views on the advantages of home schooling for mobile Military Families like this:

"It [home schooling] provides continuity and stability for our children going through the entire Military experience. It's something we can keep stable in their lives while they're moving from place to place. They always know who their teacher's going to be, they know what their curriculum is going to be. It makes our move easier. If the U.S. Army wants to move us in April or February or whatever month, we can do it; it doesn't matter."

In spite of the advantages mentioned in the previous quote, there are still some considerations parents must be aware of when they move from state to state or even within a state from district to district. There are many laws and local policies that might impact the home schooling Families. These include mandatory attendance age, curriculum, number of days (or hours) that school must be in session, testing, reporting procedures, and qualifications for the teacher. (See Appendix D) Due diligence would include researching all the laws that regulate home schooling in a specific state as well as contacting the local district or home schooling association for any specific policies that may affect the homeschooler. The idea of a "one stop" information source is one that could alleviate some of the stress and angst associated with any move. Having School Liaison Officers who are trained and resourced with the most current information could be one solution and once parents know where to go for the most up-to-date, accurate, and complete information, they will most likely turn to that source anytime they move or there is some change in local or state policy.

Moving is one common denominator shared by home schooled and other Military connected children. Although home schooling addresses some of the challenges of moving, it does not address them all, and it may present some additional transition issues as parents navigate the various laws and policies. The old adage "information is power" might be most fitting when it comes to the home schooling Military Family and moving.

Home Schooling and Transition to Public School

"Now the transition of home school students (back to public school) has been a little rocky at best."

<div align="right">Administrator</div>

PCS moves are not the only transition Military-connected home schooled children may experience. During the course of their child's education, a parent may transition the child from a home school into a public school for various reasons. Nine percent of the parents participating in EMC-21 who stated they had home schooled their children at one time but were no longer home schooling, reported the reason for their children returning to a traditional school was they moved to a new duty station or their situation had changed. These situations included attending a different school than the one they would have gone to when they started home schooling, mom got a job, or, a medical issue that had been the initial reason to home school had been addressed. The desire for the child to be able to participate in school-sponsored athletic events was also mentioned. This transition, for whatever reason, may present both academic and social challenges for the child and the receiving school.

Policies and Procedures

As part of EMC-21, 175 administrators and 162 teachers responded about local policies for transferring students from home school to public school, as well as their personal experience with students who had been in a home school and perception of home schooling. The most prevalent concerns among educators related to academic preparedness and adherence to each state's education commission policies and regulations.

As the policies and regulations for home schooling differ from state to state, the transition from one state as a homeschooler to public school in another state may be complicated. Primary and secondary levels have unique concerns.

Typically, elementary and middle school children will be placed in a grade according to the parents' report on the child's academic readiness. If the parent has not kept a transcript, portfolio, or records of the child's academic work, then the child will likely be placed in an age appropriate grade.

At the high school level, the grade level placement can be more problematic for students. Awarding credits and procedures for placement will vary from state to state and district to district. The student who moves from a state with few regulations to a state where home schooling is highly regulated may encounter challenges. A ninth grade home schooled student from Texas (a state that is considered a low regulation state) who enters public high school after moving to North Carolina (a state with moderate regulation) offers a sample comparison. North Carolina requires home schooling parents to test their children using a standardized test at least once a year. Texas does not require annual assessment and as a result, the transferring student will lack proper documentation. The school will require the student to take an end-of-year exam or placement test to receive credit for any core course work. Transferring credit for non-core course work like music and art, or even a speech class may be more difficult. If the school does not have an end-of-course physical education test, for example, it may be impossible for the home schooled student to receive credit

"The state is fairly rigid about homeschooling. Most of the time, if they're home schooled we can just offer the state level tests that afford them the opportunity to have credit if they pass these tests."

<div align="right">Administrator</div>

for physical education. Even in states with limited regulation on home schooling, transferring into public school will require documentation or testing for awarding credits to the high school student.

Although administrators said that policies are in place to handle this type of transfer, they also frequently stated that each case is looked at individually. Students transferring in at the high school level will likely need to demonstrate their academic readiness through an end-of-course or standardized test or some other test specified by the local education authority (LEA) in order to receive credit toward graduation.

Academic Preparedness

Experiences and perceptions of the academic ability of home schooled students vary greatly, as would be expected given the range of home schooling experiences. Some administrators and educators report they have only seen children who were either very advanced or very behind in academics, and others readily admit that it depends entirely on the parents, child, or the curriculum. Though administrators and educators will respond that they have seen students who excel and students who are ill prepared for the academic rigors of public school, the observation that home schooled children are on level with their public school peers is not widely held. This is in contrast to the study previously noted comparing standardized test scores.

The 175 administrators and 162 teachers were asked to relate their experience/perceptions of academic preparedness of home schooled students who have transferred to the public school environment. Their responses fell into six general categories.

> "If they want those home school classes to count as a credit our departments review that and determine if credits should be issued."
>
> Administrator

> "For cases where there is not much documentation it's a little bit more difficult; some time we have to go to the principal or someone above us to make the call on whether or not we can issue credit for the student."
>
> Counselor

ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS RESPONSES	Administrators K-7	Teachers K-7	Administrators 8-12	Teachers 8-12
Home schooled students are ahead academically	8%	13%	12%	22%
Home schooled students are behind academically	43%	36%	39%	31%
Home schooled students are behind or ahead but never in the middle	--	12%	15%	1%
Home schooled students are just average students	13%	23%	21%	21%
Home schooled students have a wide range of academic abilities	13%	8%	4%	18%
No Opinion	23%	8%	8%	7%

Table 4: Administrators and Teachers Perceptions of the Academic Readiness of Home schooled Children

The number represents the percent of administrators or educators who gave a response in that category. Eleven percent of the eighth through twelfth grade administrators and 16 percent of the Kindergarten through seventh grade administrators from the total number of interviews had no experience with students transitioning from a home school to a public school. The percentage of teachers with no experience with home school was 20 percent at the eighth through twelfth grade level and 13 percent at the Kindergarten through seventh grade level.

Overall, administrators tended to view home schooled students as having more academic challenges when they transition to public school, whereas teachers tended to lean to a more positive view of the transition.

It is important to note that the experience of working with previously home schooled students was very limited, sometimes to only two or three recollections of home schooling students.

High school teachers had the most positive view with 22 percent stating students were ahead in academics compared to only 13 percent at the Kindergarten through 7th grade range who reported students moving from home school to public school were ahead academically. It is important to note that the experience of working with previously home schooled students was very limited, sometimes to only two or three recollections of home schooling students. All four groups of respondents expressed a wide range of ideas and experiences.

Elementary (K-7) Administrators	Elementary Teachers	High School (8-12) Administrators	High School Teachers
"With my experience I find that a majority of them are behind."	"Like I said, usually my experience the kids have actually been very bright."	"They were very well prepared. The ones I dealt with were very self sufficient, fairly organized, ready to move academically."	"I do know they were way ahead of most of my children. They knew a lot more information, their vocabulary was bigger, they had more experience and they had more background knowledge to come to the table with."
"I would say by far the majority, like 80, 90 percent are behind our kids."	"They do have a better knowledge, which does help them. One of mine that has been home schooled until this year is very smart — extremely smart. Reads all the time. I mean, reads books I read in college. And his vocabulary is through the roof."	"In my experience the kids that I have personally been exposed to have been strong."	"I've only had one student and she actually transferred in very well. She was actually above and beyond a lot of my students in the classroom."
"I would say for the most part they're at or above where they need to be."	"They are low. The one student I had was low."	"These three girls have done a great job. They have progressed well and I think their GPA's are 3.2 or better. We don't have any issues there. They've had a good transition."	
		"By and large, the students that have come to us that have been home schooled are at a distinct disadvantage ...students' academics have suffered."	

Elementary (K-7) Administrators	Elementary Teachers	High School (8-12) Administrators	High School Teachers
"I would say it's really split. I've had kids who have come in who have been really well-prepared, really well-grounded academically and were very high achieving and kids who came in and you wonder how much they did school- maybe an hour a day? So I haven't seen a lot of in the middle. I've seen really, really good and I've seen very, very poor."	They can come in very good or they will come in very behind."	"They're prepared and they do well on national norm testing. Out of 10 students maybe 7 students will perform at the level we want them to. But there is a small percent that are far below. So, it's either to one extreme or the other, it's not in the middle."	"They are very far behind academically."

Figure 1: Sampling of Administrator and Teacher Responses

The most common comments related to the lack of preparedness for math and science. Some of the educators interviewed expressed that home schooled children will do very well in the subjects that their teacher-parent is strong in and few parents are prepared to teach math and science.

"They were home schooled really well for the most part, but I could not assess where they were mathematically or in science because those are the areas people who home schooled lack."

Teacher

"...many times the parents are really good at what they do. Like, for instance, English. The parent is really good at that and wants to pass it down to the child but the child comes in weak in subject areas like math and science."

Teacher

Parents also expressed some concerns about their ability to teach science. They said they do not have access to the materials to teach lab science.

It may be that the lack of preparedness seen by educators when children transition from a home school situation is no more than they might see with any transitioning student. The curriculum program that the home schooling Family had used may or may not align with the scope and sequence of the public school especially with science or math, just as one district's curriculum may not align with another district's curriculum possibly causing an academic concern for any transitioning student.

"I make a lab in my tiny, little kitchen in on-post housing. It's not great for middle school science."

Parent

"It would be nice to have some more things offered on Post to cover a certain area of science that a mom just doesn't get or you wouldn't have the resources to do at home where the children can use microscopes and explore more of a subject."

Parent

"We don't get to do a lot of hands-on with science and he loves science."

Parent

Socialization

Socialization, the mostly tongue-in-cheek "S Word" to homeschoolers, is one of the more significant areas when people are evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of home schooling. Whether real or not, there is a perception from the non-home schooling public that homeschoolers are socially disadvantaged. Parents participating in EMC-21 were asked if they ever considered home schooling. Of the 31 percent of positive responses who had considered it but had not home schooled, 34 percent identified the concern that their children would not have opportunities to socialize as the main factor in the decision not to home school. Over 70 percent of the children in the EMC study, whether they knew home schooled students or not, stated that the main reason they would not like to be home schooled is that it would negatively impact their social life. As one student explains: "I don't think I would enjoy home school because I'm a very social person and I couldn't be sitting at home all day looking at my mom trying to teach me."

> **"You miss the whole social thing, and you don't get the different perspective on things."**
>
> Student

The absence of the opportunity to socialize daily with other children the same age in a school setting is sometimes viewed by both educators and parents as a disadvantage to home schooling. There are also parents who view the lack of opportunity to socialize with other children in a school setting as an advantage of home schooling, one that allows parents to decide who their child associates with and what they are exposed to on a daily basis.

It is debatable whether home schooled children have the opportunity to socialize and it depends on the definition of socialization. However, others who do choose to home school may see socialization merely as a challenge to be dealt with like any other, in a manner that is appropriate and relevant for each individual Family. Many home schooling parents, especially those who have lived in their communities for some length of time find opportunities for their children to engage with other homeschoolers through co-ops, park outings, and shared learning experiences. Says one parent, "We go to a science co-op with about 12 other seventh graders in town and do their science because that way they can do their experiments together and do a science fair project."

> **"I think being in a public school is better because you can be more social. I'm an only child so I'd miss out on socializing."**
>
> Student

EMC-21 researchers interviewed 337 educators (administrators, teachers, and counselors) about their experience with children who transitioned from a home schooled environment to a public school. Comments other than academic issues include social issues, the culture of public school, and "doing school" as transition issues for children. One administrator shared, "…some of the times their social skills are lacking and they struggle," while a teacher explained, "They are usually overwhelmed by the social atmosphere of high school."

Over half of the educators interviewed commented on the lack of social skills in home schooled children who transition to a public school. Many comments by teachers and administrators were vague and alluded to social concerns in a generic manner with no specific reference to any particular issues.

Teachers more frequently mentioned social skills, as they relate to being part of a classroom, than any other concern including academic readiness. This idea, sometimes referred to as "doing school", is more specific in identifying the types of skills some home schooled children may lack.

- **A fixed schedule and time constraints:** Home schooling allows more flexibility in a daily schedule than does public school. Completing a math assignment in 10 minutes means a home schooled student is not waiting for the other students to finish before moving on to the next assignment or getting a break. In a classroom, the teacher controls the schedule and determines the amount of time that will be spent on each subject leaving some students waiting to proceed while others never achieve complete understanding. Conversely, if a child needs more time on a particular topic, the home schooling schedule could accommodate this. All home schooling parents interviewed in this study relate they have a daily or weekly schedule for teaching. Additionally, they mentioned the idea of being flexible with the time to allow for their child's needs. This does not happen in most traditional classrooms and was mentioned by several teachers as a problem for the transitioning home schooled child.

- **Classroom boundaries:** While direct references to behavioral issues requiring disciplinary action were not presented, the idea that there are significant differences between the rules in the home school and the classroom is a concern expressed by teachers. Common classroom policies such as raising your hand to speak, asking permission to use the restroom or get a drink, and remaining in your seat even when your work is finished are boundaries that may be foreign to the child who has never had a traditional classroom experience.

- **Team work:** Home schooled children generally work independently. In addition to adjusting to a rigid schedule, a transition from home school to a public school classroom may include the introduction of assignments that have collaborative elements that require students to work together.

- **The culture of school:** The public school culture presents a transitional challenge for the child who is accustomed to a home school environment. Home schooled children often participate in extracurricular activities with other home schooled children whose parents have similar social values. Parents of home schooled children may have monitored the social and media outlets to which their children are exposed. It is also likely that home schooled children may have had limited exposure to a range of children from other backgrounds, particularly children from ethnically, culturally, or socio-economically diverse backgrounds.

> "Homeschoolers are simply not used to having to do things on somebody else's schedule."
>
> Teacher

> "I think they have been in their own time frame—self paced for so long that it is hard for them to come in and have an expectation that a worksheet is due at the end of a period."
>
> Teacher

> "I've learned from my home schooling students that they really didn't have a routine and as long as they got their work done during that day, they were good. And it's a lot different at school."
>
> Teacher

> "They have problems with being in a structured setting on a regular basis, following a class schedule, having to follow basic rules."
>
> Teacher

> "…he very much struggled with social awkwardness and what was appropriate. He didn't know the boundaries…you can't just get up and say you need to use the bathroom or take a break."
>
> Teacher

> "The challenge was he just gets up and walks over and looks something up that interests him right when I'm talking or we're taking a test or whatever."
>
> Teacher

"It's challenging for kids from a home school environment to have to interact with kids and I am a firm believer [that] the workplace outside of high school is looking for people who are team players."

Teacher

"...you're talking about taking a student who's basically been in a bubble and you're drawing him into a melting pot of students..."

Administrator

"The Military [requires] me to send my child to this school where the language and behaviors are much rougher and my child was never exposed to that."

Parent

The culture shock factor when experiencing public school for the first time as a junior high or high school student may be amplified.

Eleven percent of the educators responded they did not see social issues with the transitioning child. Of these, several commented on the maturity of home schooled children or the ease of their transition into public school.

"The students we happen to have were a lot more social than I expected."

Administrator

"...you can't tell ours from them once we get them mingled together. You don't know home school from brick and mortar."

Administrator

"Public school is not PG-rated and these students sometimes get a shock."

Teacher

"...the kids are pretty sheltered and you have to get them ready for the reality of the hallways and how teenagers interact with each other and the meanness that happens."

Administrator

Most home schooling parents assert their children have ample opportunities for socialization. Parents enroll their children in various activities outside of the school day to afford them the opportunity to be around other children. However, this research indicates there are some significant differences in extracurricular activities participation between Military-connected home schooled children and civilian home schooled children.

The EMC-21 HSS did not include any students who were currently enrolled in college. The participants who had a child in 11th or 12th grade were asked what plans their high school student had once they had completed their home schooling. Additionally, the students in that age group were asked about their plans for the future, and each of the four responses reflected a unique plan. One student stated she was planning to go to college to be an art teacher. A second student had planned on going to college but her plans changed because her parents were going to move so she was going to move with them and possibly start in a community college. A third student (the junior) had not really thought too much about it but was considering college. The one parent with a senior said her daughter was planning to do mission work for a few years before she went to college. The small sample size makes it unreliable to state whether or not these plans are typical for all Military-connected students or not. There was no indication that Military service was in the future plans for any of the students but one of the Families in the study had home schooled a child who currently serves in the Military.

> **Home schooled students enlisting in the Military are considered Tier 2, categorized the same way as students receiving a GED or an alternative high school diploma.**

Home schooling Families may not be aware that their education choice will affect a student who plans to enlist in Military service. Home schooled students enlisting in the Military are considered Tier 2, categorized the same way as students receiving a GED or an alternative high school diploma. The tier categorization will limit the number of enlistees that are brought in at that level as well as the options for Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). In a study completed in 2005 which examined a 5-year pilot program requiring the Military services to treat home school graduates and graduates of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program who also hold a GED diploma as Tier 1 (high school diploma graduates) for enlistment eligibility purposes, researchers found that home schooled students had a much higher attrition rate – they didn't stay in Military service – than graduates of a traditional high school. (Wenger & Hodari, 2004)

Home Schooling and Deployment

> **"It's kind of hard when your husband's on a different continent, you can't say 'please come home and straighten out these kids.' You have to do it yourself, so anyway it's such a unique situation."**
>
> Parent

Many Military Families have experienced multiple deployments since 2001, including home schooling Families. Most of their experiences parallel those of Military children in the public schools with the obvious exception of the parent that is left at home is now left running school and managing home by themselves. Just like any working spouse, when the other spouse deploys there is no one to share the work load and manage the home, but these suddenly single parents are also managing the education of their children at home. Although not typical of the parents interviewed in the EMC-21 HSS, a mother who has home schooled for 11 years expressed some of the frustrations that may be experienced during the deployment of a spouse:

"It is just so much more stressful when you have to take care of everything yourself. The car repairs, the washing machine repairs, and of course everything breaks as soon as they leave so you have all of the stress factors and you are trying to do the school on top of that."

The majority of the home schooling parents interviewed were positive and, with the exception of transportation logistics, continued to manage school and home just as they do when their spouse is not deployed.

Twenty-six Families were interviewed for the home schooling study. Each Family had experienced one or more deployments. In all cases the Family member deployed was the father. One parent reported that both her husband and son were deployed.

As part of the EMC-21 Home School Study, parents and students were asked the following questions:

- Has anyone in your Family ever been deployed? If so who, to where, and how many times? Briefly describe your experience with the deployments.
- Tell me about the differences between the deployments. How did the second one differ from the first? (Or differences between first, second, second and third, etc.)
- Tell me what it is like when your (parent/Family member) comes home from a deployment.

1 Deployment Experience	2 Deployment Experiences	3 Deployment Experiences	4 or More Deployment Experiences
9 Families	5 Families	6 Families	6 Families

Although each Family has a different story about deployment, some common themes run through the stories.

Communication

The changes in communication are perhaps the most significant differences between deployments from 2001 to the present. Families across the board talk about the ease with which they can communicate with their loved one in a war zone, but also find frustration when the technology doesn't function efficiently. Depending on the assignment, some Families still go long periods of time without the ability to communicate. It may be difficult for young children to understand why they could talk to their parent when he was away on a previous deployment but they can't call or email him during a current deployment.

"The first time he deployed we didn't have any communication at all, not only because he couldn't communicate with us but because we didn't have that technology."

Parent

"...we didn't get to talk to him very much; we had a webcam on a computer but sometimes we couldn't hear."

Student

"Each deployment is really different. The first one, it was right at the beginning of the war and there was no infrastructure. We relied heavily on written letters and a few pictures and that was it. We had one VTC where we actually got to see him. The second deployment there was a better infrastructure."

Parent

"This third one has been our busiest one by far because our kids don't do the same things anymore and it's not all during the day. I'm just as busy as any other mom who's got kids in different activities at older ages."

Parent

"My last one was the easiest because once my daughter got her driver's license. So that was much better."

Parent

"She was only about 18 months when he deployed the first time, so I think this one is going to be a little more challenging because they understand what a year is."

Parent

"The first one was a piece of cake because she was only two so she hardly knew he was gone."

Parent

"It was ten months, but it was the most difficult for me because I had my third child who was almost one. My second child was two and a half and my first child was about five and a half. That one was just challenging physically. Demanding."

Parent

Age-related responses to deployments: Each age has unique challenges, or advantages and the relationship between parents and children will color how much a child is impacted. In the case of those Families that have experienced multiple deployments, some of the parents say that the first deployment, when the children were young, was the easiest. One reason is that the very young children simply do not understand what is going on. Other Families would say these are the most difficult times because of the physical demands placed by very young children on the parent who is home all day.

The majority of home schooling parents agree that the deployments become more demanding once children are school-age. One simple reason is that older children are busier and the at-home parent has increased time demands. The sole parent is now left with the responsibilities of running the home school as well as the transportation logistics for the children's busy social and extracurricular activities, as well a managing the emotional demands of a deployment.

Parents also voice the concern that older children understand more about deployment and the inherent dangers that the deployed parent may face.

Repetitive and longer deployments have become routine since Operation Desert Storm, (1990-1991). Many communities in the vicinity of Military installations have instituted support programs to assist Families during a deployment. In the current

"...as they get older, they're able to process things that can happen."

Parent

"It seems like each one gets rougher because, I guess, she's more aware and she's so attached to him she's making comments like 'I'm just going to tie him up so they can't take him away .'"

Parent

environment, most home schooling Families, like other Military Families, have accepted that deployments are inevitable, and they are able to access support programs before, during, and after deployment. Families are aware of the programs and services and have become resourceful and efficient in finding the programs that address their specific needs when those needs arise.

Formal Support: Many of the home schooling Families in this study took advantage of the formal deployment support programs offered through the Military or the community. Programs mentioned included Warrior Camps, National Military Family Association Camp Purple, Strong Bonds, The Military Child Education Coalition's Tell Me A Story, and Family Readiness Groups.

"I went to Warrior Camp that summer (that he was deployed) for a week and we did a bunch of stuff and it was a lot of fun."

Student

"There's story time that you [MCEC] do. They're just really nice programs. [Tell Me A Story]."

Parent

"Fort [Installation name], a fabulous thing that the Club did for us but we don't have that here is they did a Thursday night dinner and [it] cost us like two bucks; they had one room totally set off for the kids. A big screen TV for a movie. Little tables the kids loved it and thought it was fabulous. As adult women we could actually have a conversation and every Thursday, it was such a life saver. I've never seen that anywhere else."

Parent

"One daughter took the SKIES vocal lessons which she really enjoyed and we did take advantage of some of those classes during deployment."

Parent

"The U.S. Army already provides the 16 hours a month of free childcare which I think is probably one of the best ideas and resources out there for people to use."

Parent

"I think the best thing that you can do is get involved in the FRGs (Family Readiness Groups) and we haven't missed one of those things."

Parent

"We've also had operation Purple Camp where through NMFA geared towards being a proud Military child which...I think they really enjoyed it, I think it was healthy."

Parent

Informal Support: The most frequently mentioned resource in the area of adult support was Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC). PWOC groups are weekly Bible Study and fellowship organizations found at Military installations worldwide. They typically meet during the day (although some have evening groups) and are non-denominational. Although their primary focus in not on deployment, these groups offer women an opportunity to meet with other women who share their faith and common bond as Military spouses as well as providing a social outlet for the home schooled children who attend with their moms. Typically there is a supervised area for the home schooled children to work while their mothers attend the PWOC study group or programs. Twenty-five percent of the parents interviewed for the EMC-21 HS spoke about attending PWOC, and a few mentioned a deployment support group through PWOC.

Parents also mentioned Family, church groups, and informal gatherings with home schooling parents in the neighborhood as places they went for support during the deployment.

In a few cases, parents report they did not participate in any type of support programs because they were not aware of any, programs were not convenient, or they simply felt like they did not need anything at the time.

Based on information gathered from interviews with home schooling Families, the U.S. Army is providing ample opportunities for adults and children, and participants appear to appreciate the efforts in the area of deployment support. The programs and services are available in most areas.

> **"It's not that the opportunities were not there but just based on my situation and my Family dynamics, we just haven't needed it. We had plenty to do to keep ourselves busy."**
>
> Parent

"I really do feel that the U.S. Army is doing a good job with what it has to work with. Some of the programs where … dad will read to his kids and they send it back. I think that's pretty cool. And the full size blow up dolls. They seem kind of corny but I got to tell you I don't think they are. They're important."

Parent

"They've added these Family Support Assistants. There are a lot more Family programs. ACS has done a good job of putting together pre-deployment, reintegration, activities in between, the puppet shows for the kids."

Parent

Two ideas, needs and access, were brought up when home schooling parents in this study responded to the question, "What type of programs or groups would you like to see for your child related to deployment?" The majority of the parents indicated they had sufficient systems in place to address the needs of their children. A few parents commented that attending another meeting or event may even be a burden on an already busy schedule. "There's a balance between needing to do things and extra activities that are more of a stressor on a single mom trying to keep everything together. So I just try to keep it simple."

Parent

A second idea that surfaced from this question was one of access. Programs and services are in place, but children who do not have a parent currently deployed cannot access them. Sometimes these opportunities occur after a parent has returned from a deployment or children miss them because they transition. In areas where there are limited opportunities, making these activities available to all children would not only give the children a pro-social activity to participate in, it would prevent those children who do not like being singled out as having a deployed parent an opportunity to blend in more easily.

"My daughter has friends that have parents that are deployed so they all can go to the camp, but my child, her dad isn't deployed so she can't go to the camp."

Parent

"It helps us keep the Family together and it keeps the stability in their lives too."

Parent

It is difficult to determine from the small sample size and the brief discussions relating to deployment if home schooled children experience some of the same deployment-related challenges as their public school peers. Challenges like a slide in grades, emotional reactions that manifest themselves as behavior issues, and withdrawing behaviors were not mentioned by any of the parents interviewed. The parents did mention that they try to keep things as normal as possible at home; they continue with school and the activities that they are involved with.

"I really didn't want him to go; I was afraid because I wanted him to come back and be safe. After a while it gets pretty routine but in the beginning you still have those fears."

Student

"He's been deployed five times, so it's hard not having my dad around; sometimes it's hard for my mom to parent all of us but she does a good job but of course we miss him when he's gone."

Student

The Students' Voices

Every student interviewed in the EMC-21 HSS had experience with a parent being deployed; in this study it was always their father. When asked about their experience with deployment, the majority initially responded that they missed their parent. A few of the students spoke about worry, but, in general their responses reflected that deployment was just something you had to get used to.

Home schooling students reported participation in Family Readiness Groups (FRGs), National Military Family Member Association (NMFA) Camp Purple, Warrior Camps, and using the U.S. Army's AKO online chat to talk to their deployed parent. Students in both the EMC-21 HSS and the overall EMC-21 Study were asked what type of programs or services they would like to have during the deployment of a parent. The small number of participants in the home school study may have impacted the variety of responses received. The home schooled student responses fell into seven general categories compared to the 12 categories from the 244 student responses in the overall EMC-21 study. They responded as follows:

"What Programs or Services Related to Deployment Would You Like to See?"	EMC-21 HSS	EMC-21
Opportunities to meet with other kids who are going through deployments	32%	34%
Activities (not related to deployment)	6%	7%
Activities to Support Soldiers		6%
Counseling		5%
Communication Support	6%	2%
More opportunities to participate in sports	6%	2%
Camps	12%	
Other		6%
Reintegration Help and Information		1%
Support for Transitions (e.g. Student to Student)		2%
Don't Need Anything	32%	6%
Don't Want Anything-It is Not Helpful		1%
Don't Know/No Response	6%	23%

Table 7: EMC-21 Home School Study and EMC-21 Study Student Responses

Reintegration

Military-connected home schooling Families speak realistically and demonstrate an attitude of resilience when relating their experiences with reintegration after a deployment. A few of the Families state that the reintegration is just a happy time and they have no issues. However, many of these Families openly stated that they recognized it does take time and effort to get the Family unit back to where it was prior to a deployment.

"The greatest joy to have him come back home and then the aftermath of that is trying to get back into a routine, having him back, supporting him."
                                                                                              Parent

"It's usually like fun but sometimes it's hard to get back into your schedule."
                                                                                              Student

Routines, mentioned in numerous interviews, seem to play an important part in reintegrating the deployed parent into the Family; conversely, the disruption of these routines established during the service members' absence, when the service member returns is seen as a disruption in the Family life. The Family's recognition of issues and possible struggles appear to have made them able to cope that much better. And so, even though the issues exist, for the home schooling Family their daily schedule and routines help them manage, both during and post-deployment.

Technical & Post-Secondary Planning

Home School and Technology

Ten years ago the idea of teaching high school children might have seemed a far reach for many parents. It was difficult to imagine teaching chemistry to your child if you had not been in a chemistry class for 15 years; unless used in our daily work, some subjects, like math and science may become a little rusty at best. Today the resources and course work available online make possible a home-based education for any Family. Parents who may have been intimidated by the thought of teaching a literature, mathematics or science course can now access upper level course material or a class online. The only real dilemma is sorting through the plethora of options to find the program best suited for the child.

Many school districts are also offering classes online, so children could actually be part of a school district and receive support from a state certified teacher; they are just doing school at home. Only one Family in this study had experience with a state administered program and decided it was too much time in front of the computer and opted for a more traditional home schooling approach in their second year. The majority of the Families interviewed were using at least one online source for either instruction or to reinforce instruction but these sources were not connected to any public school program. The parents of the younger students primarily used online sources for games and activities to help cement learning. Other uses for online sites included curriculum support sites, YouTube, Skype, Tutor.com, and a host of individual websites with educational games and materials.

> "My two older ones use Skype online because they speak Hebrew that was a part of their curriculum as one of their foreign languages. So we do that on line with one of our teachers from back home because there just aren't any resources."
>
> Parent

> "I use websites that have free printable work sheets, which is very helpful when we've hit a subject or concept that is just, needs a little extra work and we've already done all the pages that have been assigned in the text book. I can access things like that and there are several website where you can play a math game or a spelling game."
>
> Parent

As more web-based programs and services become available, it is reasonable to predict home schooling, especially for the older students, will become more popular. This, coupled with the number of public schools that offer on-line course work will certainly change the landscape for home schooling especially at the high school level.

Postsecondary Planning

Even if students never transition to a public school, there is a point where children will graduate and need to make a decision about their future endeavors as an adult. This may mean work, Military service or continuing their education at a post secondary level. There is a growing body of research that suggests home schooled students are meeting with academic success in their pursuit of a college degree.

The Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) analyzed ACT college entrance examination scores to compare homeschooler results to national averages. (Home School Legal Defense Association, 2009)

TEST	Homeschoolers (n = 2,610)	National Average
1998 ACT Score (Maximum = 36)	22.8	21.0
1996 ACT **English**	22.5	20.3
Math	19.2	20.2
Reading	24.1	21.3
Science	21.9	21.1

Table 6: Comparison of ACT Test Scores

Michael F. Cogan's *Exploring Academic Outcomes of Home schooled Students* study released in 2010 suggests homeschoolers are well prepared for college and meeting the academic challenges successfully. The study was based on a medium-sized college located in the upper Midwest with an enrollment of 11,000 students and an average 1,320 freshmen each year. The sample size for homeschoolers was 76 which represents one percent of the 7,776 incoming freshman for 2004–2009.

Some of the major findings of that study include:

Home schooled students earned:

- More college credit (14.7) prior to their freshman year compared to the student body (6).
- A higher fall semester GPA (3.37) when compared to other freshman students (3.08).
- A higher first-year GPA (3.41) when compared to other freshman students (3.12).
- A higher fourth-year GPA (3.46) when compared to other freshman students who completed their fourth year (3.16).

In phone interviews with four state university admission offices represented by the four states in the study, admission officers reported the application procedure for home schooled students was like any other student, usually submitting transcripts and the scores from their SATs and/or ACTs. Many college websites have home school admission links on their admissions' web page suggesting that admission requests from home schooled students are common.

Findings

Home School Basics

- **Military Families use home schooling as one option when they are looking for an alternative to public schools.**

  Military Families are part of the growing home schooling movement in the United States. Reporting requirements, or lack of requirements, makes it nearly impossible to get an accurate count of how many Military Families are home schooling. The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that 2.9% of children are home schooled but the EMC-21 survey indicated that this number may be as high as 9% for Military Families.

  Military Families have reasons similar to their civilian counterparts for choosing home school, with one addition: *Military Families home school to provide continuity in education for the children when they transition from one assignment to the next.*

  There are many reasons Families opt to home school; one reason they report that is not as common in the civilian home schooling community is that home schooling provides children with continuity in their education as they move from place to place. A benefit of home schooling reported by all the Families was the flexibility it provides for Families. This is especially beneficial if the Family wants to travel during the school year or spend time together when a parent returns from a long absence.

- **Curriculum can be a substantial financial investment both as an initial investment and as parents see the need to change curricula to meet the needs of their children.**

  The cost of curriculum per child averages around $600.00 per year. This represents a substantial investment for a Family especially if there is more than one child. Although resourceful parents may be able to access used materials through the internet or home schooling co-ops, it is still a financial commitment and should be factored into the decision process.

- **Access to a wide range of online classes has made home schooling possible for parents who are looking for an alternative to public school but do not have extensive backgrounds in all of the content areas necessary for a secondary level curriculum.**

  The availability of online courses means that even if a parent does not have experience or knowledge in a subject (e.g. chemistry, a foreign language), these classes are available online. Many classes are offered through accredited academic institutions and in some areas they may be free through a local school district.

- **Home schooling Families are accessing a variety of online sources for curriculum and instruction.**

  The internet as a learning resource was used by every Family in this study. The very youngest children are playing learning games, parents are accessing online support for teaching, and older students are taking classes online.

- **Mobility impacts the home schooling Family.**

  Laws and local policies regulating home schooling are different from state to state and even within a state. Parents need accurate information about these policies when they move.

- **Parents in the study are concerned that their children are making adequate academic progress compared to children in public schools and would like access to standardized testing through the school district or the installation in order to evaluate the progress of their home schooled children.**

- **There are a wide range of opinions and perceptions about the academic and social readiness of children who transition from home school to public school.**

  The academic readiness of students who transition to public school is much like any child transitioning; it will depend on the child and the school (in this case home school) he or she is coming from. Social preparedness appears to be more a matter of children understanding the culture, rules, and how to "do school" than the ability to socialize with other children.

Extracurricular Participation

- **Military-connected children who are home schooled participate in extracurricular activities at a lower rate than their civilian counterparts. Participation in community co-ops which often offer extracurricular as well as educational opportunities was also low for the Military home schooling Family.**

  The logistics of moving, coupled with the time needed to connect to a community, may limit the home schooled students' participation in home school co-ops and extracurricular activities. Although there were a few reports of participating in on-post co-op activities, it does not appear that any of the installations have co-op that offer the opportunities that a community based co-op has and many Military Families choose to independently home school rather than participate in community- based home schooling co-ops.

Deployment

- **Home schooling Families experience and deal with deployment stress like any other Military Family.**

  Home schooling Families navigate through deployments like other Military Families. Every Family has a unique experience with deployment depending on the ages of the children, the number of deployments they have experienced, and where they are living at that time.

- **Home schooling Families are aware of, and accessing when available, deployment support programs and activities.**

  The Families interviewed indicated they were able to access all the deployment support activities, support, or services that were available and that these were sufficient to meet their needs.

- **The organization and structure required to home school coupled with the flexibility for Family time facilitates the reintegration process.**

  The schedules and routines necessary for managing home school provide structure and normalcy to help Families reintegrate successfully after a deployment. Families also appreciated that it was easy to schedule school around Family time.

HOME SCHOOLING IMPLICATIONS...WHAT CAN BE DONE BY:

Installations:

- Resource School Liaison Officers with accurate information about the laws, regulations, and policies for home schooling in their state and specific to their districts. This would include state regulations regarding required curriculum as well as local regulations concerning procedures to notify the school district of intent to home school if required. School Liaison Officers need training in home schooling basic so they can work at an optimum level with the home schooling Families. Training in awareness, understanding the language of home schooling, different home schooling styles as well as district and state specific laws, regulations and policies could make the SLO Office the first stop for home schooling Families transitioning in to an installation or seeking information about a future location. School Liaison Officers could also serve as a point of contact to connect arriving Families to other home schooling Families

- U.S. Army Child, Youth, and School Services should conduct a review of existing programs and services targeting home schooling Families to determine which programs are effective. Share these promising practices with all installation to assist each installation in developing programs and services that are appropriate and meaningful to their home schooling population.

- Continue practice of opening facilities on the installation which are staffed during the day, but not heavily used (e.g. gyms, youth service buildings) to make these facilities available to the home schooling Families.

- Include home schooling curriculum resources in the installation library collections.

- Offer nationally recognized achievement testing for home schooling Families at the installation education center OR

- Enhance partnerships with local school districts to offer standardized testing for Military-connected home schooled children.

- Establish on-post co-op opportunities for home schooling parents. The greatest challenge is providing continuity with a population that is mobile. The School Liaison office could serve as the connecting point for parents interested in participating in a co-op. An active, robust co-op program for Military home schooling Families should be a goal for every installation.

School Districts:

- Communicate with the installation and keep the School Liaison Officer informed of local policies and regulations that affect the homeschoolers in your district.

- Open after-school clubs and activities (non-competitive) to homeschoolers in your district.

- If your state allows home schooling students to participate in competitive sports, share this information with the installation.

Parents:

- Parents who elect to home school their children need to insure they have accurate information about state and local policies that regulate home schooling in their district. This is especially critical for a mobile Family because the laws change.

- Parents should keep accurate records and an up-to-date portfolio of their child's work. Although this may not be a requirement where they currently reside, this is a valuable resource to have if the child ever transitions to a public or private school; it may also be a requirement for entrance into post-secondary education.

- Keep informed and utilize the resources, programs, or services that are available for the home schooling Families in your area.

Further Study:

- The EMC-21 Home schooling study was an exploratory study. There are many unanswered questions that surfaced as a result of the study which would give a more comprehensive look at the Military home schooling climate. Future studies could consider the following:

The thoughts and ideas shared by the home schooling Families in this exploratory study provide a glimpse at some of the advantages and challenges Military home schooling Families encounter. They are insightful in helping us begin to understand home schooling and how the U.S. Army Family Programs might engage and support these Families in ways that are meaningful to the education of the children. The landscape of home schooling is changing. It is important for those concerned with the education of the children of our service members to keep abreast of the changes and trends in the home schooling community in order to best appropriate any funding for home schooling support in a way that is meaningful and advantageous for the education and well-being of the child.

How pervasive is homeschooling in the Military community and do certain geographical locations have higher rates of homeschooling? If so, why? Are Military Families homeschooling long term or for a short period of time?

Transitioning back to public school. What types of challenges or successes have homeschooled students experienced when transitioning from a home school to a public school? What specific strategies have parents found helpful to navigate this transition?

Post secondary endeavors. Are Military homeschooled children attending college, joining the Military, attending vocational training, or seeking employment when they graduate homeschooling? How successful are these endeavors? Are there any roadblocks that have been difficult to overcome? What would help?

Military homeschoolers and co-ops. How do community co-ops and on-post co-ops compare? What type of programs does each of these offer? Why do Families participate or decide not to participate in the different co-ops?

Conclusions

Research Study Constraints

Dependable estimates of home schoolers are difficult to obtain. Ten states do not require notification from parents of intent to home school their children. Even among those states that do require notification, the requirements may vary from district to district within the state. Surveys from the National Household Education Surveys Program, administered by the National Center for Educational Statistics, are completed on a voluntary basis. Researchers recognize that many home schooling Families will not voluntarily participate in government surveys. As one home schooling mom stated:

"Just because you want to study us doesn't mean we want to be studied." (M, 2010)

Families may be reluctant to participate because they are concerned about their privacy, they do not want their home schooling practices scrutinized, or even because they do not feel they have the time to participate in lengthy surveys or interviews. The EMC-21 Home School Study researchers also found that Families were hesitant to volunteer to be interviewed. A snowball sampling plan was used to obtain the majority of the interviews for this project. This technique is a sociology research technique used to survey and interview populations which may be difficult to otherwise access. Many Families in the study identified other home schooling Families from among their acquaintances as potential interview participants. Other interviews were obtained through local home schooling associations and requesting interested volunteers contact the MCEC.

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"If there was just a way to streamline the educational process across the board nationwide, it would sure make things a lot easier for those of us that have to move around. We truly fall in danger of our kids falling through the cracks. When they're little, they miss key concepts and we don't realize it until far down the road and all of sudden they can't do long division because they missed multiplication during a move. And a way to standardize testing, too – make it the same across the board. Then we could have an honest view of how our states match up nationwide. That would make it better for everybody."

Parent

Introduction and Central Themes

Schools are constantly striving to find the best practices to meet the needs of the students they educate. As times change, so do the educational practices. A big change has come with the recognition that the education system now needs to prepare our students to be successful in a high-tech, global environment. All students must be good problem solvers and be proficient in the use of high-tech tools (An NEA Policy Brief, 2010). At least some post-secondary education will also be needed for all students. Forty of the fifty fastest growing occupations in the nation now require at least some education after high school; yet seven out of ten students now graduate from high school without the requisite courses needed to succeed in college or in the workplace (Center for State Scholars, 2004). The recognition of the need for more education beyond high school can be seen by the increase in students taking the (Scholastic Aptitude Test) SATs in record numbers (Alliance for Education, Issue Brief, 2007).

In the decade since the Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) was completed in 2001, education in the United States has changed dramatically in respect to technology, assessment and accountability. Since then there have been changes in the Military that have affected Military-connected students, most notably frequent and repeated deployments to combat areas. Since 2001 school districts and the Military have made many improvements that help to ease transition for mobile students: reciprocal graduation agreements and the use of former schools' test scores in course and program placement among others, and recommendations made in SETS, such as implementation of the Army School Liaison Officer program and senior stabilization, have been enacted. Not all of these improvements are handled in a standardized manner, many times because of state or district policy or procedure, so there are continuing frustrations. These include testing to qualify for gifted or special needs education when the student has been receiving services in his former district, and the student losing credit or ranking due to course offerings not aligning from one district to another. New frustrations result from the complexity of high stakes testing with each state's widely differing requirements.

Within the Education of the Military Child-21st Century Study (EMC-21) research there is willingness and sensitivity to supporting the education of the Military-connected child by both administrators and educators. Even as educators show willingness to support Military-connected children, the complexity of education has increased in respect to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and its required assessment and accountability components. Gateway assessments for graduation/ grade progression are more commonplace: Texas, for example, has gateways at grades three, five, eight, and graduation grade ten; end-of-course (EOC) exams for specific high school subjects are being developed by the states in an effort to closely align their curriculum with assessments and improve college and career readiness.

"The Florida EOC Assessments are part of Florida's Next Generation Strategic Plan for the purpose of increasing student achievement and improving college and career readiness. EOC assessments are computer-based, criterion-referenced assessments that measure the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for specific courses, as outlined in their course descriptions" (http://fcat.fldoe.org/eoc/).

Some states use EOC exams for double duty - to assure content knowledge on the part of the student and to count as part of the students' course grade. For example, both Georgia and Texas EOCs will count 15 percent of the student's course grade.

The national vision for education has changed from a high school diploma as education's ultimate goal to college and career readiness. In an effort to prepare more students to be successful in college and careers, required graduation credits appear to be changing and increasing in some statesi. This adds to the complexity of graduation for students who move frequently and results in the need for parents and students to plan ahead and research thoroughly their target school's graduation requirements as they transition.

From the EMC-21 Study interviews, it can be seen that parents and educators can feel frustrated when they are caught in the gap between differing state policies and procedures, as seen in this administrator's comment:

"The Kansas math assessment puts a great deal of emphasis on the names of mathematical properties. Well, in my opinion you don't have to know the names of the properties in order to do algebra successfully. But because that's on the Kansas assessment we spend a lot of time on it. And in another state they may not have done that."

Administrator

The Common Core State Standards

Every child across the country must be given the tools needed to succeed. High, consistent standards across state boundaries will provide teachers, parents, and students with a set of clear, common expectations to work toward. These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers and are aligned to international standards to ensure that our students will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses, in workforce training programs, and in the global marketplace.

Efforts to standardize curricula across states have taken form in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The Common Core State Standards Initiative is an effort that sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The initiative's stated purpose is to "provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them." The standards seek to align diverse state curricula to a single standard (**www.corestandards.org**).

Adoption of these standards has potential to smooth transitions for mobile Military-connected students, eliminating some of the differences in curriculum they experience as they move from one school to another, both within and between states, especially in their capacity to help highly mobile Military-connected students academically with placement and transfer of credits. They may not, though, solve school management issues associated with enrollment, course placement, transfer of credits, different schedules or calendars, electives, eligibility, and graduation.

The states have made progress in implementing the Common Core State Standards. A November 2010 Center on Education Policy report, based on a state superintendent survey, found 35 states and the District of Columbia citing the rigor of the standards and the possibility of those standards serving as a

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foundation for statewide education improvement as the major consideration for adopting the standards, and by December 2011, 45 states and the District of Columbia had adopted the Common Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts. Two heavily impacted Military states, Texas and Virginia, have not adopted the Standards.

One of the goals of the Common Core standards was to ensure that students who mastered these standards would graduate college- and career-ready. Coordination between K-12 with higher education is required to reach this goal. At present only eight states have plans to align their undergraduate admissions requirements and seven states plan to align their first-year undergraduate core curriculum with the Common Core.

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

Efforts to support transition through reciprocal agreements are embedded in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (MIC3)[1], a compact that works toward resolving transition issues experienced by Military-connected students, many of which were identified in SETS 2001: school enrollment, eligibility, placement and graduation. The Compact was developed by the Council of State Government's National Center for Interstate Compacts, the Department of Defense, national associations, federal and state officials, departments of education, school administrators and Military families. Its aim is to replace the wide variety of policies that currently exist. The agreement covers handling of educational records, immunizations, entrance ages, and placement and attendance agreements. Presently, 40 states and Washington, D.C., have signed the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission. As Military-connected students move from one school to another, it will afford them the same educational opportunities for success in school as their less mobile peers.

The Current Landscape of General Academics

One limitation uncovered by the EMC-21 research was quantifying basic school information on Military-connected children. Responses to questions on district demographics found that only 40 percent of the districts had a student identifier that could be used to delineate data on Military-connected students. This lack of information on Military students leaves a large void in the ability to understand this population. The March 2011 GAO report similarly found a lack of information to designate Military students.

When addressing the issue of transition, over 75 percent of the parents reported <u>no</u> transitions issues, a change in pattern from parent responses from the SETS 2001 study when the majority of parents reported transition challenges. Based on interview responses this high percentage appears to be the result a combination of the Army Child, Youth and School Services School Liaison Program efforts, schools working hard to support parents and the parent's knowledge of what to bring to the new school in the way of records. CYSS School Liaison Officers appear to be a contributor to parent knowledge with their numerous support initiatives. Of those parents that did not have a good transition, issues of housing, high school credit and graduation, and special program induction complicated the transition.

Families with children in enriched programs were interviewed about their transition experiences. Many noted challenges associated with each move, challenges which are artifacts of different state policies. Some states consider gifted students to be children with unique learning needs and as such require an Individualized Education Program (IEP) before they can provide services. These states will require testing

1 The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children is overseen by the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission and is commonly referred to as MIC3.

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if the student does not have an IEP. Testing students to establish eligibility was commonly mentioned as a problem for gifted students involved in transition.

Testing for enrichment programs can be extensive, with some districts requiring multiple criteria in their identification process: up to three tests and completion of a rubric from several individuals familiar with the student were not uncommon. From the interviews, lag times are seen in enrollment based on testing. MIC3 provides rays of hope: if a child was enrolled in an enrichment program prior to arriving at the local school district, states that have signed the MIC3 agreement should allow continued enrollment. Enrichment programs are generally limited at the elementary and middle school with select district programs. More opportunities are available at the high

"They can be gifted in one state, not gifted in another, and it would be the same child. Every state has its own requirements."

Parent

school level with Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate programs, and dual and concurrent enrollment growing rapidly in many of the interviewed school systems.

Technology change is part of education change and surfaced in many ways throughout the study both within Family and between Family and schools: in Family research in preparation for a move and Family communication as well as within schools to deliver coursework. In general academics there were frequent references to technology's growing importance for credit recovery and enhancing school curricula, providing courses that are beyond the capacity of many school districts to provide. Today 75 percent of school districts in the United States have students enrolled in an online or blended learning course[2].

The Current Landscape of General Academics

- Based on the data, school districts are much more aware of issues and responsive to transitions of Military children as compared to the SETS 2001 study.
- The business of education under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has become more complex in the areas of assessment and accountability requirements.
- The use of assessments has greatly increased since SETS and is commonly used for state accountability, program/class placement, gauging progress, and graduation requirements. Some Military impacted states are moving toward end-of-course exams in an effort to align academic curricula to assessment.
- Technology has greatly assisted school systems: through online options, student information systems have assisted students in respect to learning options, opportunities, and credit recovery.
- The lack of a student identifier creates a void of information on Military-connected students.
- States are moving to curriculum that provides a stronger base for college and career readiness, and many states are increasing and changing credit requirements for high school graduation.
- Increased use of credit-based transition programs at high school, for example, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate, are being widely implemented, allowing students to graduate with college credit, decreasing time to and lowering costs of college graduation.
- Students are still required to retest in many districts to qualify for gifted and special needs programs.
- While the MIC3 is in place in 40 states and Washington D.C., many school districts are not aware that their state has signed the Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunities for Military Children and the provisions made through this compact.

2 K-12 Online Learning: A 2008 Follow-up of the Survey of U.S. School District Administrators, Sloan Consortium, January 2009, http://sloanconsortium.org/publications/survey/k-12online2008.

Calendars and Schedules

The way schools structure students' time – in periods, days, terms, semesters, and years – can have a profound effect on the transition of mobile students. The EMC-21 Study looks at how these different arrangements were perceived by study participants whose responses focused on school calendars and scheduling.

The school calendar in all districts have students in attendance for about 180 days each year, however, the beginning and ending dates for the 2010-2011 school year varied. Traditional school calendar start dates ranged from August 5 through September 7, and end dates ranged from May 20 to June 10. Semester breaks could be before or after the mid-year break. Two districts studied included year-round schools that began instruction mid-July and ended in early June. Though the school calendar was extended, students attended classes about the same number of days as those on a traditional calendar.

School day scheduling ranged from a traditional schedule where students attend classes with all subjects taught every day to a variety of block scheduling options, including classes that are taught every other day for a school year, or every day for a semester. Differences between sending and receiving schools' schedules can affect a secondary student's credits dramatically:

"This is a big problem. Some schools are block schedules, and, if a student moves during the semester from a block schedule to us - we're regular seven-hour schedule - they're going to lose a credit and a half off their high school transcript. And there's really no way to get around it, you know. 'Cause they're taking four courses at another school, and we can't just give them credit for something they've missed twenty days of, or something like that. So we work around it. But one thing I can say, it doesn't keep them from graduating any earlier or later than what they were supposed to. They may have to go to school a couple extra hours a day their senior year, instead of being early release."

Administrator

Whatever the calendar or schedule, successful transition from one school to another requires planning, information, and communication. School start

The data about calendars and schedules from the EMC-21 Study found:

- Different ways schools structure their time, by both calendar and schedule, can amplify transition challenges for students. The year-round calendar was used in only two of the EMC-21 Study districts, but many respondents mentioned students moving between that and a traditional school calendar, and vice versa, as a concern.
- School calendars are inconsistent: start dates, end dates, and mid-year break dates can vary considerably between different school districts and even within a district if there are different schedules or schools of choice.
- Students have more opportunity to participate in activities because educators are more sensitive to the needs of Military-connected children. Even a decade ago, sign-up for activities could be denied because deadlines had passed prior to the students' move. Now there are formal instruments such as the Memorandum of Agreement and the Military Interstate Compact for Children Commission, which has been signed by 41 states as of Spring 2012, to aid mobile students.
- Moving a student between a traditional and block scheduling and vice versa can cause loss of credit. Even though this loss may be mitigated by credit recovery classes, it still contributes to a bumpy transition, particularly for the secondary student.
- Schools are positive in their attitude toward mobile students and provide multiple opportunities for students to recover credit.
- Technology has been a boon for mobile Families with students. Most talk about researching the receiving district before the move. Online coursework has enabled students to recover credit more readily as opposed to traditional classroom courses.

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dates, semester break, high-stakes testing, and athletics scheduling can all cause challenges for mobile Families. Any student can lose out on learning time when he is not in school. Additionally, high school students can face penalties in grade points and credits if the Family is not proactive in learning all they can about a school calendar and schedule in the receiving school as they prepare for a move. Especially as students progress into the secondary grades, elements of the school calendar and daily schedule need to be integral pieces of the transition plan for a Military Family with school children of any age. Educators who understand the possible challenges in a transition can work with the student, helping him make the transition into his new surroundings smoother. Most educators who have worked with mobile Military children agree with this administrator's summary:

"You have to match what they come with, with what you have. And sometimes making a schedule work for that student is a challenge. But we haven't had one that we haven't been able to do yet. And so we don't give up easily. We work with situations."

Administrator

Calendars

One of the major structural school issues for the mobile student is the school calendar (the overall organization of the annual calendar) and the details of when school, semester break, testing, and sports begin. Different districts observe different start dates and marking periods, and these dates may differ, even within a district. These structures can be a major stumbling block to a smooth transition for students who move and change schools. Students may find themselves moving not only geographically, but also between different school calendars.

School Start Dates

In the EMC-21 Study, starting dates for schools on a traditional calendar during school year 2010-2011 range from August fifth to September seventh. In some states, all public schools have the same starting date dictated by the state education authority, but this is not necessarily true of all states. For each move, the Family needs to research school start dates to ensure their timely arrival in the area to register and enter school at the beginning of the year. Parents and students interviewed for the study generally found information about calendars accessible on school websites and are aware that school start, semester break dates, and end dates can vary considerably depending on the district.

"We had to hurry up and get everything together for the simple fact that we were thinking school was starting around the end of August, but, in actuality, it started at the beginning of August. So we had to get everything together prior to the end of July, because our reporting date wasn't until after the school started. So we had to get our orders and everything a little bit changed, modified a little bit, so we could meet the start for school so the girls wouldn't be late."

Parent

"We do have students that come in late as if they aren't enrolled at all. We start August 13, which is crazy early. But if that happens, all we can do is get kids in classes and, depending on the courses they may have, work to catch up. And if that's the catch, then they will have a lot of work to catch up. And we have tutoring in place after school also. So we make sure we provide many opportunities if they need to catch up on anything. If it's just a transfer from a different school, then they will have transfer grades, and we will try to match those classes as best we can. When that doesn't fit perfectly, that's when you become the creative problem solver."

Administrator

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Parents find numerous differences in school calendars from one district to another. There is no consistency in calendars: school start dates for the sites included in the EMC-21 Study vary by a month; start dates at the two sites in Kansas vary by three weeks; semester breaks can fall before break or three weeks after; school end dates have a spread of three weeks. Consider the school district calendars of the installations in this study, which covers only 11 school districts in seven states:

SCHOOL START, SEMESTER BREAK, AND END OF YEAR DATES 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR ARRANGED BY INITIAL OF SCHOOL

SCHOOL DISTRICT	First Day of School 2010-2011	Semester Break	End of Year	Year Round Calendar (offered as an option in two school districts)	
Liberty County Schools (Georgia)	Aug 5	Dec 17	May 26	No	
Muscogee County Schools (GA) Operates both traditional and year-round options	Aug 9	Dec 17	May 20	Start July 15	End June 8
Vernon Parish (LA)	Aug 11	Jan 7	May 27	No	
Fountain Fort Carson – District 8 (CO)	Aug 12	Dec 17	May 27	No	
Geary County Schools (KS)	Aug 16	Dec 21	May 20	No	
Lawton Public Schools (OK)	Aug 20	Dec 17	May 26	No	
Fort Sam Houston Independent School District (TX)	Aug 22	Jan 13	June 1	No	
El Paso Independent School District (TX)	Aug 23	Dec 17	June 3	No	
Killeen Independent School District (TX)	Aug 23	Jan 14	June 2	No	
Cumberland County Schools (NC) Operates both traditional and year-round options	Aug 25	Jan 21	June 10	Start July 14	End June 3
Fort Leavenworth/Leavenworth Schools (KS)	Sept 7	Jan 3	June 3	No	

One can see that a Family moving from one district to another or who enroll their children after the district start date may find that their children have to "catch up" the minute they register for the school year in the receiving district. Even within a school district there can be variation in calendars, as can be seen in Muscogee County and Cumberland County Schools, which contain both traditional and year-round schools.

School Choice

In districts where school choice is offered, enrolling Family siblings into the same calendar seemingly can simplify things; for some Families, it is a priority, as can be seen from this parent's comment:

"I wanted to know which schools in our county were traditional calendar schools. That's really the main concern I had. I did not want my children to be all staggered on what we have here, the year round school where there are 4 different tracks. I just couldn't have them all on separate schedules. So my main concern was traditional schedule."

Parent

In some cases, when parents do not have a choice because of their inability to provide the transportation to a particular school, the child attends school according to district zoning policies. Having children on multiple schedules, although manageable, may require flexibility on the part of the Family. One middle school student who attends a year-round school has a sister in high school on a traditional schedule and speaks about pragmatic concerns for her Family:

"It's good, but it's kind of hard for a Family, like when…Because my sister goes to a traditional school, so it's hard for us to find time to go somewhere for vacation…[and] when my dad's back from being deployed, I'm off, and she's going to school."

The Year-round Calendar

Moving from a district operating on a traditional school calendar to a district operating on a year-round calendar presents amplified challenges for students. Two school calendars were seen in the EMC-21 Study:

- The traditional, ten-month school year calendar, beginning in August or September and ending somewhere near the end of May or early to mid-June.
- The year-round calendar sometimes referred to as a "balanced" calendar, with the school year starting in July and having evenly spaced breaks.

According to the National Association for Year-Round Education (NAYRE), in 2008-09 more than 2.5 million public school students, approximately 5 percent of the nation's students, attended year-round schools. Even though this is a small percentage of U.S. students, a number of Military-connected students and parents as well as schools impacted by Military presence had experience with year-round schooling. Students who move between a traditional and year-round school face academic challenges in that they rarely are at the same point in their studies in the receiving school that they were in the sending school. Several spoke of losing credit because of the difference in schedules at the sending and receiving schools.

The transition from a year-round to a traditional calendar after the beginning of the school year presents challenges frequently to mobile students in being awarded credit for partially completed course work or joining a new class after the semester has begun. The EMC-21 Study found that the majority of the school districts are well aware of the differences between calendars and do everything possible to facilitate incoming students to receive credit for the work they have done and helping those who move in the catch up with work missed.

"We get students from everywhere. As a matter of fact, I just did enroll a young lady yesterday who is on a year-round school calendar, which means we have to assimilate her the best that we can into second quarter, because she wasn't anywhere near ready to be second quarter at her school."

Administrator

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"I try to find out where they were, what kind of topics were they on, to gauge, to see exactly where they were in relationship to where we are. And most of the time it's fairly consistent that everybody usually is in the about the same place depending on if you came from a year-round school or a block school or something of that nature. Occasionally I will get a student who is coming in from another system, where they've taken the same course but because of the way the schedule is, they're not at the same point we are."

Teacher

The Semester/Term Break

Ideally, Families move during the summer vacation, but there are many times when that is not possible. The next best time seems to be over the long, winter holiday break. This option, however, may be problematic for the high school student when there is such variation in when the break occurs, as can be seen in the *School Start, Semester Break, and End of Year Dates 2010-2011 School Year* table shown earlier in this chapter.

In the EMC-21 Study of schools on traditional calendars for the 2010-11 school year, the end of the first semester may occur as early as December 17 and as late as January 21. Parents and students need be aware of these differences as they plan a move, as attendance policies may affect credits awarded for course work.

Two kinds of grades may be awarded when a student withdraws from school, and it is important for parents to understand the difference between the two: a withdrawal grade is the "as of" grade a student has earned up to the point of withdrawing from a school, generally without credit being awarded; a final credit grade is awarded when the student has completed sufficient requirements, including days enrolled, assignments and tests/exams to earn credit. A student withdrawing during the winter break can possibly miss sufficient school days that she may not be awarded credit from the sending school unless prior arrangements can made to complete the course work and any required exams. Such arrangements

Parents and students need be aware of these differences as they plan a move, as attendance policies may affect credits awarded for course work.

can be accomplished with prior planning, personal coordination, and timely communication. The opposite is also true when the student stays until the 21 of January to complete the semester and then moves to a district starting the second semester of school in early January. That student will have missed three weeks of course work, and, depending on the type of schedule, her credits may be in jeopardy. Because each district is different, it is critical to understand the policies for withdrawal grades, end-of-course grades, and seat-hour requirements for receiving credit.

"We have to look at all of that individually and try to solve any of those issues, you know, the best we can. You know, because there's at some point if they transfer in too late, if they have not been in school already, then they're not going to get credit because of attendance regulations. And we have some that get in that situation."

Administrator

High Stakes Testing

In some degree, testing schedules drive school calendars. In the EMC-21 Study interviews with district-level administrators, all stated that the statewide testing schedule is the one inflexible part of the calendar, because the dates are set in stone by state education authorities. Many parents may not be aware – or even consider the impact – of moving students during a period when the tests are given. Furthermore,

testing schedules affect children of all ages, not just high school students taking end-of-course work. In some states high-stakes testing may determine a child's promotion at the end of the year. The grades and policies for testing differ in every state, but the bottom line for testing is generally that children enrolled in school on test administration days must take the tests.

Extracurricular Activities

School starting dates also determine when sports practices, marching band rehearsals, and other extracurricular programs begin. Many parents such as the following are concerned about extracurricular activities for their children, especially at the high school level.

"I mean for a child who is into athletics and they're a big part of his school, when does football season start so they're prepped and ready? When is 'Hell Week' for football? Football ends in October. But basketball season starts then. I know for wrestling its February, March and that's it. So they technically have like four seasons of sports here versus three seasons of sports which we're used to."

Parent

Students today have a greater chance of participating in extracurricular activities than they did even a decade ago for a variety of reasons: informally, schools are more aware of the needs of the mobile Military student and work to ensure that he has these opportunities, and formally, many schools and states signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), an outcome of the Secondary Education Transition Study, and the Military Interstate Compact for Children Commission (MIC3).

Signatories of the Memorandum of Agreement agree to "review local tryout timelines and systems with an eye to the opportunity to increase access and encourage inclusiveness."

An example of this is high school football which has rules in place to ensure that players have adequate time for physical conditioning prior to the beginning of the playing season. These rules protect the health and well-being of the players. Due in part to the Memorandum of Agreement and the MIC3, newly arriving students may be allowed to join the team and will be able to play when they have met the requirements for training and conditioning. In another example, summer is the traditional time for specifically designed camps where marching band members learn new routines and form a cohesive unit. Students arriving after the summer training in those states that have joined the MIC3 will have the opportunity to participate in those groups.

Chapter 600, Section 600.1 of the *Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunities for Military-Connected Children* further helps students who wish to participate in an extracurricular activity. Forty states have joined the Compact, whose purpose it is to replace the widely varying practices that affect mobile Military students. The Compact states that "State and local education agencies shall facilitate the opportunity for transitioning Military children's inclusion in extracurricular activities, regardless of application deadlines, with consultation with the state high school athletic association; to the extent they are otherwise qualified. Application deadlines include tryouts, summer conditioning and other coach or district prerequisites."

Ending the Academic Year

A final consideration about the school calendar is the close of the academic year. Families with children in year-round schools will end the year usually in late June, much later than children on a traditional calendar. Therefore, a student going from a traditional calendar to a year-round calendar will not have a full-length summer vacation. Once again, the end of year means the end of a semester, and, for the high school

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student, an early withdrawal could negatively affect full credit for a course. Being informed and planning appropriately can ameliorate potential problems.

"Yeah there is a big difference in school starting times, and again it's the kids that pay more attention to that and get more concerned about that, because they're not understanding why a kid, for instance in Alaska, starts school in September, perhaps, and then gets out in June. And then they transfer to Louisiana, and they have to start school in August. And they feel like they lost a month of their summer vacation."

Administrator

Other Considerations

There may be deadlines the mobile Military Family should be aware of as they transition their children from one school to another. Many schools offer dual and/or concurrent enrollment for high school students. Students who enroll in these courses may earn college credit at the same time they earn credits to graduate high school. There may be a cut-off date for enrollment in these classes, and students arriving after that date may not be enrolled because of time requirements set by the state for college coursework.

Parents of children with special needs need to be aware of the need to contact the receiving school district early, particularly if their child has multiple and/or severe special needs when establishing school services at the receiving location. These services may take some time to set up, and planning ahead with school district personnel may mean that services can be initiated with no delay upon arrival.

International moves from host nation schools can also take planning in a move. Such a move may not be common, and school administrators at the secondary level may find it difficult to equate courses taken in those schools to U.S. courses. Parents may find that school calendars can cause difficulty:

"We were going to this great new place and so the problem with Australia and the schools though is we went into the end of their school year 'cause they're academic year goes January to November so basically we got there and they did the end of the school year and then started the new school year in January so that was difficult."

Parent

"My older kids were in German schools so we couldn't leave until the end of July because their schools don't end until the end of July. So that was really the driving force of when we could leave because they had to finish school over there. The German schools don't have this cutoff date like American schools where if you are not there by that date you don't have to finish the year so it was more driven by leaving Germany then coming here."

Parent

Academic Scheduling

There are many nuances to school schedules that can affect student transitions. Some schools begin with a week of half days, alternating days, or different starting dates for different grades. The research uncovered differences in the number of early release days, professional development days for teachers, and holiday schedules. An important concern for students, however, appears to be scheduling.

Ten years ago, in the Military Child Education Coalition's Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) for

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the U.S. Army, researchers found the different school schedules to be a major stumbling block for high school students moving during the school year. Take, for example, a high school student who misses ten school days on a block schedule of four 90-minute classes per day each semester (this schedule is sometimes called the four-by-four block schedule.) This student will have missed a total of 15 hours of class time in each academic subject. While these gaps often occur when parents are not aware of the starting dates for school, they can occur at any time and can cause problems not only with learning but also with earning credits.

While this problem has not changed and schedules now seem to be even more complicated, school districts are sensitive to the affect they have on students. The EMC-21 Study sample includes three different schedule types, and there were only 11 school districts in seven states participating in the study:

- **Block Schedule:** Sometimes called the accelerated or four-by-four block schedule; students take four, 90-minute classes a day, every day, for one semester.
- **Alternating Block or Alternative Block:** Students attend eight 90-minute classes, four one day and the other four on the alternating day, for the entire school year. A/B days or school colors such as Black/Gold, Red/Blue, are frequently used to identify the days.
- **Traditional:** Students have six to eight classes per day for the entire year.

> "I've worked in a high school, and when somebody comes from a seven-period day to a four-by-four (a form of accelerated block schedule structured so that a student completes four 90-minute classes in one semester and four the next), you know, that's a nightmare..."
>
> Counselor

The EMC-21 Study sites were divided in the type of schedule they offered: Muscogee, El Paso, Cumberland, Fountain Fort Carson and Liberty County Schools used a version of the block schedule; Killeen, Leavenworth/Ft. Leavenworth, Vernon Parish, Fort Sam Houston, Geary County, and Lawton Schools used a traditional schedule.

Transitioning Within the School Year

When a student transitions prior to the end of the year, receiving full credit for the course is never certain. Parents and students are aware of this problem.

> "I was doing eight classes all year instead of four a semester, so I ended up losing credits coming here. I was told they were going to convert the extra eight half credits that I had to four full elective credits, so that also put me a year behind in History and Science."
>
> Student

> "Here it's four-by-four and where we're moving where it won't be. When we found out we were leaving that was the one thing I told my husband - we cannot move in the middle of the school year because it would be crazy. He's finished four classes and he hasn't started four classes; we'll get there as they're half way through eight classes."
>
> Parent

The type of high school schedule the school uses most likely determines course options as well as how credits are awarded, and sometimes, in spite of the best planning, students will not be able to transfer all their credits. Moving from block to traditional or traditional to block can be challenging for administrators trying to accommodate students, as remarked on by various stakeholders: "I have been told it is really difficult in other counties because we do the block program where you do one class in three months instead of the whole year and so if we were to PCS right now it would really screw up their education. Because then they wouldn't be able to, you know, transfer stuff."

> Parent

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"…If they're coming from a school that operates under a block schedule, they only had four classes this semester. We have seven, so that's three more classes. If they come in this time in this semester or later, it really puts them in a bind, because they have missed too much to make up the credit. So they really have no choice but to audit the course for the remainder of the semester. And they lose out on that credit because it's a class they haven't had this year. So credits are a big issue."

Administrator

Students moving to or from a country outside the U.S., attending school in the local community, may experience problems in a move, and sports calendars add another layer to the complexity when a student transitions from one school to another.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF BLOCK SCHEDULING

Student and Parent Impression		Educator Impression	
Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Opportunity to take more courses in a school year	A mid-year move from a block to traditional schedule and vice versa can cause loss of credit	More time for supervised research and practice	More costs associated with staffing
More time to complete labs	Absences can result in difficulty in making up missed work	Opportunities to work with students who need to master essential skills	A traditional to/from block schedule move can cause credit loss
Fewer subjects to prepare for	Sequential skill development in courses such as math & foreign language can be disrupted	Time to get to know students	AP testing in spring can be adversely affected if class taken in the fall
More time for group projects and work	Not all teachers use a variety of activities needed to effectively implement block scheduling	Time to plan instruction and collaborate with colleagues	Each district handles students who are out of step with local scheduling in a different manner
Teachers have more time to work with students and "get to know" them	Juniors and Seniors particularly impacted by a move that involves changing from block to/from traditional schedule	Extended time for group projects	Activity based learning increases cost of supplies, resources and materials

Middle School Schedules

Middle school students are different from both elementary and high school students and need a different educational approach in order to work with them effectively. This approach needs to blend elementary and high school approaches – provide the student with support as does the elementary school, while giving him increasing independence as does the high school. Many middle schools use a team approach to accomplish this.

Middle schools tend to group students into teams that are comprised of all ability levels with names

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indicating belongingness only. Because of scheduling constraints, such as band or art class, some students may attend some classes with students from other teams, but overall, students will attend core subjects - math, English, science and social studies - with students from their own team. Their classes are generally contiguous with one another, and teachers have the option of planning units together and using their time flexibly. For example, in a science/social studies unit focusing on the 1950's space race the teachers may use extra time in a science lab for one part of the unit and extra time in the social studies classroom in another part.

This flexibility is useful to meet student's needs, and a student moving in from a junior high district will not be at a disadvantage as far as knowledge and concepts or promotion are concerned, as in middle school students are generally promoted by the year rather than being awarded course credit.

Beginning in grade eight, however, and sometimes in grade seven, some middle schools offer high school course work. This can complicate matters when the student enters high school. This course work is generally algebra, biology, or a world language, but geometry may be offered. Some schools do not have staff on a middle school campus to handle high school classes and two courses are likely to present themselves: schedule the student into a middle school class or accommodate the student in some way:

"I think the biggest challenge is that some of the kids come in with geometry and high school classes, and we don't have all those on campus. And we have to transfer the kids to outside the base, which is not near our school... It's on the other side of town, which that could be a conflict, because we have to coordinate building the master board on the high school level with building the master board at the middle school level."

Administrator

There are many challenges posed by school calendars and schedules for the mobile Military-connected student and communication proved to be the key to making a smooth transition between one school and the next. Even when calendars and schedules were markedly different, the knowledge that there were differences moved the student to the next step - making it work. While a lot of information is delivered face-to-face, technology has had a large role in communication during a student's move, and many students and their parents spoke about being proactive in seeking information.

"We've had issues with people that have had things like Spanish or higher math that we can't offer them here. But, as far as keeping them on track to graduate, there are not any issues."

Administrator

Schools were uniformly positive in their response to transitioning students and the variety of backgrounds they brought with them. They have developed structures to help students recover credit and stay on track to graduate. Technology has been helpful here: online credit recovery can enable students to "catch up" without sacrificing seat time on concepts they already know.

Then and Now:
The Secondary Education Transition Study (2001) and Education of the Military Child in the 21st Century (2011)

In both the SETS (2000) and EMC-21 studies similar issues exist concerning transitions, calendars, and schedules, but with one significant difference: Parents and students are now more cognizant that there can be differences, and technology makes access to information easier. There are fewer surprises now than

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there were in the past. Many Families are well informed and have researched their children's new school, and many parents and students are aware of the ramifications on credits when they transition mid-year. Parents and students are proactive in checking school websites to gain helpful information, while receiving schools' personnel are communicating with the sending schools' to determine the best placement and the extent to which they can award students credit to keep them on track to graduate on time. Many schools involved in the EMC-21 Study have instituted credit recovery and before- or after-school tutoring to get students caught up if they are behind. There will still be, however, instances when students will lose credit, be required to repeat courses, or end up as seniors in freshman classes to meet graduation requirements.

Recommendations

There are many positive actions that can help students make a smooth transition as they navigate a variety of school calendars and school day scheduling when they move from state-to-state, district-to-district, and school-to-school.

Students and Parents:

- Contact or visit the installation School Liaison Officer to find out as much information as possible to help ensure a smooth school transition.
- Visit the installation School Liaison Program website for information about the new school district.
- Find out as much information as possible about schools in the new location. Locate the receiving school district's website and learn the start date for the year, term beginning and end dates, report card dates, and testing dates.
- Know what kind of schedule the child is leaving and what kind of schedule is in place in the new location.
- If it is necessary to withdraw a student prior to the end of the school year, work with the sending school to find out what accommodations can be made to ensure that completed course work grades are included on the transcript. These accommodations may include scheduling exams, compacting curriculum, or graduation reciprocity for seniors.
- Gather pertinent information about state-mandated testing from both the sending and receiving schools, to offset any negative impact on the student's progress.
- Do not delay on enrolling the student in the receiving school. Make sure the children are enrolled in school at the beginning of the school year or as soon as possible after arrival if the move occurs within the school year.
- Establish communication with the counselors at the receiving school, and hand-carry the required records and documentation to enroll immediately and appropriately upon arrival. Let counselors know what kind of schedule was used at the prior school.
- Take information about the calendar and schedule of the sending school to the receiving school. This may be found in the student handbook or orientation brochure as well as on the school district web site.

School Staff:

- Understand that Military-connected students come from a wide variety of backgrounds. They can enter the school with advanced skills and knowledge in some areas and the need to "catch up" in others due

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to their prior school's calendar and schedule and/or curriculum.

- Have packets on-hand of information for students and parents during enrollment; make sure all information on the school website is current, complete and accurate.
- Be able to converse with students and parents about school information, particularly scheduling, marking periods, and attendance regulations.

School Districts:

- Continually update websites, including:
  - > School calendar for both the current and upcoming years
  - > Information on bell schedules, noting any special scheduling
  - > Local and state testing dates
- Prepare information packets for distribution via website or hard copy. Include enrollment information and, where possible, forms that parents can fill in before their arrival.
- Post enrollment requirements and procedures on the school district web site and in published materials.
- Ensure that there are systems in place – including credit recovery classes and tutoring opportunities – to help ensure a smooth transition during mid-year enrollment.
- Ensure that there is a variety of options for students to recover credit, thus enabling them to participate in activities that will promote friendship and well-being.

The Local Military installation:

- Partner with local school districts to ensure knowledge and implementation of school transition best practices.
- Place links to each school district on their web site so that Families moving into the area have information to help make the transition easier for children.
- Make sure that links work and that all information posted on the installation site is current, accurate, and complete.
- Coordinate calendars as much as possible with local school district(s) to lessen calendar conflicts.
- Encourage Military Families to enroll their children in school quickly.
- Coordinate with the local school district(s) to obtain information materials about the schools available for Families with school-age children. Include information such as enrollment and immunization requirements, specialty schools such as charter and magnet schools, and points of contact for children with special needs.

U.S. Army Leadership:

- Consider providing Families with high school children some flexibility in arriving at the new installation to meet school start dates.

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Having a student with special needs in the Family means that most Family life activities entail additional complexity. Dealing with schools, teachers, and, in a move, policies and procedures that differ from those in the previous school are additional tasks in these Families' lives. Enrolling a student with special needs in a school, for example, entails not only registering the child but also meeting with special education staff to discuss eligibility, special conditions or needs of the child, reviewing records from the prior school, and discussing services available at the current school. Policies delineating categories of disabilities may differ from state to state, as this parent discovered, and multiple disability conditions make enrolling in a new school even more complex:

"My son has dyslexia and they don't recognize it here in Georgia. Maybe some state does, that's what they told me. I have to just keep the copy [of his individual education plan] with me… And my son being ADHD is really harder."

Parent

Children with special needs instruction are children who demonstrate a physical or learning disability or an emotional, behavioral, or developmental disorder requiring modifications or accommodations to materials, instructions, activities, or environment in order to perceive a free appropriate public education that will prepare them for independent living, employment, or further education. Modified instruction utilizes specialized techniques, activities, and in some cases subject matter, that will enable the child to experience success in school.[1]

Some children with disabilities do not qualify for modified services under IDEA but may qualify for services under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

There are two primary federal laws detailing children with special needs' right to a public education: the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504). IDEA was created to ensure that states and public agencies such as schools provide *modifications* such as assigning material at the student's level and adapting teaching to the learner's style for children with disabilities. Some children with disabilities do not qualify for modified services under IDEA but may qualify for services under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (see Appendix E for comparison of legislation affecting education services for children with disabilities). These children need *accommodations* such as use of technology to participate in school to compensate for their condition or perhaps allowing a set of textbooks to be kept at home.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in school year 2008-09, 13.2 percent of students age three to 21 – the ages mandated by the IDEA – were served in special education programs. The most common disabilities are specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairments, intellectual disabilities, and emotional disturbance. Examples of disabilities and disorders that adversely affect a child's educational performance include:

1 Gifted education was not included in the special
needs section of the SETS update.

EXAMPLES OF SPECIAL NEEDS THAT MIGHT QUALIFY A STUDENT FOR SCHOOL-PROVIDED SERVICES

Category	Special Need	Condition
Physical Disabilities	Limit basic activities such as walking, lifting, climbing stairs.	Muscular Dystrophy, Cystic Fibrosis, Epilepsy, Spina Bifida
Emotional or Behavioral Disabilities	Adversely affect educational performance and interpersonal relationships.	Bipolar disorder, Aggressive Conduct Disorder
Intellectual Disabilities	Limit the capacity for self-care, communication, or learning.	Down Syndrome
Autism Spectrum Disorders	Affects the child's ability to use language and relate to others.	Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Rett syndrome
Learning Disabilities	Limits the capacity for learning academic skills.	Dyscalculia (difficulty understanding and using math concepts and symbols), Dyslexia (difficulty learning to read or interpret words, letters or other symbols), Central Auditory Processing Disorder
Other Health Impairments	Limited strength, vitality or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems.	Asthma, Sickle Cell Anemia, Hemophilia, Diabetes

(Categories and Samples from the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities)

Transition and the Student with Special Needs

Moving can be challenging for any Family that includes school-age children. Leaving familiar surroundings, adjusting to a new school, and making new friends can be difficult for children. When a child has special needs, these and other, additional tasks and concerns involved can make transitions particularly challenging: parents may have to contend with new or different state rules regarding special education; the child may need to be reassessed by his or her new school and may face adjustment issues as routines are changed; and the entire Family may have to find a new network of support in their current location.

Military Families move on average six to nine times during their children's school career. All Families experience anxiety as children are uprooted from one environment and moved to a new one. These challenges are intensified for Families with children with special needs, as these parents noted:

"My younger boy has autism and there are just so many problems that come just with that. You have got to prepare him six months prior (to the move)."

Parent

"...he's a special education student and does not do changes well at all."

Parent

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The change in school environment can be especially disconcerting. Moving from a small school to a large school, rural to urban, or from lower class to affluent districts can be especially disconcerting. Parents and educators speak about this:

"Our son has some special needs, he's ADHD and we were afraid that such a big crowd may be overwhelming for him."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

"Students who come to us with special needs from a metropolitan area to a rural setting - we've seen some students with very serious problems, and this environment is a challenge for some of those students."

<div align="right">Administrator</div>

The data about special neeeds from the EMC-21 Study found:

- Students with special needs face enhanced challenges as they transition and need predictability and consistency.

- Children may not receive the same services as they move from location to location.

- Educators are concerned that the delay in receiving records may result in delayed initiation of services and can cause students to lose learning time.

- Parents are concerned about social as well as academic affects of mobility on the student with special needs.

- Effective communication between parents and school personnel can ease the transition for children with special needs.

- There is inconsistency in programs and services available to the student with special needs from state-to-state and district-to-district.

Research into the education of the Military-connected child for the EMC-21 Study was accomplished through a series of semi-structured interviews conducted in 11 school districts that were heavily impacted by Military presence. Students, parents, administrators, and educators were asked questions dealing with transitions from one school district to another and the effects deployments have on the education of the Military-connected student. Direct questions related to children's special needs were not specifically addressed in the interview questions; however, special needs emerged as a theme during analysis of the study data.

Each of the 50 states plus DoDEA, the District of Columbia, and the territories, establish their own policies and procedures and that means mobile students face inconsistencies when they move from one school to another. Both parents and educators recognize that it would be easier for Families with a student with special needs if there were consistency between schools across the states. This would include consistencies such as

"...some type of system for consistency so you're not having to re-establish [services]. As far as my younger child's IEP, you know its half way thru the year when we're finally back on track."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

"Anything that can help the children move from one state to another to let them transition into these special programs – anything that would allow that continuity – would be huge between the states. Some sort of agreement that would allow that child to continue, that would really be helpful."

<div align="right">Teacher</div>

Differences in State Policies and District Services Offered

Despite federal policy, there are differences in state policies and district services, and parents may see this as a lack of consistency of services for students. Federal statute outlines specific and minimum requirements for the development and implementation of an Individualized Education Program (IEP); however, programs, practices, formats, and procedures vary from state to state. Some receiving school districts may, because of inadequate funding or resources, be unable to provide the services outlined in the original IEP and students will not experience the same services from location to location. In this case, the school will follow their established procedure to respond to the student's need according to their state policy and local ability.

The expectations of parents are sometimes not realized by the receiving school districts. Parents' concerns with the inconsistencies in programs and services they encounter as they transition from one state to another can include different names for a service or condition, different programs provided – or not provided – for a condition, and the different testing requirements established by various states. For example, these parents say:

"…I have a child with special needs and they call it something different here than in Georgia and it was confusing."

"My youngest child has a writing disability – [in the sending school] he was able to enroll in a specialized program during school hours….it's just not offered here."

"…he's a student with special needs. So the most difficult part is the standardized testing. They have got to come up with something that is transferable across state lines where they don't have these ridiculous testing requirements in every state."

> "Unfortunately the Special Education qualifications across state lines are not consistent. For instance, in the former school migraine headache is a handicapping condition; here it's a 504 consideration."
>
> Parent

> "Often our difficulty comes when the students received special education services, and then that doesn't always match up with what we have available."
>
> Administrator

> "If the child has some type of special need, it may be a question of services and what kinds of services are available; that seems to be a big transition glitch."
>
> Administrator

Not all parents have concerns about programs and services when they move. Some parents report greater satisfaction with the services they receive in the new school as compared to the school they left:

"I found the aid that they give to student with special needs a lot better than I have seen in other places."

Delayed Receipt of Records by the School District

Sometimes receipt of documentation of the approved education plan from the sending school is delayed. This can cause delay in services to a student who has previously received IDEA or Section 504 services. It can, in addition, cause a school to be out of compliance with federal law. Educators who were interviewed commented on the delay:

"[The problem is] the timeliness of being able to place students who need special services…if we have to reevaluate or it takes up to six weeks and that's just very frustrating."

"Sometimes it is three weeks before we get records and then we've missed a window of three weeks where we could help a child that may need speech or something like that."

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"We have to continually check and check and it kind of puts us in a serious situation because of the federal requirements."

"It was week 12 before we knew the students was on an IEP and the student is failing tremendously and miserably."

The timely transfer of records and grades is the first and most essential line of communication when a student with special needs moves into a new school district. The responsibility for this begins with the parent notifying the sending school about the upcoming move and the school forwarding records, to include the student's special education records, to the receiving school. Parents may carry copies, and while these copies may be regarded as unofficial, they will usually be accepted as proof of eligibility and enable the school to provide services to the child while they await the receipt of documentation sent by the child's prior school.

Communication

An important part of the student's transition should be communicating with the receiving school. Even when the parent has not hand carried a copy of the IEP, the parent should notify the receiving school that their child qualified for special education services at his prior school. Educators spoke of their need for this information so they can begin working without delay with the student with special needs. Not having this information can cost the child valuable learning. According to educators who participated in the study, hand carrying the records, particularly the IEP, to the receiving school is even more important for the student with special needs than for mainstream students:

Even when the parent has not hand carried a copy of the IEP, the parent should notify the receiving school that their child qualified for special education services at his prior school.

"I know we request records automatically but sometimes they take a bit to get here. So let me know if your child is on an IEP."

"If I've got a parent copy [of the child's records] right here, then I have a place to start adequately placing your child."

"If they can come with records, that really is beneficial; then we can make some better decisions right off the bat..."

These educators consistently suggested that parents have a process for gathering records to carry to the receiving campus:

"I think a workshop needs to be set up for all parents around the world to come in with a binder and know if the kid is a special education kid. Sometimes they [parents] don't even know what IEP means..."

"Any records that they [parents] have on their student, putting them together in a binder...and carrying that with them rather than us having to wait...and especially about the biggest part is when we have students that are on an IEP or Section 504."

Parents who were interviewed who addressed the topic, were confident about how the process worked, and understood how important records are, and were able to advocate for their child with special needs, as this parent who has had experience within the system notes:

"With my kids and me having to go to different meetings to get services for their disabilities, I have a one-time shot. I have to go in there with my stuff together. It's like going to court – it's your one time shot, convince these people that this is needed and get signed on, or we are in a whole other appeals and everything else."

For a special needs child, depending on her condition, moving even once can be stressful to the point of trauma, and as a Military-connected student, frequent moves and school changes are likely to be a given.

Parents are especially conscious of the difficulties their children with special needs have as a result of their mobile lifestyle, sometimes speaking in generalities and often addressing specifics. The concern about socialization is reflected by many parents:

"My son has a hard time making friends anyway. He's an ADHD child and so socially he's behind the power curve... so making and keeping friends and things like that is very hard for him."

"The biggest thing was his social skills were lacking and that's where his Asperger's comes out...It's hard for him to make friends..."

In previous MCEC studies (*What Transitioning Military Families with Children who have Special Needs Currently Experience*, 2005), some parents reported sensitivity to the fact their child needed special services. Some were embarrassed or hoped a change in environment would eliminate the need for special services. Some were worried that having a child with special needs would affect the sponsor's career. Others were reluctant to stigmatize their child as a special education student, particularly if they thought the child might have grown out of the need for services. While no parents who were interviewed for the study addressed such sensitivity, two educators spoke of their observations based on experience:

"Some kids don't want the stigma of having an IEP....parents don't want the stigma of having an IEP."

It is the law that the public school provides a free and appropriate education for all children When children transfer from school to school, the understanding shared in one school district by educators about the child is lost. Even the most detailed reporting cannot relate all of the nuances of the educational needs of the child. Particularly affected are the children who have learning challenges. The strategies one teacher finds successful may not be communicated to the new school, and the process of finding the right approach to teach the child must begin again. Military Families, who move frequently, are likely to feel the effects of the loss of this tacit understanding.

> **"I've seen resistance from some Military parents to get more help for their kids because they are worried about the stigma that will be placed on them through the U.S. Army."**

Adopting some of the strategies suggested in the interview process as mentioned earlier in this chapter may provide a measure of remedy to the problem. It is also possible for parents, especially those with students with special needs, to request a teacher who has been successful with a child fill out an informational document for the child's next teacher describing some of the successful strategies she has employed.

The Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission

The Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) was designed to make transition easier for the children of Military Families, giving them the same opportunities for educational success as other children and not penalizing them in achieving their educational goals. It aims "to replace the widely varying policies affecting transitioning Military students. [It] leverages consistency, [using a] comprehensive approach that provides a consistent policy in every school district and in every state that chooses to join." At this time 36 states have joined the Compact.

Children are eligible for assistance under the Compact if they have a parent who is: an Active Duty member of the uniformed services, National Guard and Reserve on active duty orders; a member or veteran who was medically discharged or retired (for one year following the date of retirement); or a member who died on Active Duty.

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The Compact is particularly important for children with special needs, as it ensures that they are not placed at a disadvantage due to difficulty in the transfer of education records from the previous school or variations in program requirements. Families will benefit from the flexibility and cooperation as it promotes between the educational system, parents, and the student.

The greatest benefit to the student with special needs is the rule regarding transfer of records. It states that, should it not be possible to release official education records to the parents as they prepare to transfer to another school, the sending school shall furnish to the parent a complete set of unofficial educational records containing uniform information defined by the Interstate Commission. The receiving school shall enroll and appropriately place the student based on the information provided in the unofficial records as quickly as possible.

Recommendations

Parents:

- Visit the School Liaison Officer or Exceptional Facility Member Program Manager to gather information to help ensure a smooth transition for the child.
- Be knowledgeable about resources available to them, such as state regulations and sites commonly used by parents with children with special needs (see Appendix E).
- Advocate for their child in a variety of ways: learn about the child's disability and about programs and services available to help him.
- Talk about the move and possible changes ahead of time; go online to familiarize the child with the new environment.
- Request a copy of the Section 504 services available for the child.
- Inform the child's school of the move as soon as possible and request copies of all records for personal files.
- Keep copies of all educational records, including evaluations, correspondence with educators, and plans such as individual education and transition plans.
- Make appointments for meetings with counselors and educators at the receiving school soon after the move.
- Learn about special education policies and eligibility requirements at the receiving school and state.

Schools:

- Understand and train staff on existing regulations, procedures and systems.
- Increase staff capacity to improve predictability and manage uncertainty.
- Focus on providing a smooth transition for children and Families.
- For those states that have signed the Military Interstate Children's Compact, be aware of their state's participation and of the rules that are included in the Compact.

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There are two types of written plans which are a part of school records: the **Individualized Educational Program (IEP)** and the **504 Plan**. A student's IEP is a legal document which, in part, sets forth the duties and responsibilities of the school district and staff regarding that student. It is the responsibility of special educators, regular education teachers, administrators, counselors, and other professional educators to be thoroughly familiar with the provisions of the IEP for their students with disabilities.

The IEP for a child with a disability must include a statement of any needed modifications in the administration of state or district-wide assessments, and must, if the IEP team determines that it is not appropriate for the child to participate in a particular assessment, provide a statement of why the particular assessment is not appropriate for the child and how the child will be assessed. If the IEP does not indicate any needed modifications or that the particular assessment is not appropriate for the child, this is an indication that the IEP team has determined that the child will participate without modifications in the assessment. (U.S. Department of Education)

An IEP, which falls under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, is much more concerned with actually providing educational services. "Students eligible for an IEP represent a small subset of all students with disabilities. They generally require more than a level playing field – they require significant remediation and assistance, and are more likely to work on their own level at their own pace even in an inclusive classroom" (Hull, 2010). For students who require assistance or modification to fully participate in school but who do not meet the specific requirements of the IEP, a less formal plan based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a national law that protects individuals from discrimination based on their disability is used.

The 504 plan, which falls under civil-rights law, provides a means to remove the barriers which keep students with disabilities from participating freely in school activities. Similar to the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, it seeks to level the playing field so that those students can safely pursue the same opportunities as everyone else (Hull, 2010). Students qualify for services under Section 504 do not qualify for special education and do not receive special education services (such as physical or speech therapy or classes taught by a special education teacher) but can receive modifications (D'Amato, 2004). Students with medical conditions such as depression or cancer might receive modifications under this statute. By federal law, the IEP and the 504 Plan will be accepted by the receiving school and incorporated into the child's education. Modifications to the IEP or 504 must be made according to federal and state guidelines.

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The Value of Extracurricular Activities

Military-connected students transition frequently; it is a fact of their lives. Dad or Mom gets orders, the Family moves. There is stress involved in those moves: *Will my classes transfer? Will the grade point structure be the same as it was at my old school? What will the teachers be like? How soon before I find friends?* Although academics may be the central focus of anxiety, extracurricular activities can be an important part of the transitions, supporting both social connections and a personal sense of confidence. These activities can be a powerful aid in helping students ease into a new school setting; it can also provide many potential benefits to students, such as is described by this educator:

"We find that participating in extracurricular activities helps the academic side. Involved students are happier, adjust better, and make social contacts faster."

This educator is addressing how his campus supports students and helps them succeed through their passions. These passions – or "SPARKs" – reside in all children and will help them succeed and even thrive. According to Peter Benson, President and CEO of Search Institute, SPARKs give children direction, hope, and purpose. SPARKs matter because they are universal to children; they are their hidden flames, authentic passions, talents, assets, skills, and dreams. SPARKs can

- Get them excited, motivated and inspired;
- Can be musical, athletic, intellectual, academic, or relational;
- Get kids going on a positive path with the belief that "my life has a purpose" (Benson, 2008).

For many children, their SPARKs are frequently found in extracurricular activities. A basketball practice, school play, choral rehearsal, debate competition, or the school council – students volunteer for these activities because they have interest and want to learn and grow through the experience. The payoff for children who find their SPARKs, whether through school- or community-related activities, can be seen in higher grades and improved attendance rates in school; a sense of purpose and hope for the future; and social competence and positive citizenship traits (Benson). These characteristics are supported by research found in the literature on extracurricular activities.

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The Education of the Military Child – 21st Century project's intent was to consider changes in opportunities and barriers to participation in extracurricular activities that had occurred since the SETS 2001 study. In the latter study, researchers found that eligibility requirements varied from state to state, were frequently governed by state amateur athletics associations, and were relatively inflexible for both athletic and academic competitions. Researchers also found that schools had some flexibility in "tryout schedules;" extracurricular activities allowed the mobile student to find friends and acceptance in the receiving school; and participation in extracurricular activities increased student confidence and allowed mobile students to find recognition.

The EMC-21 Study looked at extracurricular activities and how they affected the transition of the mobile Military student. The study used open-ended questions to allow the respondents to refer to their experiences in their answers. Educators were asked for specific examples of what the school does to allow transferring students to have opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities. Open-ended questions to parents,

educators and students about transitions often elicited responses about extracurricular activities. In addition, educators were asked focused questions about extracurricular activities. Parents were not asked specifically about extracurricular activities. Other questions asked of all study participants were general enough that responses could include references to extracurricular activities; for example, administrators were asked what their campus did for Military-connected students in particular, and parents were asked if the school did anything to assist their child during deployment that was helpful. Many interviewees from both groups included extracurricular activities in their responses.

Extracurricular activities are activities that are school-sponsored but generally requiring a time commitment for the sponsor and students outside the school day. They may be athletic, such as football or swimming; academic, such as newspaper or chess club; or interest-related, such as theater or ecology. A broader definition could include community classes and activities and volunteering. Although it might be common to view extracurricular activities as purely recreational, research has shown these activities to provide a safe, structured environment in which youth can learn to exert control and express identity through their choice of activities and actions. With adult-sanctioned activities, students can explore positive developmental opportunities protected from experimentation of activities such as drug or alcohol use (Shann, 2001). As one educator notes:

> "I think that our sports activities are great for them because it's something very structured and reliable and it gives them an instant sense of team and community, which is something they need because they're always moving around and losing their friends so it's nice to be part of that community or team. And then I think that our leadership and our WEB [Welcome Every Body, a local leadership program] and those sorts of activities that give the kids leadership opportunities are great for the kids because, since they're not in any school for a long time, sometimes it's hard for them to get into those leadership positions."

Although it might be common to view extracurricular activities as purely recreational, research has shown these activities to provide a safe, structured environment in which youth can learn to exert control and express identity through their choice of activities and actions.

The typical teen may spend about 40 percent of his or her waking hours available as leisure time (Mahoney, 2004). This time can provide adolescents with social developmental opportunities, giving them chances to learn through independent action as they conduct their own experiences (Brown, 1998). During leisure time, youth can build skills (Kleiber, 1999) and both individuate and integrate socially.

Students who are involved in extracurricular activities in high school are more likely to have higher grade point averages, higher test scores and postsecondary aspirations (Lipscomb, 2007) and higher literacy scores (Shulruf, 2008) than students who do not participate. In addition, students who participate in extracurricular activities show higher rates of high school completion (Stattin, 2000); and lower levels of delinquency and arrests (Mahoney, 2004).

Extracurricular activities provide adolescents access to social networks, activities, resources, and equipment that might otherwise be unavailable to them. Schools provide a setting to deliver programs that extend beyond the academic day. Outside the academic curriculum, extracurricular activities give students access to developmental and leadership opportunities and a way of building shared community within the school. At the personal level, extracurricular activities allow students to socialize with both peers and adults and to learn to set and achieve goals, compete fairly, recover from defeat, and to peacefully resolve disputes (Danish, 2000). An administrator cites a coach who works with Military children:

> "Our football coach probably has to be one of the great examples of taking kids under his wing and making sure he allows kids on his team and developing relationships with those kids. And it isn't about his win and loss record; it's been about trying to better that child by the team participation."

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Extracurricular activities allow students to develop identity, develop initiative, learn emotional competency, and develop social skill, to form connections and acquire social capital. They allow the opportunity to associate with peers different from those who they encounter at home and in the classroom, broadening the student's social network. These positive experiences of students help them to become confident individuals:

"She's in drama, which is a lot of fun. She played volleyball. She tried out for basketball. She's a majorette, so she gets to go to all the games. Even when she didn't make it on the basketball team, she knew that the other girls were stronger. She knows her niche, and this school has been real encouraging for her."

Parent

"My son plays football and wrestles. He's had the benefit of having many different coaches with many different styles and objectives, so he is becoming a better, well-rounded athlete as a result. Rather than looking at it like, 'That's not how we used to do it. This place stinks,' he thinks of it as an opportunity to enhance his ability as an athlete."

Parent

Participation in extracurricular activities is important for Military-connected students, as it is for any student. When students engage in their self-chosen SPARK activities, their abilities, talents, interests and curiosity combine to increase socialization skills and build self-awareness, both part of character development. They learn to set priorities, manage time, and function as a member and leader in an organization. Being active in extracurricular activities can help students feel comfortable in their environment, open opportunities for new friendships, and provide a venue for learning new skills, all while doing something they enjoy. In addition, they afford the mobile student the ability to quickly assimilate into a peer group in which he or she can establish friendships quickly.

THE 10 MOST COMMON SPARKS AMONG AMERICAN TEENS

	SPARK	Type of activity	Examples of Activities
1	Creative Arts	Skill/talent	Drama, Dance, Sketching, Woodworking, Fashion Design
2	Athletics	Skill/talent	Soccer, Basketball, Swim Team, Gymnastics, Wrestling
3	Learning	Commitment	Science Club, Archaeology, Programming
4	Reading	Skill/talent	Literary Club, Library Club, Fiction, Biography
5	Helping, Serving	Commitment	Volunteering, Project Linus, Candy Stripers
6	Spirituality, Religion	Quality	Meditation, Yoga, Worship
7	Nature, Ecology, Environment	Commitment	Ecology Club, Environment Advocacy, Camping
8	Living a Quality Life	Quality	Personal Optimism, Idealism, Caring
9	Animal Welfare	Commitment	Animal Medicine, Volunteer at Animal Shelter
10	Leading	Commitment	Student Government, Conflict Resolution

The SPARK column from Search Institute studies

When adolescents participate in school-based extracurricular activities they do so in a context that allows them to get to know adults outside the classroom (Darling, 2003), creating opportunities for bonding to school-related adults and increasing their commitment to school and the adult-oriented value associated with schools (Hirischi, 1969). This exposure can contribute to reducing students' feelings of anxiety (Newmann, 1998).

Adult presence in students' lives links to academic and life success (Scales, 2005), another reason extracurricular participation is important for children. The feelings of belonging and being cared for have been linked to decreases in at-risk behavior along with higher levels of emotional well-being (Brooks, 2006/Darling, 2003). The mobile lifestyle means that many Military students may lack the time needed to develop bonds with adults in school, but opportunities can present themselves in unexpected places and make a school transition easier for students. A shared interest in baseball helped a student feel comfortable from the moment he walked into his receiving school:

"My principal was real cool. When I first walked in, I was wearing my St. Louis Cardinal stuff and he's a Boston Red Sox fan. I could already tell we were going to be friends and that made me comfortable because we were talking about baseball. So it helps when the adults have some sorts of interest that make sense to you."

Student

Activities are not, therefore, frills, distractions, or time-wasters. Rather, they emphasize responsibility, teamwork, and achievement, three strengths that successful Military Families value and practice.

Military-connected parents and their students need information to make decisions as to which teams, clubs, and organizations are the best choices, no matter their time of entry into a receiving school. Some schools hold orientation sessions for Families, typically at the beginning of the school year, and publish pertinent information online and in booklets which are available throughout the year. Additional information may be found through word of mouth from Families with children currently or previously enrolled in these schools.

However, it is not always easy for Military-connected students to become involved in certain extracurricular activities when they transfer to a new school. Transferring schools in the summer might mean that the

The data about extracurricular activities from the EMC-21 Study found:

- Eligibility for students to participate in extracurricular activities may be governed by state associations which set rules and procedures. These rules may limit the flexibility of the local district to work with a mobile student when he enrolls in school.

- Most schools are aware that extracurricular activities are important to children and work hard to provide the mobile student with opportunity to participate and exercise flexibility in reserving slots and using waivers in competitive activities for mobile students, for example, on athletics teams, cheerleading squads, or performance teams.

- Students may transfer from their sending school into some national-based activities at their receiving school. National Honor Society is an example of this type of activity.

- Some activities such as band or choir focus on a skill or talent and present students with a broad and instant group of friends with similar interests. Students and parents are aware of this and speak about its importance.

- Parents and students look to extracurricular activities as a means to obtain scholarships, whether directly as a result of participation in an activity or indirectly to show that the student is "well-rounded."

- Extracurricular activities build character, connect students socially with peers, and provide the opportunity for relationships with adults.

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cheerleading and football teams have already been chosen and the mandatory camps already been attended, or the student council officers have already been elected and are in the process of planning their year's activities. Other activities such as Robotics or Drama Club will likely be open for student participation.

The EMC-21 Study considered the different activities and opportunities in which Military-connected students could participate and how these were affected by mobility. The research team conducted nine hundred interviews which showed wide variation in the experiences of the students and parents and the ways schools handled opportunities.

Eligibility

The research team found that eligibility requirements for formal/organized state-sanctioned extracurricular activities differ from state to state. Often activities are governed by a state level body that governs interscholastic events. In Kansas, it is the Kansas State High School Activities Association; in Georgia, it is the Georgia High School Association; in Oklahoma, it is the Oklahoma Secondary School Activity Association. Schools must operate within the rules established by their state's organization to determine eligibility for athletics, performance, and academic competitions.

Most of the 175 administrators and 162 teachers who were interviewed for the EMC-21 Study were aware that state level rules governed some school activities and that students were required to meet standards set by the state in order to participate in those activities. Athletic activities such as football and basketball were most often mentioned by educators. Few parents seemed aware of state regulations.

Some administrators spoke about specific rules that students had to meet in order to participate in extracurricular events.

> **"Students have to attend so many practices before they can play in games, and sometimes if they come in too late in the season, they wouldn't be able to meet that number of practices before they could play."**
>
> Administrator

> "If the vocal or band group goes to a contest, that's controlled by State of Kansas High School Activities Association, so they have to come in passing five core subjects from their previous semester… and have a physical on file to be eligible to participate."
>
> Administrator

Once the local school determines that the student meets state eligibility requirements, the majority of school personnel are extremely supportive of Military-connected students participating in extracurricular activities. A Louisiana school administrator spoke about his district amending a local requirement that a child attend local schools at least a calendar year prior to running for an office or for homecoming court. The district has amended that particular requirement so that "any child who is Louisiana High School Athletics Association eligible can run for office or do whatever." A Georgia administrator reports, "If they come to us and they are eligible based on their academics, if they want to play sports, then we'll connect them with the athletics department and let them play sports. They are able to do everything that any other kid is able to do here."

Most states have a process for schools to apply for a waiver for mobile students to participate and schools must be aware of that process. As a Texas school administrator reports, "We get those waivers taken care of so they can participate." A Kansas educator states that the athletics department gets written permission (waivers) for mobile students to be in sports. And allowing a student to participate as a team member can keep the team's numbers up. An administrator at a Kansas high school with a high Military-connected student turnover noted, "A lot of our new kids actually take the place of other kids that may have moved on."

Students who intend to participate in college athletics need to be aware of college athletic association eligibility requirements. Different colleges belong to different associations, each with their own requirements. The two main associations are the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) and the NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics). These associations set grade point averages and testing standards for incoming freshman for collegiate athletics eligibility and for continuing eligibility during their college years. The student will need to maintain a portfolio of grades and the way grade points are awarded, and work closely with coaches and counselors, especially if she has transcripts from more than one high school. Grade point averages can be affected by weighted grades, sometimes known as quality points, and state testing from one state may qualify a student for eligibility even as he graduates from another state.

Flexibility

Military-connected children do not have control over when they move, and flexibility on the part of schools can be important when a new student arrives and wants to join clubs or athletics that have tryout periods. Incoming athletes arriving with a history of playing on junior varsity and varsity teams might be permitted to present a letter of introduction from their previous coaches and try out for the team. If the team is already in a mid-season schedule, entering athletes may also have the option of working out and trying out for a sport not yet in season. Flexibility is necessary on the parts of both the incoming Families and the schools receiving them. The following quotes show flexibility on the part of both the school and the student in the interest of being involved in extracurricular activities:

"If the season is passed we still try to get that kid connected to a different sport: 'Hey have you ever tried tennis? What about soccer? Maybe something else?' Again our philosophy is: if a kid is involved in school they are going to be more successful and have more buy-in."

Educator

"We have a pretty decent policy parish-wide if they're Military. If they're Military...they're not bound by those same district guidelines as if the move from school to school within the district. They come in. They can try out. They can play. They can do all of that good stuff."

Administrator

In contrast to those who are more flexible, and increase opportunities for Military students who come to their schools, there were a few cases of districts that strictly adhered to their policies. As the following educator reports,

"One thing that they have in this district is that you must try out in the spring. And if you don't try out in the spring you can't be on the squad for that year. And I know that there have been a lot of Military children that have come in that have wanted to cheer and they can't because they missed try outs because they transferred into the district maybe in October. Then they have to wait all the way until April to be able to try out for the next year."

This perspective, however, is not reported by most of the districts interviewed. Most districts are not only flexible, but are proactive in getting mobile students into extracurricular activities. These quotes illustrate the flexibility most school districts exhibit when students transition into their schools:

"...you can come in the middle of the year, after she [the coach] has already chosen the step team, and Miss __ will let you try out. There is just a note that I place in their box...So you'll get an individual tryout in front of the cheer coach and somebody else, and decide whether you get to be a cheerleader, or they'll decide whether you get to play on the basketball team or the football team, even though the season has already started. Most of the time, that means no more tryouts, but when we have students transition in, we do."

Administrator

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"We keep things flexible so that, when students come in, they can join in...You don't miss opportunities because you transfer in at an odd time. We just don't do that. We don't put up artificial barriers that would hinder a Military child from participating. And when those kinds of situations come up, we handle them on a case-by-case basis and work through the barriers rather than just saying, 'Well, it's a matter of policy.' Well, I mean day one, if they come in and say, 'I was playing basketball,' we introduce them to the coach and we get them involved. So the only problem we would have is if the...seventh and eighth grade basketball team...has already been chosen. So they missed that opportunity, _but there's a developmental team where anybody can participate_. And they have games and uniforms and things like that."

"Anything that we have available to our students is available to all students, so there are no restrictions for anyone who just recently came in. In elementary school, your extracurricular activities are pretty limited to choir, some after-school choirs, student council; different things that just pop up through the year, you know, a play here and there. And all students have access. We don't consider how long they have been here or not been here."

<div align="right">Administrator</div>

This school administrator uses explicit communication to ensure that students attending school on the installation have opportunity to try out for competitive positions in extracurricular activities:

"I have forms that the students fill out if they are interested in sports or are interesting in cheerleading or interested in the step team, and they fill that out and I give that to the coaches, so they can contact them. Often times our cheerleading is already picked in April and May for the next year, I notify the three post schools of the dates and give them the applications, so those students on post have an opportunity to try out as well."

> **An NHS [or NJHS] member who transfers to another school and brings a letter from the principal or chapter adviser to the new school adviser shall be accepted automatically as a member in the receiving school's chapter.**

Some activities, National Honor Society, the National Junior Honor Society, and the National Technical Honor Society, for example, are national in scope and have some built-in flexibility; students may be able to transfer into them without having to prove themselves again in a new setting. The NHS and NJHS Constitutions state, "An NHS [or NJHS] member who transfers to another school and brings a letter from the principal or chapter adviser to the new school adviser shall be accepted automatically as a member in the receiving school's chapter. Transfer members must meet the new chapter's standards within one semester in order to retain membership."

This is important for students who are involved in the National Honor Society who arrive at a new school. It can provide them with a faculty contact and an instant peer group, helping make the move less stressful.

Additional flexibility from the Honor Societies comes in an amendment to their constitution, stating "Some candidates may be ineligible for induction because of the semester ruling. Many students, _including students of Military parents_, are required to move with parents or guardians that have transferred in their work. The present school principal should seek a recommendation from the previous school principal or chapter adviser pursuant to the candidate's selection. On the basis of the recommendation of the previous principal or chapter adviser, the Faculty Council may waive the semester regulation."

Entrée through Interests, Talents and Skills

Some activities make it easy for students to meet others with similar interests. Many students are involved in band and choir performance activities and every school offers these as classes and as extracurricular activities. Career and technical organizations such as Health Occupation Students of America is an example of another organization that offers activities of interest to large numbers of students.

Portability of skills and talents is key. Students bring their abilities to a school which in turn has an organization ready-made with students of like interests. One student tells of her first day in the receiving school: "The exact day we got here, later that day I went to my soccer tryouts for my new team that I was going to join. A couple of girls…were very welcoming, reassuring. They told me, 'You're going to love it, and we'll help you, whatever you need.'"

Many schools sponsor activities such as Odyssey of the Mind, Math Counts, and Academic Decathlon team competitions that allow students to increase their knowledge base and team-building skills as they practice and compete with other schools. One administrator notes:

 "For your more academically inclined students, we have Academic Decathlon, the Science Olympiad, and I think the Academic Decathlon specifically has to have an A, B, and C student on roster. So it kind of gives a wide range of students the ability or the chance to participate in something they probably would not necessarily get the chance to participate in otherwise."

Students recognize the power of having an interest and the benefits it reaps in a move. As two band students revealed: "A big connection for me was the band. Wherever you go, you always connect with the band if you play a musical instrument. Because it's like a "transportive" Family, almost, because all band geeks tend to get along. It's something that's a way of life."

College, Opportunities Affected by Participation

College applications frequently include requests for information about outside-the-classroom activities, looking for well-rounded students. As one administrator described a well-rounded student, "Their plates are full…the resume, the application, community service, extracurricular activities, National Honor Society, Academic Decathlon, UIL, Band, Swimming…There's just so many things our students are doing to remain competitive."

The mobile Military child can be at a disadvantage compared to the above description. Parents looking to the future see that mobility can take its toll on their child's application, as this parent notes:

"Things that they were doing in Texas are not available here and so we get to change instruments. Tennis is a huge year-round activity down in El Paso; of course, it is not big here. We've had learn-to-ski, and Boy Scouting is big here. We find they are always beginners in their activities and that concerns me now that my son is moving to high school, to have some real skills outside his academic work that he can put on his college application."

Students themselves are attuned to mobility's affect on scholarship aspirations, as these students relate:

"I used to be on the gymnastics team at my old high school, and I did it for like five years and then I came here [where the school doesn't offer gymnastics] so I've been out of practice for two years…I've probably lost all of my skill. I was hoping to possibly to get a scholarship in it or something."

"I want to go to Oklahoma State…and if they had wrestling here that could be one more advantage to getting a scholarship."

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Sometimes, though, mobility can create unexpected opportunities, as one parent reported: "He [my son] ended up getting a decathlon scholarship at this school, whereas back home that would not have been available."

The key for Military-connected students to receive scholarships is to apply. Working with the school's administrators, counselors, and faculty can help yield results. Each campus has one or more individuals who can assist students with their applications. At one campus it may be a teacher – the AVID teacher, for example – while at another it may be the student's counselor or a designated counselor. One administrator notes: "I'm the scholarship chairman. I go through and look at the requirements for every Military scholarship and I find all of my kids that meet that criteria and I call them in and hand them scholarship applications. We don't exclude Military kids from anything."

Awareness of the Importance/Appreciation of Extracurricular Activities

Most of the individuals the research team interviewed for the EMC-21 study were aware that students benefit from supporting and caring relationships with adults (Brooks, 2006) although they may not have been aware of key research that supports this knowledge.

Some schools are finely attuned to the needs of mobile children. One administrator who has worked extensively with Military-connected children notes:

"Military kids seem to realize that there is a time frame that they're working with and they have to get involved in things when they think about it."

One school is fortunate to have a designated staff member whose role and position is to follow up on Military-connected students when they enter the school; most school depend on staff members whose primary job is to enroll and follow up with students as opportunity permits. This position is formally part of the school structure. According to an administrator at that school: "We've just instituted what we call the "integrationist" which is through a Department of Defense Educational Activity grant. That person is a bridge between what the counselors do to get the student adjusted, and then, from day one, we get the kid adjusted. And then from day three to maybe week three or four, to follow up with that student and that Family to make sure: that the kid is in the right class; that they are connecting with teachers; that, if they are a basketball player, they have connected with the basketball coach; if they like chess, they've connected with the chess club sponsor. Because the counselors are continually enrolling new people, they don't have the ability to track those kids for weeks on end, but this person is that bridge to extend what we are doing to make sure kids are comfortable."

Parents speak about the role extracurricular activities play in their children's lives, particularly as they relate to their

"I would have to say it was a really good adjustment, both of my kids were always into sports and kind of outgoing and... it was an easy transition because they always kind of fit in with a group like a soccer group. We were really lucky."

Parent

"There are a lot of activities. I'm in Skills USA program and it's the first time I actually joined in a club at school. It's really fun. We do a lot of activities and it helps you meet more people in your school."

Student

"I've been coming here since the summer before in band camp so, I felt comfortable...You are with them all the time so it is easy to make friends."

Student

huge sacrifices, as did this Family: "Having a high schooler who's into cheerleading and things like that, it was a major thing about whether she left mid-tour. That's when my husband went ahead and took another deployment so that she could stay because she's a cheerleader. If she left she would have already missed tryouts at the other school. These kids are penalized when they hit middle school and high school and come into a sports setting. Or vocal choir, you know, advanced choir, and things like that. They have these tryouts that begin at the end of the school year and it's not fair to the kids that come in. And a lot of Military transfer in the middle of summer."

Many more Families make the move and find their children's out-of-classroom activities help smooth the way to a good transition, ultimately learning the ropes of a new school through their activities. These students have someone with whom to talk to and share lunch. Parents and students report:

"I think it's good at school. He has friends. He started playing football right away, made friends there. Not necessarily friends that he brought home; he met those in the neighborhood. But he got along fine... He doesn't do a lot of activities here at school. He does a lot, he mountain bikes, but he does meet with kids that are from school to mountain bike. Golf, but he does golf with kids from school."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

"Well, I also started making friends because I got involved in a lot of the clubs and sports."

<div align="right">Student</div>

"Get involved with activities and clubs because you make so many friends that way. Probably the majority of my friends were made through Lacrosse."

<div align="right">Student</div>

Continuing Student Involvement in Activities

Local issues may limit opportunities for incoming students to participate in extracurricular activities. Funding, for example, may make a difference to a sports team's ability to include newly arrived members. The educator in this interview showed that the school had the capacity to support additional basketball teams when more students arrive with that particular interest. This is an exceptional instance because of the associated cost of facilities and time.

"Even athletically, we are one of the few schools in _____ that offer four basketball teams for boys. We have a freshman, sophomore, a JV, and a varsity. There are an extra twelve or fifteen kids getting to compete right now because we are in the position to provide them coaching, gym time, and officials, everything, uniforms. I mean the team we played yesterday showed up in practice uniforms. That's what they have to play in. I mean we just have more opportunity for kids. We are very fortunate financially."

<div align="right">Teacher</div>

Sometimes the receiving school may have more activities than the prior, smaller one and incoming students may be motivated to investigate more venues for their interests and talents. These Family members found themselves in an enviable position after a move, as one student explains: "I think that there are more activities available here than at my last school, so it was pretty easy to get involved. And that's really how I met a good chunk of people. And a lot of the same things I did in _____, I was able to do here."

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"…some of the activities that they offer, soccer and baseball…and some of the fundraising, like the cancer walks and the things like that…my kids thought this was totally amazing, because we didn't have that when we were in ____."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

Some Families made the opportunity for students to continue a skill through private instruction and others showed flexibility in filling the gap when the receiving school did not have a sport in which the student had

> "I was in guitar in Germany, and they don't have that over here. . . . It was just introduced at my old school, so I wouldn't have expected it to be over here."
>
> Student
>
> "I play lacrosse, but our school doesn't have it. I would love for this school to have it, instead of having to drive half an hour… to practices."
>
> Student

an interest. Again, flexibility allowed these students to continue in an endeavor of interest.

Mobility, the timing of transitions, and availability of activities may not be the only barriers to participation. Family resources may also affect a student's ability to participate. Transportation to and from extracurricular activities can be a problem, and sometimes it takes extra effort on the Family's part to enable their child to participate. One student says: "I always wanted to get into sports, but with my mom's job, she works so late I can't do school sports. She was glad when I was, like, 'Next year, I'm going to join football.' And she was, "I'll be happy to drive you to games if they are on weekends.' And I'm like, 'There are some games on weekends, some where there's no school, some during the school day, and after school, late at night.' It's going be hard if I do join, because I have to walk from the center here. "

On-Post and Civilian Community Activities

Communities (both on and off post) offer myriad opportunities to Military students through Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS), Scouting, and other organizations. Offerings include team activities, crafts, volunteering, tutoring, camping, field trips, and music, art, and dancing lessons. Parents were positive about community activities open to the young student at a new assignment:

"They offer so much more here … I don't know if you guys are aware of that. There are clubs and sports teams, and my son just got his scuba certification. He's eleven. That's a huge accomplishment for an eleven-year-old. And that's through Morale Welfare and Recreation, through the Edge program."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

"Activities here were easy to find. You go to the FMWRC site, or you go to __ and everything's there. So you just sign up for it. And the girls have always been in involved in activities, so I've kept them in. You know, when we got there that summer, I started putting them in activities, and then we all started making friends."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS) is another source of recreational activities for transitioning Military children, even when they arrive very late in the receiving school's year, and may be another source of support for children—and the whole Family—when a parent is deployed. The parents quoted in the following noted the value of CYSS.

"Right off the bat, I was already familiar with the CYSS . . . So that's the first place that I went to. They had a lot of things for the kids to do, activities to get into the community. So that was the first stop to getting her enrolled in CYSS and all the activities there. As far as the teachers, I really didn't meet too many of the teachers, because it was the last two weeks of school. It was kind of a rush trying to get things done, so, as far as the school and me being able to connect, that wasn't feasible. So I used more of the Child Youth & Student Services to be able to connect through the community."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

"During the last deployment, they did let any child—and I think they are doing that now, too—get free sports. They waived the fees through CYSS for any sport that a child [with a deployed parent] signed up for, which was great…It gets you out of the house."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

Volunteering, playing on youth sports teams, interest-based classes, and other community-based activities along with afterschool activities such as choir, chess club, and academic competitions give younger children an opportunity to "try out" many interests to see if they are a fit.

Scouting may be of particular importance, as it is an activity without borders. As of 2011, there are nearly three million scouts active in Boy Scouts of America and approximately 3.3 million Girl Scouts of the USA. Scouting is truly a worldwide activity; many overseas installations have scout troops, and Families assigned away from U.S. Military installations may be able to find a troop in their local community. It is likely a child can find a troop in the new location and continue scouting.

Then and Now:
The Secondary Education Transition Study (2001) and Education of the Military Child in the 21st Century (2011)

One parent in the Secondary Transition Education Study (SETS) of 2001 spoke about Military-connected students being "behind the power curve. Every time they move they have to start all over again," touching upon her concern for the impact this had on things like college applications. A decade ago there was concern about students moving during the school year and the barriers to inclusion in extracurricular activities they faced.

There are still barriers to the mobile student participating in extracurricular activities. As one teacher notes: "Of course, there are those organizations, like cheerleading and POM, and those tryouts happen often before they get here, and we're not able to get them on the team."

One parent voiced amazement at the lack of sensitivity to her child's situation at one post:

"We got there a little bit early so he could try out for the soccer team. He had played JV as a freshman. He had gone through the whole week of tryouts. And then, on the last day, he got cut. The coach – you know, we were just kind of amazed – told us, 'Your son's only here for a year, and we're building a team. You need to understand that, even if he did make the team, he'd sit on the bench.' That's really hard on a kid, because in high school and moving, sports are where you find your friends, that's who you eat lunch with. To have that taken away because you're a Military kid – that was tough."

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However, most interviews from the school systems that participated in the research project show administrators and educators to be sensitive to mobile students' access to extracurricular activities. Most speak of the need to be flexible when dealing with students entering outside tryout windows. In many school systems, district administration has introduced rules specifically addressing Military students' access to extracurricular activities. Many of these rules center around athletics and performance activities such as band, choir, and dance: activities which are most difficult for mobile students to break into when they arrive outside the tryout window. At a national level, organizations such as the National Honor Society and the Junior National Honor Society have included explicit language about mobility and the Military in their constitutions to enable students to continue participation when they move.

Breakthroughs in, and access to, communication technology have helped parents and students learn what is available at the receiving school and what is required for participation in various activities. Families in the process of moving can use the internet to help them prepare for the new school. At the very least, they can find names of school personnel from whom they can request additional information.

Recommendations

Parents and Students:

- Contact the installation School Liaison Officer for information about school calendars, try-out windows, and eligibility requirements for extracurricular activities.
- Write, phone, or email the new school to find out what activities are available. Find out if they have eligibility requirements, tryout windows, and/or practices or trainings to attend in order to participate. Find out also if there is a waiver process for students who arrive outside any tryout windows.
- Include extracurricular activities on a moving checklist.
- Make a copy of eligibility requirements for former activities.
- Prepare for a move by compiling a portfolio that includes grades, activities, and leadership positions held.
- Ask coaches for notes of recommendation to take to coaches at the receiving school.
- Contact friends at the new school to find out their experiences getting involved in extracurricular activities.
- Follow up on the research done prior to the move with a trip to the staff member in charge of the activity. Take a portfolio to the discussion to "sell yourself."Be sure to make an appointment first to ensure the staff member is available.

Schools:

- Since extracurricular activities benefit students in so many ways, the person who is the student's first point of contact at the receiving school needs to have information about extracurricular activities.
- Use professional development activities to train administrators and educators in underlying reasons why extracurricular activities are important to mobile children.
- Educate coaches and group sponsors on the influence that the extracurricular activities have on the students' lives. Activities are not solely about wins and losses. They provide students with lessons that will last them a lifetime.
- Post information about tryout windows and seasons on the school's website; include names of coaches and club sponsors; list and update fees involved in each activity.
- Publish hard copy brochures for sports and have them available for incoming Families to pick up.

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- Be knowledgeable, proactive, and flexible regarding the needs of the mobile student. For example, a student who had participated in dance team for years in her former school arrives after spring tryouts at this school. Be aware of waivers to use when available.

Installations:

- Include current, accurate school district information about extracurricular events on the installation website.
- Widely publicize CYSS activities for youth, providing a point of contact for parents new to the installation.
- Review state policy on extracurricular activities and work with the local district to encourage equity in allowing Military-connected students opportunity to participate.

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"The hardest thing, if you ask me, is getting back into the program when you move. When you get here you get your basic education and it will take another month or so for your papers to get here, to qualify for gifted classes. All the schools I've been to have qualified me after they got my records, but I would be away from gifted for a few months and I would have to catch up. It's like a moving train and you have to jump on."

Student

Gifted and Talented Program Options

According to the U.S. Department of Education, gifted and talented students may be defined as "children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment." According to the National Society for the Gifted and Talented, there is no single characteristic that defines a gifted student and may show several of the following: she may be a perfectionist, show heightened sensitivity to others' expectations, be far ahead of their peers academically, be a problem solver, and be able to formulate abstract ideas well before their peers are able to do so. Giftedness is not confined to intelligence and a gifted student may display unusual talent in one or more of the following areas:

- General Intellectual Ability
- Specific Academic Ability
- Creative Thinking

- Leadership
- Visual/Performing Arts
- Psychomotor

Alaska, Hawaii, Kansas and Virginia, for example, permit identification in Kindergarten while in Alabama and Georgia students are not identified until grade three. Kansas, Florida, and Louisiana require Individual Education Plans while Georgia, New York, and Texas do not. California, Hawaii, Kansas, and North Carolina identify students by level of giftedness. Arizona, Maryland, and Texas permit acceleration for gifted students (Hoagie, 2010). While this list is not exhaustive and does not include information about all options available or all states, it does point to caution for an upcoming move: each move brings with it new challenges for students receiving gifted education services.

...all program and service decisions for gifted children are made at the state and local levels, with each state having its own criteria for identifying students as academically gifted, their own standards for serving gifted children, and their own formulae and procedures for funding their programs.

Programs vary for gifted classes from school system to school system. One reason for the differences can be whether the program is mandated for the funding that is available. According to the National Association for Gifted Children, all program and service decisions for gifted children are made at the state and local levels, with each state having its own criteria for identifying students as academically gifted, their own standards for serving gifted children, and their own formulae and procedures for funding their programs. The following graphic shows state mandated programs and state funding available to support those programs.

	State Mandated	Funding Available
▮	yes	fully
▮	yes	partially
▮	yes	no
▮	no	available
▮	no	no

http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/StatePolicy.aspx
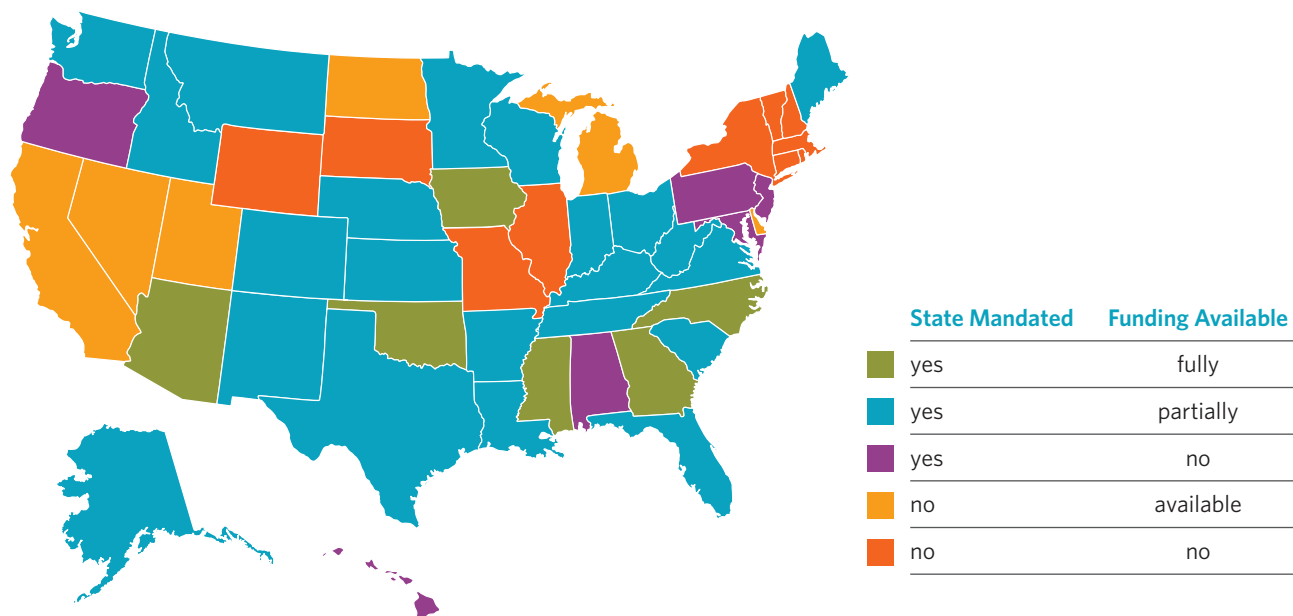
Because of budget restrictions, if a school system is small and has few students identified in the program, it may not be able to afford a separate class or teacher for the students that have been identified. The regular classroom teacher must be trained in the gifted and talented techniques and differentiate the curriculum for the students. Larger school systems usually are able to have teachers dedicated to teach whole classes of identified gifted students using a curriculum designed to meet their needs. The smaller school may have only one subject area for their gifted students to participate in, or it may provide a program where math, language arts, and other subjects are taught at a higher level.

The amount of time students spend in the program can vary. Some schools may have a pullout program that is one hour a day at the elementary level or it may be a one day per week pullout program in which identified gifted students leave their regular class and go to a separate class in the same building or to another campus. A different program may have a teacher implement fast-paced, higher level curriculum to an entire class of gifted students all day long every day. At the high school level, classes that are designated Honors or Advanced Placement usually contain students that are identified as gifted and talented. It was interesting that many of the interviewees stated that students in the Honors or Advanced Placement classes were not always identified as gifted. If the student felt he could do the work, he was allowed to be in the class.

Gifted and Talented Identification Varies from School to School

There is no standard state policy where gifted education is concerned. States may or may not mandate gifted programming; they may or may not elect to fund the program; each state sets its own policy for qualification for inclusion into its gifted program and each school system within the state may vary their identification process. For example, one school system might identify students for a Language Arts Program while another may offer a Mathematics Program. The areas of identification (general intellectual ability, creativity, or subject area like math or language arts) for the program in a school system vary along with the identification criteria like I.Q. or grades. The fact that there is no consistency of any kind with identification causes issues for ALL students. Since Military-connected students have more school transitions than their non-Military-connected counterparts, the problems that arise for students are amplified. The following parent speaks for many when she asks for:

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"Anything that can help children move from one state to another. They have not asked to move; they have not asked to leave that old school, but to let them transition into these special programs, gifted programs, special needs programs, anything like that would allow that continuity would be huge between the states. Some sort of agreement that would allow, "Yes, we see that you tested in N.C. Yes, we see that you were in that program." Anything that would let them get started, even if you have to do that state's paperwork to allow that child to continue, that would really be helpful."

Parent

The major issue that parents in the EMC-21 Study shared in the interviews was the lack of standardization of processes and procedures when a gifted child enrolls in school. Some addressed retesting to qualify for services. Some reported retesting every time they moved while others spoke about the receiving school accepting the prior school's acceptance of the student as gifted. The timeline for testing also varies from school to school. Some schools only test students at certain times of the year while other schools are able to test a student in a timely manner as soon as the student arrives. Sometimes the student will be allowed into the gifted program while waiting for the tests results, while other schools may not finish the processing of the paperwork until the end of the school year.

"It was hard. When we moved here I think he was in third grade. And I let the school know that he was identified as a gifted child. The school had him to do, I think, two quarters..., get the transcripts, get re-tested. He had to go through the process all over again, as if it was a fluke that he got identified. So then his third grade year he did not get to participate...Yeah, he missed a whole year of gifted."

Parent

In some states, including several states that have a large number of Military-connected students such as Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma (Hoagie, 2010), gifted education is part of the special education department and requires evaluation to qualify students and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to receive services. A student who enrolls in school in one of those states must be tested for special education services. The IEP that must be written to outline services he will receive is a time-consuming process which may cost the student time in classes designed to meet his needs.

Parents advocate for their children to continue in gifted programs as they move from place to place, but they face challenges when their adversary is policy and procedure, as is voiced by the following administrator:

"The Department of Defense has a different process to identify a student as gifted than the State of Georgia. So, that's kind of difficult because we don't let you directly come into our program. We make you go through our procedure."

Administrator

Parents spoke about the need to advocate for their child as well as the need to search out information before moving to the new community and talking to district personnel who could answer questions about the gifted program. They hand carried records, including portfolios of work accomplished in gifted classes, from previous schools to the receiving school. Testing to qualify for a state's gifted education program was a recurrent theme with parents.

The Program Experience

Enrichment is defined for the Education of the Military Child – 21st Century Study as enhancement beyond the regular, standardized, core curriculum in the areas of language arts, science, math, and social studies. This broad definition allowed participants to talk about what they interpreted as enrichment classes when responding to questions in an interview.

While most high school students who were interviewed said that mobility did not affect their participation in a gifted program, several students in elementary and middle schools did report barriers to participation. These barriers included qualifying to participate in a district's gifted program after a move. High school students were served through a variety of options – Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), dual credit and Honors classes – that did not require inclusion in a gifted program.

Options for students in elementary and middle school were fewer. Elementary students were dependent on programs such as pull-out classes and group cluster classes that depended on the student being identified as gifted. Middle school tends to lean more to the high school model, with Pre-AP and Honors core classes offered to students based on their identification as gifted. While not intended to be a gifted curriculum, the Advancement Via Individual Determination, or AVID, coursework provides skills that prepare students for advanced courses. The classes are praised by all stakeholders, as can be seen by these administrator and student comments:

"We have the AVID program which is excellent. What you do in the AVID program is you allow students to build up their skills, so they can better handle the more difficult courses. They initially start out taking a few of the Pre-AP classes along with their regular classes and slowly as they build up because in AVID they learn how to study, take notes, and keep journals. They build up their self esteem. All of it works toward preparing them for college."

Administrator

"AVID is one of those classes that everybody gets something out of."

Student

The overwhelming majority of students who participated in gifted or enrichment programs reported enjoyment in a gifted education program, even though being in an advanced program was challenging. The challenge was a big part of what they enjoyed along with the love of learning. Students were proud of the experience they are getting while in high school and the preparation they felt they were getting to succeed in college. A few students talked about the amount of work required in the gifted program or having to be organized and others talked about parent expectations being high and the need to focus on the work because of the high expectations. One student summed up his experience:

"The most enjoyable part was being with other students who actually enjoy being in school; enjoy doing their work and like to learn. Being with a group of other guys who actually care about school work is really great. We do more difficult work and it's actually a challenge. Some of my less difficult courses actually get boring because they're easy, so it [being in the gifted program] keeps me challenged and interested."

Student

When students who were interviewed spoke about concerns, they spoke more about parent deployment and transitioning to another state or school than anything else, as did the student below:

"It requires a lot more work, so say, for instance a parent is deployed, you obviously have a lot on your mind and you are distracted."

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"The teachers really challenge the children. I know there are responsibilities on the parents to push them as well and to challenge them, but I have to say I'm really impressed with the AP teachers here as well as the TAG teachers."

Parent

Parents who were interviewed most often expressed satisfaction that their child was in an enrichment program.

They spoke of their child enjoying the challenge of the gifted classes and the stimulating environment. Parents related that overall their children are excited to go to enrichment classes and like being with students who are their academic peers. They like being pushed to work at a higher level and accomplish more. The parents talked about the challenges their children are being exposed to and the pride they felt in their academics. They also talked about the benefits of the advanced courses they were taking and the life skills they are learning by taking higher level classes. They feel their children build confidence in themselves. They felt that all of the activities and practices in the gifted program equipped their child for the future.

Research about mobile students' education

Research about educational experiences, including the experiences of gifted education of Military-connected children is scarce. Most research focuses on the issue of deployment of the parent(s) and the effects on the Family and little on the student achievement of the child. In the Education of the Military Child in the 21st Century (EMC-21) Study, the Military Child Education Coalition examined the effect of mobility on students receiving services in a gifted education program. Interviews with 120 parents of gifted students, 143 gifted students, 84 educators, and 175 school administrators revealed what they identified as programs and initiatives that are working to ease the transition for Military Families and to hear what the interviewees felt needed to be improved in order to have a smooth transition with their move.

Children in Military Families rarely live in one location all their life. They experience periodic transitions to different states and even different countries each time their parent receives orders moving him to a new posting. One of the challenges parents and students experience may be the lack of continuity in the gifted program as they move from state to state. Many parents who were interviewed voiced their concerns about inconsistencies their children faced when moving from one school to another.

The data about gifted and enrichment programs from the EMC-21 Study found:

- Mobility still can present barriers to access to a gifted and talented or enriched program. Retesting frequently occurs, but it is not automatically indicated when a student enrolls in his receiving school. Some parents speak about the school requiring retesting while others report that that the receiving school accepts their student's records identifying him as gifted. As more school personnel become knowledgeable of the terms of the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), students will be accepted into gifted programs based on their prior acceptance. They may still be required to test and fit the state's criteria, but they will be offered services pending results of that testing.
- Several states, including states that are heavily impacted by Military presence such as Alabama, Georgia, Kansas, and Louisiana, classify gifted students as needing special services so that they may reach their potential, just as students with handicapping conditions such as learning disabilities. Because they are so classified, they are required to have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). In those states the student will be tested unless he arrives at the school with an IEP. Having to qualify for an IEP can delay the student being enrolled in classes designed to help her reach her potential.

- When students reach the secondary level identification into the gifted program becomes less of an issue because of the variety of coursework available to them. AP classes can be used to meet their academic need for advanced coursework, and those classes do not require the student to meet gifted criteria. They are able to be their own advocate for their education. They recognize their own abilities and begin forming a plan for what they want in school. They work with their parents and counselors to decide on classes that meet their needs.
- Moving, especially during the school year, is a concern for many students. While any move may mean that hoped-for advanced courses may not be available to them, mid-year moves may mean that advanced courses are available but they are not allowed to enroll in them because of size limits or district testing policy.
- With state focus on high stakes testing, gifted students are well aware of the need for review if they have moved mid-year, and they appreciate teachers reviewing objectives taught earlier in the school year.
- Technology is being used to help students earn credit toward high school graduation or to earn credit during high school for college credit. Approximately 12 percent of students have taken an online course, and many students expressed interest in taking a course online in the future.

The bottom line is, mobility can still present barriers to access a program that is sought out by students and parents alike.

Academic Programs and Coursework

"If it's not offered at that school, then you spent half a year or however long you were at the old school trying to get ahead and do the advanced level classes and then it's almost pointless when you get to the new school and they don't offer it."

Student

Elementary and middle school students' options for services are limited compared to those that are available to secondary school students. Two programs are common at the elementary level: the pull-out and the full-time cluster programs. Middle schools may cluster gifted students or may offer coursework such as pre-AP courses. Secondary students are more often served through enriched, compacted, or accelerated classes such as honors classes, those offered through the College Board Advanced Placement program or through programs such as International Baccalaureate.

At the elementary and middle school levels, while the overwhelming majority had no problems getting into courses, they did encounter problems transitioning to a new school when they did not move into the school at the beginning of the school year. Students remarked that the timing of their move kept them out of the gifted program. Other students mentioned that they missed out on clubs or activities because of the timing of their move.

Most high school students had no problem getting into advanced courses when they moved to another school, an indicator in the work and coordination of courses by the counselors and administrators in the schools. While about 60 percent said they had no problem getting the courses wanted when they transitioned to their next school, others indicated a need for consistency as they moved from school to school.

"They don't have Honor Classes here. When I checked for Honors Physical Science, they didn't have that. I didn't want AP U.S. History, I wanted Honors U.S. History. I thought they were the same at first, but they are two different things. I was very upset."

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One problem that mobile students often face is loss of credits or classes that will not transfer, a problem for all mobile students, but more acute for students in academically enriched classes who can find that the classes in which they were enrolled are not available at their new school. There were three primary reasons mentioned by students as causing loss of credit: classes not being accepted at the receiving school because it did not match state or local course descriptions; moving from a block to traditional schedule or vice versa; and course requirements which create a gap in coursework needed for graduation. As one student noted,

"The curriculum is different; they're not all the same. Well, I'm in the higher classes so they're really not that big of a difference, but the requirements that the school has for graduation are different. And you just kind of have to suck it up and move on."

Student

While not a problem particular to gifted students, the lack of upper level courses often affects them, causing problems with receiving enhanced diplomas which, in turn, can affect their postsecondary plans. Colleges look for academic achievement, and one indicator is the type of diploma awarded. In a state that awards different diplomas for different achievement, coursework that transfers in is critical. Coursework combined with grade point average are critical to acceptance into a competitive college.

How grade points are awarded is another concern. Upper level classes may be designated Honors or AP, and weighting these courses – awarding more grade points than would be awarded for a regular level course – can help ensure that students are not penalized for taking harder courses. For example, an Honors course, being more rigorous than the regular curriculum, may receive weighted credit. There are many ways that grades may be weighted, but one model could look like this:

EXAMPLE OF WEIGHTED GRADE SCALE

Grade	AP and IB Courses	Pre-AP and Honors Courses	Regular Courses
A	4.2	4.1	4.0
B	3.2	3.1	3.0
C	2.2	2.1	2.0
D	1.2	1.1	1.0
F	0	0	0

While the differences in grade points awarded may seem to be small, they add up: a student who takes six AP courses and earns an A in each would be awarded 25.2 grade points; the student taking six Honors courses with an A in each would earn 24.6 grade points; the student taking regular courses would earn 24 points. When averaged, weighted grade points could mean the difference in the student becoming valedictorian or salutatorian, being accepted into a Tier 1 college, and earning scholarships. Mobile students who have taken rigorous courses can experience the effect that school policy will make to weighting grades:

"One problem when you switch from other schools is that they don't offer the same classes, so they won't give you the Honors credit. They'll give you the credit for taking the class, but they won't weight it. That's the problem we're having right now."

Student

Another area that students mentioned as a mobility-related problem was the lack of foreign language classes needed to meet their needs. Many schools just offer a basic two year minimum of a world language, and upper levels of commonly offered foreign languages – French, Spanish, German and Latin – were mentioned as lacking. Only eight states have a foreign language graduation requirement that may be fulfilled by coursework or proficiency, and it is up to a school to determine whether it has sufficient interest in a course when they create their class schedule for the year. Several factors feed into this problem: the scarcity of foreign language instructors, the lack of state level foreign language requirements for graduation, and tightening of state education budgets among others.

> **Only eight states have a foreign language graduation requirement that may be fulfilled by coursework or proficiency, and it is up to a school to determine whether it has sufficient interest in a course when they create their class schedule for the year.**

Each of these factors affects the other: U.S. colleges and universities award only about 1.3 percent of all enrolled students a Bachelor's degree in foreign language, a percentage that has been stable for over two decades (U.S. Census, 2010). Not all foreign language graduates pursue a career in teaching, which affects the number available to teach; teaching without certification has become less of an option than in the past with the requirement from No Child Left Behind that teachers be certified to teach in their degree area; and in tough economic times when budgets are cut, "frills" tend to be eliminated from schools. Classes deemed unnecessary in state curriculum would likely be cut by school districts.

All of these factors affect students. One student voiced his frustration with the lack of foreign language instruction at his receiving school:

"I took Latin I and I really wanted to take Latin here, but they don't offer that here. They only offer French and Spanish, I think, so I had to take French. You need two language credits to graduate and I had already taken and passed Latin I and I was like "Yay! Okay I only need one more language credit," and then they're like, "You have to take French" and I'm really horrible at French so right now I'm in French II and it's not going so well and I just wish they had Latin. I didn't understand how other schools in the county offered it, but this school didn't."

Student

Technology has become much more commonly used in education since the Secondary Education Transition Study was published in 2001 and is a boon to mobile students. Mobile Military-connected students are beneficiaries of this shift. Depending on the school district, students may be able to make up failed or missed classes, accelerate, or complete coursework begun at a previous school through online coursework. Enrichment courses that may not be available in the physical school facility can be taken online for mobile students, as these stakeholders note:

"We've got plenty of Honors and AP opportunities. We've also got the Jordan Virtual Program where we can schedule a child in there for one block a day if they're in interested in taking something else like a music appreciation course that we don't necessarily offer, so some of the online things, I think, really help."

Administrator

"They don't have Latin here. You would think Latin being a requirement for health occupations – which is what he [our son] wants to go into – we were surprised they didn't have Latin as one of the courses here at the high school, but the Assistant Principal opened up the door for us to do it online."

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Advanced mathematics and science courses may also be absent from a school's curriculum, and students transferring during the school year may find that they need to work with the receiving school's counselor to find options that would allow them to complete a course that they began at the prior school with no loss of credit.

College Board Advanced Placement (AP) and, to a lesser degree perhaps due to program availability, International Baccalaureate (IB) courses have assumed a major role in serving academically gifted and talented students. These courses provide students with many advantages over regular level coursework: learning experiences that will help them to be successful in college, allowing them the opportunity to earn college credit, and giving them a competitive edge in the college admissions process. In these courses the focus is on discussion, collaborative problem solving, and clear and persuasive writing, rather than memorizing facts and figures. Most schools offer a wide variety of advanced opportunities.

At this time there are 34 AP courses from which students may choose, but even common courses may not be available, as this student notes:

"AP U.S. History was offered at my old school and was here last year and before then. This year they decided no more AP Histories. So when the chance came that I finally could take the AP U.S. History, they didn't offer it anymore."

Student

Honors courses are not standard course offerings at all schools: locally developed by teachers and based on the regular curriculum, they are more challenging, more in-depth, and generally faster paced than a regular course. A move to another school might mean that an honors course may be offered as a regular level course – or that it might not be offered at all.

Another option for students is dual or concurrent enrollment. In this program students can earn college credit while still in high school. Different districts have different policies for students to enroll – some may pay for the courses or exams while others require a portion be paid by the student; some offer all students the opportunity to participate while others have acceptance criteria. The course is college level and usually taught at the college or by college faculty, and students receive credit for both high school and college upon passing the course. In many districts students may also enroll in and complete college coursework in addition to their high school courses.

Caution is needed, though, when mobile students complete courses for college credit: credit may not transfer to colleges outside the area in which the student received it.

Caution is needed, though, when mobile students complete courses for college credit: credit may not transfer to colleges outside the area in which the student received it. Parents and students appreciate the rigor and opportunity these courses offer.

Currently, 11 percent of the students identified as being in enrichment classes have taken an online class, about the same percentage as non-enrichment students. The majority of those students felt that it was a good experience and would take another online.

Several students who were interviewed had taken two to three courses for dual credit through community colleges, feeling confident that they would transfer when the next move comes up. According to one student,

"I took an online course through a local community college here. I got dual enrollment which is why I took it and I got credit at my high school as well as at the college. I really enjoyed it. I've taken a couple during the summer. It was nice to be able to work at my own pace and be productive over the summer rather than feel lazy like I usually do. And then I took another course during the school year and that was nice because I was able to work it out perfectly with my own schedule. And the credits will transfer pretty much anywhere. I took Government, Physiology, and then Lifetime Fitness."

Student

Some of the courses that were taken were English, history, computer programming, computer applications, government, psychology, and world geography. A few students mentioned that they took online courses while being home schooled. Many of the students stated they want to take a course online in the future. Four percent of grades five through seven students interviewed for the EMC-21 Study reported that they had taken a course online, but students also talked about using the computer to do in-class projects like writing an autobiography, and computer preparation for state testing was mentioned by several students.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and its Ramifications for Gifted Students

According to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) statute, each state must set a standard that shows student proficiency on the state test. When asked about the impact No Child Left Behind has had on gifted and enrichment programs, about 20 percent of the respondents said that the NCLB statute has had no impact on the gifted programs in their district or they didn't know if the NCLB statute had an impact. Other staff personnel were in favor of the legislation. Several educators, however, had strong opinions in the other direction. They were concerned that more resources and support would go to supporting instruction for lower achieving students to help them achieve proficiency on state testing (Viadero) and that, therefore, the students in gifted programs would not be able to excel to their "potential."

Research, however, has shown NCLB has not held back students identified as qualified to receive enrichment services (Hanushek, Peterson, Woessmann, 2010). The scores of students at the 90 percentile of achievement or above increased between years 2003-2009. It was a greater increase than before the passage of NCLB.

Two teachers, both of whom teach enrichment classes, expressed opposing views of this topic:

POSITIVE:	NEGATIVE:
"Overall it's had a positive effect in terms of identifying students who are bright because if every child then has individual standardized test scores looked at from year to year I think you have few students falling through the cracks."	"I don't think we focus much on them as we have the lower achievers. I think that's the one thing about the NCLB and that's the one thing about our district, we focus so much on one side of the coin we haven't done as much for the other. I think more needs to be done for the higher achiever."

Students in the EMC-21 Study – both enrichment and non-enrichment – stressed the importance their teachers gave to reviewing before state tests. Reviewing in class helps to prepare everyone for state tests that are given at the end of the year. Students were overwhelmingly positive in their response to review for high stakes testing: approximately 90 percent of students, both enrichment and non-enrichment, felt that review was helpful. They were appreciative of teachers who found creative ways to review material. Overall students, and particularly mobile students, felt it helps:

"I like repetition. It's hard when you move states because they have different standards."

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Recommendations

Parents:

- Be sure to hand carry student records, including portfolios if available. These records can provide the receiving school with information about the courses the student has taken and his level of attainment.
- Be prepared to advocate for the student. Be able to discuss her past academic performance, courses, and goals and to verbalize her perceived needs.
- Know the differences between AP/IB, Honors, and dual credit courses. Be able to discuss how they will affect your child's current academic needs and future plans.

School Districts:

- Develop a policy that accepts former schools' testing and placement in a gifted education program. This will enable students to continue in a valuable program that builds on their skills, knowledge, and abilities. Doing so eases the stress of transition on students and their Families. Testing that must be done can be carried out while the student receives services.
- If the state has adopted the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), inform campuses about the specific educational issues that the Compact addresses and the requirements with which the campus must comply.
- Be prepared to work with students to prevent loss of credit due to when a student moves during the year and a course in which she is enrolled is not available at the receiving school. In a similar vein, be prepared to work with students to provide them with courses that are not available to students such as upper level math, science and mathematics courses. Technology may be used to fill these gaps through online coursework.

Installations:

- School Liaison Officers should continue to provide up to date information about local policies and procedures for enrichment programs, and the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children to parents.
- Understand local policies and procedures for inclusion in the gifted and talented program and the MIC3 so that School Liaison Officers (SLOs) can advise Families when they arrive at the installation.

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Assessments

Why Students Are Tested

Assessment, the measurement of learning, provides a wealth of information about what students have learned and how well they learned it. Individual reports reveal successful academic performance along with remediation needs while school, district, and state performance data are summarized for Families, communities, school boards, and state audiences under mandatory state and/or federal accountability programs to describe overall patterns of performance. Assessments are used extensively in education and serve a wide range of purposes, such as determining:

- Student progress in meeting grade or course standards through formative or benchmark assessments, administered periodically throughout the year;
- Placement in special or advanced courses and eligibility for special programs;
- Student achievement, grade level promotion or diploma eligibility through summative assessments;
- College- and career- readiness; and
- System weaknesses and strengths; school and district accountability; curriculum shape and pedagogy and the impact of teacher efforts.

The biggest change in assessment since SETS 2001 is the movement toward use of testing for accountability purposes and to identify college- and career-readiness in students. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and its reauthorizations has been central to the growth of state mandated testing, the results of which are used to measure student achievement and system accountability.

Mobile students face several problems as each state, an independent operator when it comes to curriculum and accountability, aligns its own curriculum to its own assessment.

Today, most states administer their own state assessment programs which are aligned to their state curricula. These tests are designed so that students can reach the top performance levels if they have mastered the expected grade level/course expectations for that state. Mobile students face several problems as each state, an independent operator when it comes to curriculum and accountability, aligns its own curriculum to its own assessment. This leads to gaps between curricula taught to students when they move to a new school in a different state; a major concern in mathematics and science courses that are structured to build on prior concepts.

A related problem that mobile Families face is comparing one state's performance to another: the lack of a standard assessment that is administered in every state to every student makes this a near impossibility. Even tests that are administered nationally such as the SAT and the ACT cannot be used to compare performance because sitting for them is generally voluntary on the part of students and, although many students take the tests, they are not necessarily representative of the general student population.

This state assessment and accountability information is important to Military Families. Although parents cannot compare states using the results of different assessment programs, it is important to know what students are supposed to know, when they are supposed to know it by, how it is assessed, and how their school has performed on state assessments in the past. Additionally, parents need to know when benchmark assessments are given, how their children are prepared for assessments, and how teachers use those results to assist children who have not mastered material.

When moving, parents can consult state-prepared district and school report cards to determine school performance over time. If a student is assigned to a school that has consistently not performed well, parents

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can discuss options such as school choice and supplemental services with campus and district staff as these are related to accountability measures. Several home schooling parents indicated their concerns with school performance based on their research as part of their decision to home school their children.

The interviews in the EMC-21 Study showed challenges faced by mobile students in performance on tests for which they have incomplete background and preparation. Parents have challenges in understanding and using test results to make decisions about their child's education and even living arrangements in a move.

The data about assessment from the EMC-21 Study found:

- Parents are concerned about the variety of state tests and the effect on their children's education as they move from one school to another, particularly across state boundaries.
- Many schools do not accept testing from other schools for program and course inclusion, which can result in delay of services for mobile students; most states do not accept results for state administered high stakes testing. This can particularly affect students in gateway grades and students who are facing graduation.
- Elementary students are more likely to be required to test for inclusion into a gifted education program than are secondary students, who many times are served by advanced courses that do not require gifted identification. Some locations schedule testing windows which mobile students may miss, thereby delaying the student receiving services.
- Parents are using test scores to make decisions about the neighborhood in which they will live.

Comparing Student Achievement across State Lines

One concern for mobile Military Families is the quality of education for their children. It is difficult for them to find information that will allow them to compare student achievement from state to state. Parents, many of whom are "digital natives" who have grown up with access to the Internet and its research capability,

All states must include assessment to measure growth over time, but because each state has its own curriculum, each state is responsible for its assessment's design and content.

are adept at finding information to help them make education decisions for their Families. It can be difficult, however, for parents to locate information that will enable them to make this kind of comparison. State accountability reports do not provide this information.

State accountability programs use the results from state assessment programs to determine whether or not the state, district, and school has met state criteria for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), as required by No Child Left Behind. All states must include assessment to measure growth over time, but because each state has its own curriculum, each state is responsible for its assessment's design and content. NCLB does require that states administer math and English/reading assessments yearly in grades three through eight and, at a minimum, once during high school. In addition, they must administer one science exam in elementary, middle, and high school.

Therefore, AYP is based on different state tests aligned to different curriculum standards graded by different performance standards and reviewed according to different state accountability criteria, and comparing AYP is like comparing the proverbial apples and oranges. A recent report regarding schools in states that are heavily impacted by Military presence that made AYP based on their 2008-09 test administration (Deitz & Malini, 2010) demonstrates the difference between state accountability (AYP) and student achievement (NAEP).

PERCENTAGE OF HEAVILY IMPACTED MILITARY STATES MAKING AYP BASED ON 2008-09 TESTING

| STATE | Federal Rating | Student Achievement Based on NAEP Results | |
	Percentage of schools Made AYP	Percentage of Students Attaining Proficient/Advanced on NAEP Grade Eight Reading	Percentage of Students Attaining Proficient/Advanced on NAEP Grade Eight Math
CO	56%	32	40
GA	86%	27	26
KS	88%	33	39
LA	91%	20	20
NC	71%	29	23
OK	89%	26	35
TX	95%	27	36

With diligent research this parent located the information she was looking for:

"I knew what schools they were going to be attending so I looked on some websites to see how they were rated, how their test scores matched up nationwide and with others in the area and to see what parents had to say about teachers and students and staff. This is my first move with kids, and I did find that it was more difficult to find out how schools ranked nationwide than they did in terms of test scores against other students in the state."

Parent

The NAEP is administered routinely at grades four and eight in reading and mathematics. Other subjects are tested at different grade levels, to include high school reading and mathematics, economics and civics, and U.S. History. It uses a representative sample of students to report on *state education systems*, but it does not provide information for *individual schools* nor for *individual students*. NAEP reports scores as Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced, and these reports can provide parents with information about overall statewide student proficiency in mathematics and reading.

Parents can view a variety of reports posted on the Nation's Report Card website, nationsreportcard.gov. In addition to state and national results, the site includes information on gaps and trends in mathematics and reading such as percentages of students taking higher level math courses and even a selection of sample questions from previous NAEP administrations.

Parents seeking information about quality of schools can use a school report card, a state publication that reports student achievement based on test scores and operating information that informs the public about schools in the state and allows them to compare schools for student achievement, resources, and demographics. This information is limited in scope because state curriculum and assessment systems are so different, that information cannot be used to compare schools across state boundaries. It can, however, be used to compare schools within a state.

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Qualifying for Program and Course Inclusion

Within this study researchers saw numerous incidents of retesting to re-qualify for IEPs or enrichment programs. State policy can be the reason behind retesting, as one administrator notes when discussing testing in his district:

"We have a lot of testing. Our state doesn't accept other states' tests, so if a kid tests somewhere else, they still have to take it from us."

Administrator

Other examples of programs that require assessment for qualification and acceptance are schools in the Early College High School Initiative, which compress the time it takes to earn a college diploma by blending the last two years of high school and the first two years of college. Students in these programs graduate with a high school diploma and an Associate's degree or up to two years of credit toward a Bachelor's degree. An added bonus for the Family is financial – credits earned are tuition-free. These programs are generally technical in nature, such as a bio-science or robotics program. Mobility can affect acceptance into these programs for a variety of reasons: since they focus on the last two years of high school, students enrolling in a district as a senior may have missed the window for entry criteria and all require assessment results which may not transfer from a former school or which may be scheduled in a window in the receiving school that the mobile student misses.

Testing for inclusion in special education or gifted programs can mean hours of assessment for mobile students. Parents of children with unique learning challenges often find that each district in which they enroll their child requires assessments dictated by state and local policy, and parents of gifted students face a similar situation. For both special needs and gifted students, these tests may not occur only for initial program inclusion; rather they are to qualify students for programs in which they have been assessed and were receiving services in their former schools. Within this study researchers saw numerous incidents of retesting to re-qualify for IEPs or enrichment programs.

State Assessment

State assessment has increased greatly since 2001 and its variability can create challenges for mobile Families. Many changes that have occurred since SETS 2001 have occurred in state testing. In some states the assessments are coupled to passing to the next grade, called gateway testing. In gateway grades students may pass all of their required coursework but still be faced with grade level retention because of failing state test results. Mobile students at elementary and middle school can be at risk of retention because they may not have studied the tested curriculum through the years and thus have knowledge gaps and failing test results. For high school students, failing these assessments can put them at risk of not graduating on time.

"There are key concepts that we don't realize they've missed until they get far down the road and all of sudden they can't do long division because they missed multiplication, maybe because of a move. If standardized testing was the same across the board then we really could have an honest view of how our states match up nationwide and we make it better for everybody."
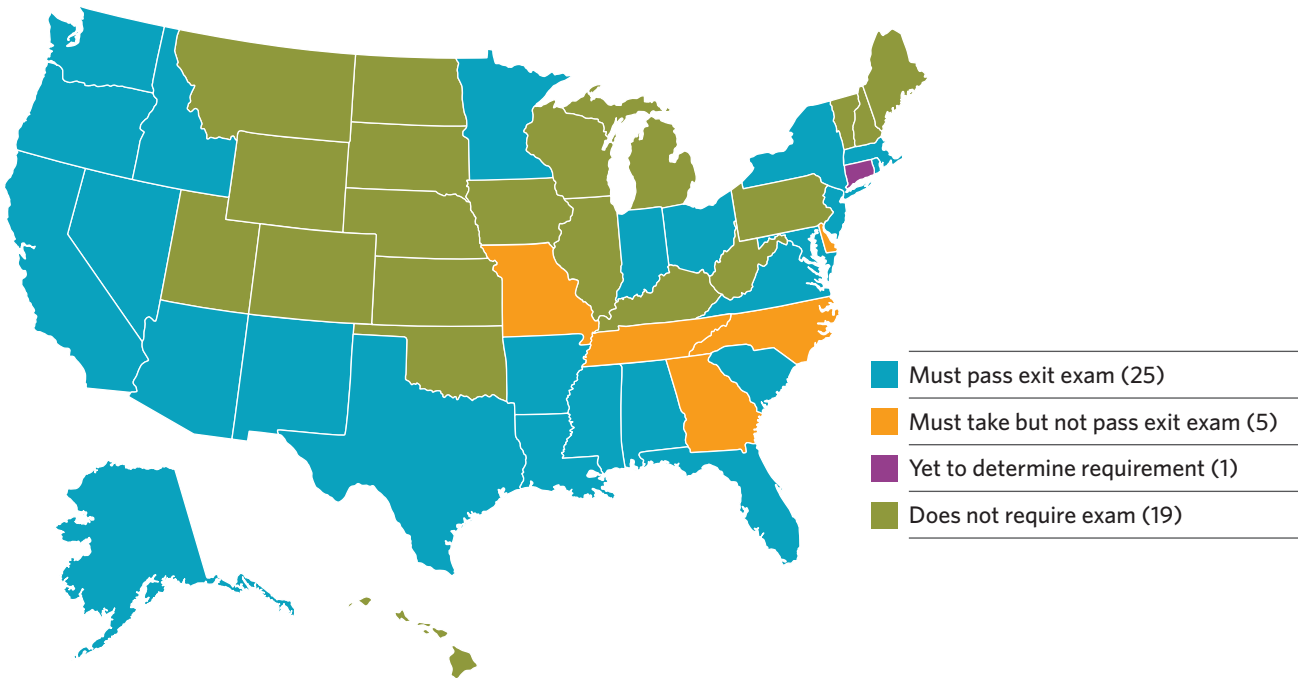
Parent

Military parents need to be especially aware of high school graduation exams, commonly called exit exams, that are used in many states along with passing required courses to fulfill graduation. These assessments have traditionally been comprehensive in nature, covering several years of coursework. For example, an exit test in mathematics might include

questions on arithmetic, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and Statistics may correct this situation in some states. In recent years, to better focus assessments, states are moving to end-of- course exams (EOC) at the high school level, providing a finer grained assessment of student performance and provide a better picture of college- and career- readiness.

The majority of state tests originally developed for NCLB assessment at the high school level were minimum competency exams. The movement to state standards shifted high stakes testing to standards-based assessments. Currently assessment is moving to end-of-course exams administered upon course conclusion. For any assessment, though, mobile students just arriving to that state are faced with a situation of being tested on curriculum not previously received. All of these factors can complicate a child's move from one state to another, as one state's definition of competency, its criteria, and its way of calculating can be vastly different from another's.

For any assessment, though, mobile students just arriving to that state are faced with a situation of being tested on curriculum not previously received.

The December 2011 Center on Education Policy report on graduation (exit) tests found 25 states have policies that require students to pass an exit exam in order to receive a high school diploma and five states which require an exit exam but do not need to pass to receive a diploma. These states do not penalize students who have passed all required coursework by withholding a diploma on the basis of a single exam. Two states plan to implement end-of-course exams which will count toward meeting graduation requirements. One state has planned exit exam policy but has not decided on whether students must pass to receive a diploma. Fifteen states plan to administer high school end-of-course tests for mathematics, science, the social sciences and English language by 2015, an increase from five in 2009.

Must pass exit exam (25)
Must take but not pass exit exam (5)
Yet to determine requirement (1)
Does not require exam (19)

The reason for test administration has been extended to include college- and work-readiness in 11 states. Most are multiple choice tests, but some include short answer response or extended responses, including writing prompts.

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Nineteen of 26 states offer alternatives to a high school diploma such as a certificate of completion if a student does not earn passing scores on all required tests. Six states permit students to substitute passing grades on other tests while four permit waivers; seven allow portfolio assessment, two review class performance, and two accept flexible cut scores under specific guidelines. Students who do not pass all of their state's required graduation tests, do not meet the alternative criteria, or receive a waiver are awarded a certificate of completion or attendance depending on the state (Ying Zhang, 2009).

Any Family with a student in high school should investigate the regulations of the state to which they are moving to prepare for testing requirements since these requirements can strongly affect a student's graduation plans.

Some states offer options to students with disabilities who do not meet the alternatives for graduation tests. In addition to those alternatives listed earlier, some states offer tests with modified questions or tests that aligned to modified standards. Of the 14 reported states, 11 offer alternative assessments which, when passed, lead to a regular diploma. Passing the Texas modified test, however, results in the issuance of a minimum-standard diploma as opposed to a regular or advanced diploma. Some states allow a portfolio assessment and others offer other options, for example lower passing scores, or exemptions from passing. These students may receive a regular diploma or a Certificate of Attendance, Special Education diploma, or a Graduation Certificate (Ying Zhang, 2009).

Meeting the exit exam criteria for graduation could be a hurdle for students moving during their junior or senior year. In general, students who transfer high schools during their junior or senior year should plan to take required graduation tests. If these are comprehensive tests and the student enrolls as late as the beginning of the senior year, the student will most likely be required to pass the comprehensive tests. Some states will accept passing performance on another state's tests or accept academic performance on another recognized test such as the SAT, ACT, AP or IB test, but each state has its own regulations. For students who require accommodations or modifications, it is imperative to ensure those requirements set in their IEP or 504 plans are in place.

Any Family with a student in high school should investigate the regulations of the state to which they are moving to prepare for testing requirements since these requirements can strongly affect a student's graduation plans.

"It's important to know the requirements of the state that they're going to. One student leaving here had already passed all the aspects of the state test, but our testing requirements did not transfer with him. He was going to have to take all parts of their test and that could be devastating. First, because they're Military; second, he'd been to three different high schools; third, he's a student with special needs. Somebody has got to come up with something that is transferable across state lines where they don't have these different testing requirements in every state."

Administrator

States that require end-of-course tests may reduce the number of required tests to graduate for students who do not complete those grades in the state. For example, students who transfer to a new high school in Virginia after the freshman year are required to verify fewer credits through assessment. Students who enroll in tenth grade will have to pass six out of nine tests; those who begin in eleventh grade only have to pass four out of six; and those who transfer in as seniors have to pass two out of four. The student who enrolls after 20 days instruction in grade 12 is encouraged to meet the requirements for a state diploma, but is also counseled that it may be appropriate to complete graduation requirements from the sending school or seek a state waiver (Virginia Department of Education).

The Use of Assessments to Acknowledge College- and Career-Readiness

Because of the career- and college-ready movement, schools have increased their focus on the use of assessment results to qualify students for entrance-level public college courses. Students who attend a public institution of higher education typically must demonstrate proficiency on a national college readiness test, usually the College Board SAT or the ACT, but colleges may offer students other options to prove their readiness for college level work.

These exams are important to Military Families. Both parents and educators want students to graduate with their peers and be ready to attend college or begin a career. A large number of high school graduates are required to take developmental courses in college, which can use up financial aid needed to complete a degree. Time to complete a degree or certification is extended and may result in failure to complete the desired program. If the desired college or university does not offer remedial courses, a student may have to attend a community college to complete those courses.

Many states are incorporating college entrance exams into their state reporting programs. Increases or decreases in the number of students testing, the percent of students tested, and the change in scaled scores have become so important to districts that they provide individual preparation sessions, group workshops, and online courses to prepare students for the assessments. Some state programs using college entrance products to acknowledge college- and career-readiness include:

- **California**: the Early Assessment Program augments the California Standards Tests in English and mathematics, which all eleventh grade students take. California State University, the California Department of Education, and the California State Board of Education collaborated on the test, which gives students, teachers, parents and the University information about how well prepared their students are for University-level coursework.
- **Colorado**: all eleventh grade students are required to take the ACT.
- **Kansas**: recently approved funds to administer the ACT EXPLORE at grade eight to provide students with information to plan their high school courses and look at what career directions are available to them. ACT PLAN is given to students at grade ten to help prepare them for the ACT and provide them with information to succeed in college and the workplace.
- **Oklahoma**: students take both the ACT EXPLORE and PLAN as part of their Tech Prep program.
- **Texas**: The Texas College Preparation Program enables participating schools to administer either the ACT EXPLORE or the College Board ReadiStep to students in grade eight and/or the ACT PLAN or the College Board PSAT to students in grade ten.

Mobile students who take the ACT can use the results as an excellent source of information that crosses state lines.

The ACT can be used to determine college readiness through the benchmarks it has established. Students who meet these benchmarks have at least a 50 percent chance of making a grade of B or higher and at least a 75 percent chance of making a C or higher in entry-level college English Composition, Algebra, Social Science, and Biology, the credit-bearing courses most commonly taken by college freshmen (http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/benchmarks.pdf). Mobile students who take the ACT can use the results as an excellent source of information that crosses state lines.

Schools use other tests to produce individual performance reports to assist a student in career and college planning. These include:

- The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), which assists students to investigate knowledge and skills needed for career choices;

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- The ACT Compass and the SAT ACCUPLACER, assessments the same colleges use to evaluate incoming students' literacy, writing and math skills; and
- The ACT WorkKeys product which assesses math, reading, technology, business writing, listening, teamwork, workplace observation, and general writing skills to help in career and college planning.

The Importance of Exams for Military Families

"I wanted to know their location; I wanted to know how they were; I wanted to know what the environment was like; I wanted to know what kinds of programs were available; I wanted to know if there were other Military children; I wanted to know class size. I went online and looked at test scores. I think test scores in combination with knowing what the environment is really tells you a lot. We came and looked, before choosing where to live."

Parent

Mobile Families have developed awareness of what test scores represent, to the extent that they speak about using them when they select the neighborhood in which they will live. This is especially true for the mobile Military Family whose frequent transitions make it vitally important to target both strengths and weaknesses on multiple levels as they move from one state to another: their child's level as he works through grade level coursework, the school and district level as he enrolls in schools with each move, and the state level as he navigates curriculum across state boundaries. They must recognize the purposes of assessment and understand the differences in the various assessment programs.

Assessment is important for Military-connected students for a variety of reasons:

- Preparing for a move to a different location and finding out about the quality of the schools;
- Knowing what tests a student will have to take, particularly in gateway grades, in high school and for graduation; and
- Information about special needs and gifted education programs.

The Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission recognizes the difficulties encountered by mobile Families, especially those who are required to move during the senior year. States requiring graduation exams are asked to accept passing results from the sending state's exit or end-of-course exam (reciprocity), a national norm-reference test, or alternative tests such as the ACT, SAT, or AP for specific tests, or work with the sending school to permit the student to graduate under that school's graduation requirements. When these options are not available or the state does not offer a waiver option, the Family may ask to graduate under the previous state's graduation requirements. This necessitates cooperation of both schools and should begin through the registrar/counselors as soon as possible.

The greatest value of assessment to any high school student is the use of the results to document and acknowledge strengths and determine ways of remediating reported weaknesses while still in high school. This is especially true for the mobile Military Family whose frequent transitions make it vitally important to target both strengths and weaknesses as they move from one state to another. The purposes of assessment must be recognized and the differences in the various assessment programs must be understood.

Students can celebrate successes on required assessments while learning from them. They can meet graduation requirements, verify credits, earn college credits, or demonstrate they are college ready through scores on assessments. They can even earn career ready certification, such as is available in Colorado through the WorkKeys system.

Parents want to help their children make informed decisions about postsecondary choices and many are aware of the wealth of information available in the guise of test scores, as this parent attests:

"I went online and went to school website which talked a lot about football and extracurricular activities, which to me are very important also. However, what are your test scores? As a parent who was pretty sure their child was not going to go to an in-state college, I'm not that concerned about the in-state test scores. I want to know your AP scores, SAT scores, ACT scores…That type of information would be extremely valuable because you do want your college-bound child to go to a school that's going to help her attain her goals."

Parent

The concept of using the results from a state assessment which students take to demonstrate college readiness sounds great to the student who meets those criteria. For the student who is planning to attend college in another state or a private school, however, that score may not be accepted. These out-of-state higher education institutions may require the student's SAT/ACT results, or an alternate assessment selected by the college to determine college readiness.

Efforts to Support Mobile Military Families

Two initiatives that will help and support the mobile Military Family are the **Common Core Standards (CCS)** and the **Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3)**.

The Common Core Standards began with efforts from both the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers. Presently 45 states have committed to these standards, which started with mathematics and English language arts. The subsequent growth of CCS will provide many benefits to the mobile Military Family: curriculum alignment, common materials for education, and common assessments.

The typical Military student moves between six and nine times in their public school career and will derive huge benefits from implementation of the Common Core Standards. These Standards will drive common curriculum, common assessments, and common educational material which will lead to less turbulence when a student moves from one school to another. Another outcome will be the better interpretation of student transcripts. Typical with each move, Military-connected students are faced with reevaluation of their transcripts. CCS will provide clarity to this process.

The Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission will help smooth transitions for the mobile Military child. Its intent transcends boundaries of the states to ensure that these children are afforded the opportunity for success as other, less mobile students. Specifically, the Compact addresses concerns about records transfer, course sequencing, graduation requirements, extracurricular activities, entrance and exit testing, and kindergarten and first grade entrance age variances.

Then and Now:
The Secondary Education Transition Study (2001) and Education of the Military Child in the 21st Century (2011)

There have been two major areas of change in assessment since 2001: testing to determine state accountability and testing to determine college- and workplace-readiness. Results of these tests have expanded beyond the traditional individual reports, with results being analyzed and used to report system weaknesses and strengths, school and district accountability, and even the impact of teacher efforts.

An increasing number of states are using performance based assessment to report student learning. In 2001, 27 states did not have an exit level exam, and today that number has shrunk to 19. There are further changes in state level testing as states move toward end-of-course exams in an effort to more accurately assess student learning. By the year 2015, 11 states will have replaced comprehensive exams with end-of-course exams (fairtest.org).

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The potential for problems created by state testing programs for students who move during their junior and senior year – particularly in a mid-year move – has not changed. Schools have little leeway to accommodate mobile students who are faced with state testing that covers an unfamiliar curriculum.

State testing is no longer a foreign concept for students and parents. They have become accustomed to assessment programs through both the media and their children's testing in school. They research testing policies and procedures before a move and report few surprises about their children testing when they move.

Testing to determine college- and career-readiness has also increased in the last decade. More students take the SAT and the ACT then in the past, and the results are used in accountability measures for schools.

Recommendations

Parents:

- Contact or visit the installation School Liaison Officer to find out as much information as possible about school district procedures to help ensure a smooth school transition for the child.
- Visit the installation School Liaison Program website for information about the new school district.
- Each year when high school students get back their test results, review how to use them. There are many free tools online and available through high school counselors that go unused that could make a major difference to Military Families as they prepare for the college years. For example, the College Board and ACT both have pages on their websites that help students and parents understand the SAT, ACT, and AP programs. State education agency websites have sections focused on helping students and parents understand state high stakes test results.
- Discuss your child's career and college plans with the school counselor. Do this more than once during his junior or senior year and include him in each discussion. Plans change, and changes need to be reflected in course placement and assessment choices.
- Parents who are facing a move: if there are concerns about school district procedures about records, enrollment, courses, extracurricular activities, testing, and kindergarten and first grade entrance variances, check to see if the state has signed the MIC3 agreement. The Compact is relatively recent and some district personnel may be unaware of its existence. Information and a copy of the Compact may be found on the Internet at http://www.mic3.net/.
- If the child's school offers college- and career-readiness assessments or preparation for those assessments, it may well be worth the time invested in taking those prep courses and the tests. These assessments have gained prominence in school accountability and schools may offer them free or at little cost to the student, and the student reports contain valuable information.

School Staff:

- Have clear information on the school and district website about what assessments are given at what time and how they are used. Include links to resources and practice tests when relevant. Include information about specifications for special education and other programs.
- If the state has signed MIC3, understand the intent and support the initiative.

Military:

- Understand and support efforts to standardize curriculum and education policy and procedure across state boundaries. An example of this effort is the Common Core Standards Initiative.
- Because states' Education Policy changes frequently, U.S. Army School Liaison Officers should be continually updated in state standards, policies, and procedures, especially for gateway grades and juniors and seniors.

Graduation

"There simply are no good jobs for people without an education. We have to start by recognizing that our system of education is not aligned. Every state has different high school standards. The notion that we have 50 different goal posts is absolutely ridiculous."

Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education

The path to graduation for mobile Military children may have involved more steps, taken more turns, and been more complicated than the pathways of their peers who have been continuously enrolled in one school system. Although state education agencies agree that students should exit high school with knowledge and skills in English and reading, mathematics, science, and social studies, each state constructs its own definition of that knowledge and those skills. The number and type of courses required for graduation can therefore vary. Consequently, Military Families are sometimes caught off guard when their junior or senior student suddenly discovers the need for additional courses in their graduation plans after a move to a new school.

Among the states in this study, several offered multiple tracks for diplomas to meet the needs of the college bound, the vocation destined, those with a Military future, and those who have Individual Educational Plans in place. An increasing number of states require graduates to pass exams in specific subjects in order to receive a diploma. Several states require students to complete specific courses, including history, algebra, and science with a laboratory component. Some districts require students to complete volunteer or community service hours in order to meet graduation requirements.

Keys to assure a smooth transition and on-time graduation include:

- Translating credit and aligning outcomes;
- Creating alternate paths to make up work:
- Online, credit recovery, or
- Varying sequence of courses; and
- Creating options that enable on-time graduation to occur, such as is done in a reciprocal graduation agreement.

Current Directions in High School Curriculum

Students are faced with a challenge: many who earn a diploma often find that they are not adequately prepared for the workplace or college. Schools and state education systems stress college- and career-readiness in response to the number of high school graduates who enter college and are immediately enrolled in remedial courses due to gaps in their preparation and the significant number of employees hired right out of high school who have serious deficiencies in mathematics, reading, and writing.

To ensure that students are poised for success in the workplace or in pursuit of further education, students need a clear definition of what they should know and be able to do throughout their K-12 experience in order to be ready for college or careers. The June 2010 *Common Core State Standards* defined a set of expectations in English language arts and mathematics. These Standards are rigorous, clear and focused, college- and career- ready and describe specific content and skills that students must have mastered by the time they leave high school if they expect to succeed in college or in high-growth jobs. This movement is good news for mobile students, since it helps standardize curriculum across state lines.

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Employers and college leaders from around the country have stated that the skills needed to succeed in freshman level courses in two- and four-year colleges *are the same* as the skills needed for living-wage entry-level jobs and careers, and student success in work or learning beyond high school hinges upon taking rigorous courses in math beyond Algebra II and advanced courses in English (American Diploma Project). Four years of grade-level or Honors English and mathematics classes through at least Algebra II is essential.

Speed Bumps on the Road to Graduation for Mobile Students

It is the responsibility of the state government to establish policy for high school graduation. Each state determines courses, course sequencing, credits, assessments, and other requirements that lead to awarding a diploma. As they set these standards, their focus is not on mobile students whose typical school career will include six to nine moves that can take them across multiple state lines.

"I look at the graduation requirements and the requirements for anywhere else that I would move and make sure that somewhere in the middle I'm taking enough classes."

Student

Military-connected students, many of whom will move at least once during high school, can find that the lack of a standard framework can result in unintended consequences as they work toward graduation. Sometimes these consequences are relatively easy to remedy: a transferring student might substitute a pre-Advanced Placement (AP) course for the Honors course she was taking at her previous school because of course availability. Other times the consequences are severe, as when a senior moves from a school that requires 21 credits to graduate to a school that requires 24. Earning those extra credits to stay on track to graduate on time can be challenging.

Problems have two sides – challenge for the receiving school system to deal with differences that students bring and challenge for students and Family in terms of continuity of study and interests. Solutions rest on flexibility/adaptability on both sides.

"They need us to care, they need us to be supportive, they need us to be understanding and be flexible. Flexibility is probably the biggest issue in all aspects whether it is academics or extracurricular behavior. You have to be flexible."

Teacher

The data about graduation from the EMC-21 Study found:

- Some things have changed for mobile students since SETS 2001, but mobility is still an issue for high school students who move in their junior and senior year.
- Seniors who move to a new school have two needs: personal and academic. They require accommodation from caring individuals who are sensitive to their needs and alignment of information, communication, and opportunity. Tiered diplomas, graduation requirements, grading variations, high stakes testing, maintaining credit when moving from one scheduling system to another (traditional to block, for example) all have potential to create problems for the mobile student.
- Knowledge of the U.S. Army senior stabilization policy, which has been in force since April 2001, is not widespread or understood. Many educators and parents spoke of the need for high school students, especially juniors and seniors, to be able to graduate from high school without a move in their eleventh or twelfth grade years.
- Searching for information about graduation requirements is extremely important but can be challenging

for a mobile Family due to the lack of standardized information formats.

- State and local differences in mathematics sequencing and course requirements are a concern for the mobile student.
- Many upper level and gatekeeper courses such as mathematics and world language are aligned within a school district and presume prerequisite skill development and curriculum alignment from middle through high school for students who have been enrolled in and progressed through the local system. Mobile students can be at a disadvantage when they enroll in a school system; they can find that their coursework is out of sequence with the local curriculum and coursework in the local system is heavily dependent on skills and concepts they have not yet learned.
- The study of a foreign language is a more common requirement for college admissions than for high school graduation. Many students who were interviewed for the EMC-21 Study reported that they were college bound and that because different languages are available in different places, foreign language was a concern.
- An expressed need in 2001, a standardized system for exchange, understanding, articulation, and reciprocity built upon structures focused on helping children and schools continues to be requested by all stakeholders.

Most barriers to students graduating on time fall into the administrative domain: credits, including the amount and required core courses; courses that require progressive or sequential concept and skill development (math and foreign language); grading scales; other graduation requirements; and state exit exams. Parents and students must stay on top of these issues. It is acutely important that they be aware of all graduation requirements in an upcoming move.

Concerns about Credits

The Military Family's move can adversely affect the time the student has to complete classes required for a diploma especially when the move involves a junior or senior.

"If they come from a district that didn't require four years of math or four years of science, that can be a problem – especially if they're seniors trying to graduate."

Administrator

"I think that all high schools should have the same credit requirements. When they transfer they are sometimes a couple of credits down or a credit won't even count towards their graduation requirements for that new school district. And then you have to pay $150 for a summer school class. And that is a huge chunk of money for an E-4 level soldier. That is our groceries."

Parent

When the student has completed the first and second years of a course, for example French I and II, but the receiving school does not offer advanced levels, the student may qualify for a diploma of lesser prestige than if he had been able to complete his original sequence of courses. Juniors and seniors have little time to start a sequence over and may be particularly at risk of this issue. In those cases, students can explore the possibility of continuing their sequence through a virtual school with a counselor or administrator, as this parent relates:

"We were surprised they didn't have Latin as one of the courses here at the high school, but the AP [Assistant Principal] opened up the door for us to do it online."

Parent

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Students transferring from accredited schools can use high school credits toward graduation requirements, but schools may have a specific class or perform a specific activity to meet graduation requirements. These requirements vary considerably. Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Idaho, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Washington require a project or thesis in addition to coursework. Alabama requires an online/technology enhanced course or experience. New Mexico requires students to complete at least one distance learning course, Advanced Placement or Honors course, or a dual credit course offered in cooperation with a college or university prior to graduation. Maine requires students to complete a college application. Oregon requires students to participate in career-related learning experiences. No state lists community service as a requirement, but it can be a local requirement or a program requirement, such as in Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) or International Baccalaureate (IB) programs.

The bottom line for the transitioning Family is: research can help eliminate surprises and arm parents and students with information for conversations with counselors and administrators in the receiving school.

States may waive requirements that students did not have in the state from which they moved for seniors, but the ability to waive requirements may depend on state policy. The bottom line for the transitioning Family is: research can help eliminate surprises and arm parents and students with information for conversations with counselors and administrators in the receiving school.

The table below shows minimum graduation requirements for a high school diploma in the states interviewed for EMC-21 Study. It illustrates the variation across state "goalposts" that U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has described (see quote at the beginning of this section). There are 44 other goalposts in the United States, including the District of Columbia, with requirements that are a variable as California (requires 13 credits), Florida (Standard diploma requires 24 credits; the three-year college prep program and the three-year career prep programs require 18 credits), and Tennessee (requires 20 credits). Therefore, for a Family, it is critical to research the graduation requirements of the state they are moving to as far in advance as possible.

State	Degree Options and Minimum Credits Required	Testing Requirement
Colorado	Varies by District	Yes
Georgia	College Preparatory, College Preparatory with Distinction, Technology/Career-Preparatory, and Technology/Career Preparatory with Distinction. (23)	Yes
Kansas	24	No
Louisiana	College and Career (24); Core 4 (24); Career (23)	Yes
North Carolina	Future Ready (24) - Honors/College Prep and Career Preparation and College Technical	Yes
Oklahoma	23 + Additional Locally Determined	No
Texas	Minimum (22); Recommended (26); Advanced (26)	Yes

The number of credits required to receive a diploma differs greatly from state to state and district to district. This would not be a problem when moving from a state that requires 26 credits to a state that requires 22, but if that move were to be reversed, a student would find himself four credits short of graduation. Compound that with the differences in core coursework required for graduation by different states. Math is a good example of this concern. Many states require four credits of math for graduation, and many of those that require three are upping their requirements to four. But a handful of states require two math credits for graduation. Moving from those states as a senior would make graduation extremely difficult.

Researching high school diploma requirements in the states where the EMC-21 study was conducted revealed challenges for parents and children seeking information. There is not one standardized source that could be located across states to find and verify the information. Parents use a variety of sources: school counselors, online and hard copy student handbooks, state education agency and school websites, and word-of-mouth. Parents need to be cautious about any source they use. For example, school websites do not always contain the most current information about schools, and word-of-mouth information may contain as much opinion as factual information.

"Everybody said 'I'm so sorry that's where you're moving, the schools there are terrible. You'll have to find a private school'. Not one single person had good feedback. So I went online, did some looking, found some people here to talk to. I believe in public schools so I wanted to see. So everything here was small, it was going to be OK. People told us 'These are the highs schools. These are the ones to avoid'. And of course now we're going to one of the schools they told us to avoid and we love it."

Parent

Although parents and students are advised to plan well in advance of a move, states and school districts can change graduation requirements and the student may not have taken some course or completed some requirement needed for graduation at the receiving school. This may particularly be an issue for students transferring internationally. Not all Military-connected students outside the continental U. S. attend American schools or the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS). Curricula at an English or German school can differ markedly from that offered in U. S. schools. These parents and students must be acutely aware that there likely will be missing courses that will have to be completed before the student can graduate.

Credit loss because of school calendars and schedules – start/end dates, block, semester, trimester, and year-round schedules – is not uncommon in a mid-semester or mid-year move. Students moving from block to traditional schedules and vice versa can lose credit when their credits (Carnegie Units, measured at 120 seat hours per year) fall short. Students may also lose credit during a mid-year transition when the receiving school does not have classes or programs that students were enrolled in at their prior school. School staffs work diligently to match coursework from the sending school's catalogue to theirs in an effort to preclude students losing credit, such as the following administrator reports:

"In the past we worked with students to give them correspondence courses in order to allow them to catch up or to take on a class that they didn't have at a previous school that's a requirement for Louisiana. When the Louisiana virtual school came into play a few years ago that was another means we could use if we didn't have a class on our campus to try to fill students' needs so they can graduate on time."

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Foreign languages can affect mobile students' plans on a personal level and an academic achievement level:

- Lack of availability of language offerings can mean students who are interested in taking foreign language and have the first year or two of a language may not be able to continue studying that language; and
- Some states require foreign language beyond the first two years for an advanced diploma. Students who enroll as a junior or senior, bringing with them credits from a foreign language not offered at the new school, may be unable to complete the language requirement and will be unable to earn the advanced diploma.

Many states specify foreign language or fine arts or technology courses in their high school curricula, so meeting graduation requirements may not be affected by problems with foreign language. Colleges, however, may list two years of foreign language as part of their entrance requirements, and many college degrees have foreign language requirements. Entering college with background in a language can give the student a step up.

State history is one area that may be good news for mobile students. In 2001 parents and students worried about state history, knowing that each state had a state history requirement that would put their student at risk of not graduating on time. It was shown then to be largely a myth. Parents and students still worry about state history and it is still a myth. Many states do have state history requirements – in elementary and middle school. A dozen states do have a high school state history requirement, but many of them waive the requirement if the student has had a state history course in a previous high school.

Other Sources of Concern

Accountability is ingrained in the American education system. Exit and promotion exams are now part of that system, telling what students know as a cohort. States use results from these assessments to evaluate their efforts to monitor student achievement, to raise their standards and future student achievement. A policy of high stakes tests, however, does not consider their impact on mobile students. These students enroll in a district and are almost always faced with taking state mandated exams to assess learning; many times the student has not been exposed to the coursework contained in these exams. When these assessments are tied to graduation and a diploma, it creates stress for students.

Once again, flexibility can help a student graduate on time.

Grading systems and the way credits is awarded towards GPA may not be calculated in the same way for AP and Honors courses. Grading systems differ from school to school – two common systems are the ten-point traditional system where A=90 to 100, B=80 to 89, etc., and a system with a shorter point system in which A=94 to 100 and so on. Issues in grading systems include AP, IB, and Honors classes, which may be "weighted" – that is extra credit awarded for grades in those classes. This one area can be frustrating for parents and students, as this parent points out:

"Historically we have looked at students who come to us when it's too late to sit for a state-mandated test, and we look at completing their requirements for the state they came from, and then when graduation arrives they actually get their diploma from the other state."

Administrator

"Grades from school to school, particularly for those students who come from overseas, don't have the same scale. When we came from North Carolina, we did better, but if you come from a state that's on a ten-point and you go to a seven or five point, you lose grade points. There's got to be, across the board, some sort of law passed that when kids transition when it comes to grades. If I had an "A" when I came from California, then I should have an "A" when I go to North Carolina. You shouldn't have to give that "A" up because the grading scale changes."

Parent

Tiered diplomas tied to levels of coursework, grade point averages, and regulations can create confusion for students and parents. The Texas diploma program is one example of a tiered program. It offers three diplomas: the Recommended High School Diploma, the Distinguished Achievement Diploma, and – with proper approval – the Minimum High School Diploma.

The Texas Minimum program requires the student to complete 22 credits. It requires fewer math, science, and social studies credits than the Distinguished or Recommended programs. While both the Recommended and Distinguished diplomas require 26 credits, the Distinguished program requires an additional foreign language credit (three as opposed to the Distinguished program's two) plus some combination of the following advanced measures:

- An original research project;
- Successfully completing college academic courses with a grade of 3.0 or higher;
- Test data that may include a score of three or above on an AP exam or four or above on an IB exam, and
- Recognition as a commended scholar on the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) exam.

Planning for the Future

Planning is the key to students graduating from high school with a diploma that leads to future success. Mobile students benefit two ways from taking the most academically rigorous courses possible: these courses help ensure preparation for coursework in the next school and they help prepare for future college courses and the workplace.

While not every student plans to attend college after high school, many of the jobs now being created in a highly technology-based economy require abilities equivalent to those expected of the first-year college student (Crisis at the Core). AP, IB, Honors, and dual credit courses – what used to be thought of as "college prep" curriculum – provide the analytic and reasoning skills that are associated with success after high school.

More than 70 percent of graduates enter two- and four-year colleges, but at least 28 percent of those students immediately take remedial English or math courses.

With the emphasis on course rigor, students are graduating from high school better prepared for college and the workplace, but there are still gaps. More than 70 percent of graduates enter two- and four-year colleges, but at least 28 percent of those students immediately take remedial English or math courses (The American Diploma Project). This can have implications for students and their Families: developmental courses cost Families money in tuition and students in time spent in remediation rather than credit-bearing coursework. Courses such as Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and upper-level mathematics courses beyond Algebra II have a notable effect on student performance and college readiness (College Readiness: 2005 State Report, ACT 2005).

The Math Factor

One potential complication in attempting to take advanced classes, particularly in math, is inconsistency in course sequencing, which affects prerequisite skill building. In some high schools, students take Algebra I, Algebra II, and then Geometry; in others, they take Algebra I, Geometry, and then Algebra II. Students moving from one sequence to the other may miss concepts they need for future success.

College professors and employers agree that to be successful beyond high school, graduates should have mastered the content typically taught in a rigorous four-year course sequence of Algebra I, Geometry,

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Algebra II and statistics. In addition, there is growing consensus that students should take math during their senior year in high school – preferably a course beyond Algebra II – to ensure that they continue to strengthen their knowledge and skills. No matter what path they choose after they finish high school, students who have taken more demanding math courses are better prepared.

In a study that followed a cohort of students from their high school through postsecondary years, Clifford Adelman found that the highest level of math taken in high school was directly related to earning a Bachelor's degree. Students who do not take challenging math courses are much less likely to complete a Bachelor's degree, while those who complete Algebra II in high school *more than doubled* their chances of earning one.

Supports for Mobile Students

Seniors who move to a new school are particularly at a disadvantage. They are at the end of their public school career and not only have to learn to navigate a new system, they may have problems transferring credits and other requirements to graduate on time. A decade ago, following the 2001 SETS Study, the U.S. Army instituted a policy that recognized the stress that a move during the senior year has on a student. The Senior Stabilization Policy has to be requested by the soldier from his command during the student's junior year in school and, when approved, allowed soldiers with high school seniors to refrain from Permanent Change of Station (PCS) movement during the child's senior year. This policy remains in force today. As one student commented, "I love the senior stability act. I think it is very important to graduate from a school that I attended for more than a couple of months."

Few other individuals who were interviewed for the EMC-21 Study, however, appeared to be aware of the policy, including the following administrator:

"I dealt with a transfer student days ago. She was a senior and she needed a PE credit if she was to graduate from high school. The problem was she had been to four schools in the past couple years, so translating the credits was really hard. If a kid transfers their freshman or sophomore year, you usually deal with the social part of the transition. But if they are a Junior or Senior, you're dealing with graduation requirements. If the Army is looking at this they need to move them when they are a freshman or sophomore, not a junior or senior."

Administrator

Two options that support students who move to a new school and find themselves at risk of not graduating are technology and reciprocal graduation. While these are not new, they have become more prominent since the 2001 SETS Study. Online classes are growing in popularity and can provide flexibility for the school to support mobile students who lack credits to graduate or whose move triggers problems due to coursework or schedule incompatibilities. The option to take the class online has opened up opportunities for students with schedule conflicts. Counselors can help students find classes through a state virtual school program or some other accredited institution. Technology can greatly help mobile students:

"Aventa is our online curriculum. We use it for students to make up a requirement they failed, but next year we are going to open it up to students who transfer in with a class we don't have. The example that comes to mind is Japanese. We don't teach Japanese as a foreign language. On Aventa we can teach students who transfer in with a class we can't match. A big part of the reason for doing that is to open up more possibilities for our students who transfer in."

Teacher

Reciprocal graduation policies have also helped students who lack sufficient credits or are unable to complete testing requirements required to graduate at a new school but who can meet graduation requirements at his previous school.

Reciprocal graduation agreements have existed in the past and were referenced in the SETS Study that was published in 2001. Before the MIC3, these agreements were generally informal, engineered between the student's sending and receiving schools to facilitate graduation. They most likely began as a conversation between counselor or registrar, the student, and the student's Family. The conversation focused on disparities between graduation requirements from each district: credits, testing, community service requirements, among others. As graduation at the receiving school was in jeopardy, and the school administrator coordinated an agreement with the sending school to enable the student to graduate under the requirements of the former school and receive the former school's diploma.

"… if a student comes in as a senior and they've completed the majority of their credits at their previous school and they're having to move here, then I try to work with that other school to see if we can arrange a reciprocal graduation agreement in which that student follows their requirements for graduation but we supply the courses, they supply the diploma. A lot of times that's helped. In fact we had probably about five of them last year. I've got one right now. I'm working on two more."

Administrator

Upon completion of course requirements, the student had the option of participating in the graduation ceremony at her current school but receiving her prior school's diploma, or participating in her former school's ceremony.

The MIC3 formalizes this procedure in those states that have signed the Compact. Its model language reflects three areas of concern: transitions during the senior year, exit exams, and waiver requirements. While this agreement is a boon to mobile Families that have children in high school, parents and students must be cautious that not all states have signed the Compact and that each state has its own language and unique requirements regarding graduation. Retiring personnel need also be aware that there are limitations to their children's eligibility.

> **Essential questions for parents and students to ask when Families transition across state lines, or even to a new district, include:**
>
> - What are the state requirements for graduation? Specifically, how many credits are required and in what subjects? Are there other requirements such as community service or a senior project?
> - Are there local requirements in addition to state requirements?
> - Are there different diplomas offered? What are the requirements for each?
> - Is there a state test for graduating? Are there alternatives to the state test?
> - What alternatives are available for children with unique learning challenges?

Then and Now:
The Secondary Education Transition Study (2001) and Education of the Military Child in the 21st Century (2011)

In 1998, the Education Trust, Inc. reported that too few students were enrolled in curriculum that they needed to succeed in college or to have a high paying job or profession. Since then, the focus of education in America has shifted to career- and college-readiness, and coursework and assessments leading to graduation requirements reflect that shift. To support this change of focus, the 2001 SETS Study created an "Academic Passport" model that proposed a clear academic direction with a challenging plan pointed toward postsecondary opportunities, enabled portability of the education experience, helped to safeguard

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a student from unpleasant coursework surprises when he enrolls in a new school, and looked two years into the future. This passport is as valid today as it was then.

Also of importance in 2001 was exit level testing as a requirement; that continues to be used currently. However, assessing college readiness is new: Colorado, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, West Virginia, and Wyoming have incorporated College Board and ACT assessments into their graduation requirements. The results of both exit and college readiness exams are used to improve curriculum and delivery systems in school systems.

Successful students have traditionally progressed through systems which have accountability and consistent support systems.

In the 2001 SETS Study, many stakeholders spoke about problems with mobile students graduating on time. Since then, access to real-time information before the move via the internet has helped them become more informed about different state and school district courses, policies and procedures, and helped make smoother transitions for students. According to one parent, "We knew what-all he needed to graduate."

Mobile Military-connected students experience many problems due to time constraints: spending an average of three years in one district means they have little time to learn the local support system; staff is less likely to know the mobile student; they have no cohort group with whom they will enroll in classes; parents are unlikely to know the "right teacher." Successful students have traditionally progressed through systems which have accountability and consistent support systems. These support systems guide and support students through the school curriculum. In 2001, the study also revealed a need for a standardized system for exchange, understanding, articulation, and reciprocity built upon structures focused on helping children and schools. This is still a need because not all states are aware of MIC3 Compact nor have they all signed.

Recommendations

Parents and Students:

- Contact or visit the installation School Liaison Officer to find out as much information as possible about school district procedures to help ensure a smooth school transition for the child.
- Visit the installation School Liaison Program website for information about the new school district.
- Be familiar with the U.S. Army Senior Stabilization Policy and know the timeline required for application. This policy requires planning in advance as there are filing deadlines.
- As far in advance of a move as possible, parents and students should research course and testing requirements, grading scales, and different diplomas available at the new school. Parents should also be sure to check dates of documents found to ensure that information is current – requirements can change.
- Look for specific information about graduation requirements such as course sequencing; eligibility policies for inclusion in special/advanced programs; mandatory courses/work for college-track/ distinguished diploma; and projects, volunteer hours, thesis, or online course requirements when researching a new school.
- Hand-carry school records from the previous to the new school. Make sure the records are complete and current. Also request documentation such as a course catalogue that explains courses and diploma requirements.
- Be especially vigilant if a student has unique learning challenges; plan to work closely with counselors and administrators to ensure that they meet graduation requirements and will graduate on time.
- Upon arrival at a new school, ask school personnel about waivers for requirements.

- For the mobile student, quality and quantity are key to improving the odds of graduating on time and being prepared for life after graduation. Students should take as many academically challenging courses as possible, and take a rigorous curriculum, not merely courses that will meet minimum. This means planning a curriculum of sufficient academic intensity to prepare for college- and career- readiness.
- Take as challenging a math curriculum as possible. A solid mathematics background has been shown to be a predictor of both college and work success. Most schools require Algebra I at a minimum for graduation, but college- and career- readiness require a minimum of Algebra II.
- Be aware of opportunities for maximizing credit all the way through high school, not just after a move when gaps threaten graduation: credit by exam, summer school, online classes, college courses for dual enrollment, and evening academies. These are opportunities to earn additional credit or to "get ahead."
- Choose elective classes with an eye to build one's academic resume while exploring career and interests.
- Take advantage of programs such as AVID, AP, IB, and dual enrollment. In addition to providing opportunities to earn credits in coursework that prepares the student for a successful future, they are portable; that is, they have high transfer probability.
- Make connections with school counselors. These staff members have information about colleges and scholarships and can help students with applications and supporting documentation.

Schools:

- Set up a means of waiving residency and honors/awards prerequisites with a goal of inclusion for all students.
- Use print, media, and school websites to distribute information about tiered diplomas and graduation requirements. Include information about testing and non-academic requirements such as projects or community service.
- Be sure school staff is familiar with the concept of reciprocal graduation and is working with incoming seniors and their parents to ensure they are familiar with this option.
- Make sure staff is familiar with MIC3 and is able to use it with juniors and seniors to their benefit. (See Appendix H)
- When students leave, particularly juniors and seniors, provide them with a packet that explains the school's grading scale. Also include information about state testing and non-academic graduation requirements the student may have participated in.
- Work with state education agencies to standardize credits needed for graduation, grading systems, diploma levels, and bonus credit awarded for Honors/AP/IB classes. Mobile students don't move just within a state, and efforts to standardize should bridge state borders.

The Local Military installation:

- Have the School Liaison Officer in conjunction with the Public Affairs Office develop and promote campaigns on graduation, testing, and scholarships.
- Work with the local district to offer state and college readiness test preparation.
- Provide a link to local school websites as a means of ready access for parents and students to locate graduation, testing, scholarship, and contact information.
- Continue to partner with the local district, working closely with administration to stay attuned to how Military-connected students are oriented.
- Use installation resources to reinforce the need for selecting a rigorous program of study for the mobile student.

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"We really forged a strong partnership with the installation. Our Algebra II class went out to the firing range to work with the trajectories on the Howitzers. Our Spanish III class has gone over to Special Forces where they speak only Spanish and they've seen how that has applied. Our Fire Science Academy has gone to Fort Bragg's fire department and worked with them as well."

Administrator

A partnership is the collaboration between two entities with a common goal, focusing on what organizations rather than individual efforts can do to solve a problem or enhance a current success. This is accomplished through deliberately establishing joint missions that allow identification of problems and mutual goals in addressing them. In the case of installation/school district partnerships, the goal is success for all students. A strong collaboration between installation and school district, one in which leadership understands and respects its counterpart's resources and constraints, is important to success for the mobile Military student. It creates a shared vision that benefits students, educators, and Military Families, increasing predictability for mobile students and allows customized responses to their challenges.

Partnerships between Military communities and educational systems represent a mutual investment in Military-connected students. These partnerships define objectives to guide the installation and school district in overcoming education barriers for children who experience deployment and mobility. Working together, the installation and school district can increase educators' knowledge of the Military-connected student's educational needs while creating an environment that will benefit all students. What was true ten years ago is still true today: partnerships can make a difference.

Partnerships are powerful tools for extending the reach and resources of a school district. Partnering with the Military installation is just one possibility. An excellent example of the wide net of partnerships exists in one school district as noted by this administrator:

"We do all of these: the Military installation, community colleges, the four-year colleges, and the businesses are all involved on our campus. Our businesses, we try and partner to the school, of course, but we also encourage them if they have a field that our students are looking for mentors in. We have a senior project for them to open their businesses up to be mentors and also to come participate in the grading of those students when they have to present it on a panel…we have an academy that has community college classes that are available to our students. And then we have the math and science academy that has a partnership with our four-year university."

Administrator

The 2001 SETS Study found that school and U.S. Army cultures are different and that school staff expresses a deep appreciation for the Military and have a genuine concern for Military children. Its recommendations included the need to communicate for both school district and installation; emphasizing strategies that support customized attention to students; developing and supporting joint installation and school system professional development; informing school staff about Army life and culture; and creating partnership activities. Many of these measures are in place in school districts with concentrated Military-connected student populations today. As one parent noted, "The installation I think is as involved as we ask them to be."

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There are fundamental differences between Military and school cultures, identified in the SETS 2001 study and shown in the table below:

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INSTALLATION AND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Military Culture	School Culture
Straightforward, standardized, authoritarian control highly regarded and necessary	Local, decentralized control, individualized decision-making
Expectation of rapid response and decision making	Expectation of measured, thoughtful planning
Change counters trends toward complacency	Tenure rewarded

Because of these differences, partnerships between installations and school districts take continuous, increased effort to sustain. A strong working partnership makes it possible for these differences to be complementary rather than conflictive.

The EMC-21 Study research on partnerships was informed by responses from installations, school districts, school administrators, educators, and parents. Installations and administrators were asked to describe the existing partnership programs that support Military-connected children and the mechanisms that were in place for partnering and communication. Educators and parents were asked to describe the range of partnerships they had with the installation, and with post-secondary academic institutions and businesses. Among the responses in EMC-21 Study are stories of both exemplary partnerships as well as areas of concern.

Study Findings

In order to sustain a partnership, it must be nurtured even as Families and Military, education and community leaders come and go. Stakeholders need regular training and updating, and meetings between them must be meaningful and productive. Many factors over the past decade have prevented partnerships from becoming the strong bond they have the potential to be.

The data about partnerships from the EMC-21 Study found:

- Relationships and communication between installation leadership and their supporting school district leadership appear to be in place.
- Stakeholders view turmoil, such as is seen with the increased tempo of transition and deployments, as being detrimental to development and maintenance of partnerships.
- Partnerships between school districts and local business exist and are important to school districts.
- Partnerships between school districts and post-secondary education institutions have increased dramatically since SETS 2001.
- Parents who reside on an installation have a different perception of partnerships than Families who live in the civilian community.

Partnership Attributes

Entities make the decision to partner, not just for partnership's sake but because they see mutual benefits and results and they want to accomplish goals that otherwise could not be achieved working separately. The research literature on this subject makes it clear that effective partnerships share some common attributes. The ASCD (formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) Partnership Model offers four attributes of an effective partnership, and the Annenberg model extends that list to include specific characteristics:

The ASCD Partnership Model	Annenberg Institute for School Reform: Effective Partnerships
• Both sides have to want to do it and be willing to make it work; the planning, visioning, and problem solving are joint endeavors. • Effective partnerships must be flexible because the context on both committed, sides of the partnership changes. • Partnership is not a one-time event – partners must keep tending the relationship. • While the objectives are strategic, effective partnerships start small and build gradually.	• Partnerships are more than just collaboration. • They build civic capacity. • Partners need to assess effectiveness, identify what needs to be improved, and define actions to take. • They need to begin with the end in mind. • Partnerships need to have champions that are powerful leaders. • They need to distribute accountability among the partners. • Both sides should make good use of data.

Partnerships, then, represent a process rather than an end state, and an effective partnership is rarely based on the presence of a single attribute. Rather, effective partnerships are created from combining multiple attributes and evolve over time; they require close attention to be able to adjust to changes as they occur. Although partnerships are established between organizations, or institutions, effective partnerships rest on individuals and the ongoing communication among the people who are part of those organizations.

On its MilitaryK-12Partners website, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) states that installation leadership understanding the education organizational structure "is critical to forging long-lasting partnerships. Such partnerships can be an important way for Military leaders to understand local education choices and policies to better support installation Families."

Effective partnerships are created from combining multiple attributes and evolve over time; they require close attention to be able to adjust to changes as they occur.

Given the current tempo of operations and the demands of repetitive deployments, it is important to the U.S. Army that Soldiers are able to quickly and efficiently assimilate upon transitioning to a new installation. For Soldiers, it is important that, for their children, transitions between school systems occur in a similar manner, without undue frustration and friction. Partnerships can help by ensuring that the installation has information about the school system to provide for parents and that school staff have information about Army life and culture that will allow them to be sensitive to children's needs. However, each district is likely to have different policies and procedures due to the local nature of the public education system. As DODEA notes, "the establishment of education as a basic right lies with each of the 50 states and territories, and as a result, means we have 50 different and unique systems for how we educate children."

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Existence and Growth of Partnerships

Installation staff, responding to interview questions about partnerships with the local school district, frequently cited the Adopt-A-School program as being very strong and structured, and reported that their installation was connected with the education system. They reported that someone from the installation leadership, normally the Garrison Commander, attended school board meetings or had an installation representative present, and several School Liaison Officers (SLOs) spoke of attending board meetings and carrying information back to share with supervisors and with Garrison Command. Installations reported that they were effectively informing the local school district about deployments and significant unit movements. Several installations reported meeting periodically with community and school district leaders in addition to school board meetings to share information. One SLO noted that "it's a sense of fostering our relationships with the total community."

School district administrators were generally satisfied with the information provided by the installation and were positive about installation leadership participation in school board meetings. Forums between the installation and school district leaders varied from quarterly to annually.

All school district administrator responses indicated that they were knowledgeable about and appreciative of the installation/district partnership. They spoke of Military unit involvement on campus and of staff interaction with School Liaison Officers (SLO), Military Family Life Consultants (MFLC), and the Child Youth and School Services (CYSS). Few teachers, however, appeared to be aware of partnerships with the installation, with only eight of the teachers who were interviewed speaking of any Military affiliation. Those who did speak of partnership with the installation spoke of Adopt-A-School and Partners in Education

"I've been here since 2001, and ever since we've started the deployments it's been very difficult for Military units to remain active on campuses."

Administrator

programs, but felt that the tempo of deployments had been a factor in preventing the partnership from being as robust as it might otherwise be. This lack of acknowledgement of partnering may be due to leadership, teachers not having contact those partners, or perhaps because no question asked of educators specifically pointed to partnership.

Parents spoke in positive terms of school/installation partnerships. There were numerous references to SLOs, MFLCs, and CYSS serving the needs of their children. Military units were also cited, particularly for the soldier involvement in the Adopt-a-School program.

One parent's response shows an awareness of partnering happening at the school level:

"I see soldiers in here all the time. When we first moved here, they were helping children walk to school and they were helping with traffic flow. I don't see that as much now, but they're always in the school in the library helping sort books, and with any kind of special event we have, they're out helping to monitor that."

Parent

The responses from school administrators, educators, and parents are summarized in the table below. While specific questions addressed partnerships, responses that contained terms such as "relationship," "work with," "together," etc. were included in the examination of partnerships.

TYPES OF PARTNERSHIPS CITED BY RESPONDENT GROUP

	Installation (SLO, MFLC, CYSS)	Military Unit (AAS)	Post Secondary Education	Business	Service Organization (Including MCEC)	Other Districts: SETS MOA-Like
Administrators (8-12)	29	14	42	20	20	6
Administrators (K-7)	15	26	15	20	13	-
Educators (8-12)	6	1	2	-	-	3
Educators (K-7)	1			1		1
Parents (8-12)	43	2		-	4	1
Parents (K-7)	54	6	1	-	3	

Partnerships within the Community

Partnership with the Military installation is only one possible partnership. Schools maintain a wide range of partnerships in the community, and Military-connected children in those schools benefit from those partnerships as well. Most sites that participated in the EMC-21 study spoke of partnering with businesses and the local community, from working with a karate studio to a large corporation that builds planes. According to one administrator, "As far as the community leaders are concerned, anytime we need them to do something, all we need to do is ask." One school administrator showed the range of support the local community was willing to provide for local schools:

"The installation is pretty far away from us, so we don't do a lot with them, but we certainly reach out to the community. They provide mentors for us. They provide professional expertise for, say, our Science Olympiad. They have provided us with monetary support for accelerated math and other things. The come over and eat lunch with students and just provide someone to role model appropriate adult communication. They are our cheer leaders. They provide an authentic audience for our music groups. They organize field day. We've got a real strong supportive business partner."

Administrator

School District Partnerships with Postsecondary Education Institutions

School district partnerships with postsecondary education institutions have increased dramatically in the decade following the 2001 publication of SETS. Most often, study participants referred to community colleges in this regard, citing dual or concurrent enrollment programs. Strong collaborative relationships between community college and high school partners make sense for a variety of reasons. Such partnerships can:

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- Strengthen the ties between the K-16 sectors, leading to enhanced partnerships and strengthened collaboration;
- Build closer ties between colleges and communities;
- Reduce college tuition costs for students and Families;
- Help a broader range of students make the transition from high school to college;
- Provide greater academic opportunities for students; and
- Reduce time to degree at the postsecondary level (Robertson, Chapman, Gaskins, 2001).

These reasons make sense to educators and administrators, who agree that

"We have a great relationship with the community college right up the road where our students can take courses and earn college credit. Those students see that college is possible and they've already earned credits before they ever graduate. They may have been at-risk students that we didn't think would move on to higher education. They have pursued that because of that partnership."

Administrator

Place of Residence Can Affect Perception of Partnerships

Parent responses show a split in opinion on partnerships, largely dependent on where they reside. Parents who reside and have children attend school on an installation have a different perception of partnerships than do Families who live in the civilian community. Parents who reside on the installation were more likely to enroll their children in CYSS-sponsored programs, which they often cited as partnership examples even though they are base-sponsored activities. However, since the majority of Soldiers and their Families reside and attend public school off the installation, many elect not to participate in installation programs and may lack familiarity with existing partnerships/joint programs. They perceive partnerships as being between school district and various groups such as Adopt-A-School and Partners in Education.

Parents who reside on the installation were more likely to enroll their children in CYSS-sponsored programs, which they often cited as partnership examples even though they are base-sponsored activities.

In Summary

Both Military and educational respondents find that is it difficult to maintain partnerships in times of turmoil. Both are currently in turmoil - Military installations are faced with constant in and out flows of personnel; school districts experience financial uncertainty. Despite this, relationships between the installation leadership and the local school districts appear to be functional and in place. However, while all sites that participated in the EMC-21 Study spoke of a mutual partnership, it may not have translated into a strong feeling of campus-level involvement by teachers. Installation/district partnerships tend to be structured so that decision-making occurs at the leadership level with programs that stem from that partnership seated on campus. Teachers may not be aware of the partnership/program relationship, and this may open up possibilities for staff development for teachers.

Robust, longstanding partnerships between installations and schools districts do exist and benefit students, as pointed out in this administrator's interview:

"The Military installation has been awesome, and we have an absolute very good connection with them. Our school liaisons are often here. They serve on our school improvement team, and then they do a very good job helping us stay connected with Families who may be having trouble transitioning. And then in the past two years, we've been in contact with the garrison commander, and he has put out to all of his units to partner with us as well. So we've taken each of our classes, and we've said, "How can we give them the hands-on experience of what it looks like in the Military?" And so last year our physics students got to go out to the artillery range and see them shoot the artillery rounds and then talk about it from a physics perspective."

<div align="right">Administrator</div>

Districts appreciate the willingness shown by the local installation to support children, as shown by this administrator's comments:

"Even though the discussion has just started, the resources that are out there on the post have been very receptive to wanting to assist. As an institution that's trying to get the kiddos here, to have people that are going to support us like that has been real positive. I think they take that into consideration when they're developing daily activities for kids."

Parents also praised partnership:

"They [the school and installation] interact very well. I wouldn't even think of them as two different entities, they just work so closely together. They seem very linked. There's a lot of support on both ends, and the school supports the kids that are in the Military and make sure they have the extra help."

<div align="right">Parent</div>

Then and Now:
The Secondary Education Transition Study (2001) and Education of the Military Child in the 21st Century (2011)

"The fundamental architecture of this agreement is to sustain partnerships that serve as extraordinary models."

<div align="right">Secondary Education Transition Study, page 107</div>

The Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) found strong examples of partnerships between installation and school districts, and saw the benefits to children. SETS recommended that these practices be widely practiced. Ten years after the study was published, this remains true. SETS recommended establishing partnerships on several levels, including structures, policies, and relationships. The SETS study identified promising practices for partnerships and included in the SETS Memorandum Of Agreement Guiding Principles: connecting the installation School Liaison Officer (SLO) with school district counterparts through a working group to share ideas about partnership systems; collaborating with the installation to provide a community orientation program for Military Families; establishing a Military child committee; and establishing a local action plan. These recommendations have been established between installations and school districts worldwide. In some cases disruptions resulting from pace and number of deployments have made it difficult to focus on building and maintaining partnerships.

These activities may be seen in many districts serving large numbers of Military-connected students. Again, absences of leadership caused by deployments may be a reason for lack of thriving partnerships at some locations.

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Recommendations

The installation:

- Continue educating school staff about Military culture and the needs of Military children.
- Highlight and promote partnerships that are effective during times of rapid change of Military leadership that results from deployment.
- Set up systems to communicate information about schools.
- Allow opportunities that highlight partnering, to include time off for Soldiers to attend teacher/parent conferences, Soldiers' presence on school campuses during duty and tutoring times, and field trips to installation events and resources.
- Provide a method to gauge progress.

Schools:

- Use a variety of media to communicate current, accurate, timely information about both school, community, and installation offerings.
- Use professional development opportunities to share strategies, resources, and effectiveness indicators with the local installation.
- Ensure that educators have knowledge of U.S. Army culture and life and particularly about deployment.
- Ensure Military representation on the local school board.
- Continue collaborating with community colleges and other postsecondary education institutions.
- Provide a method to gauge progress.

Both the School and Installation:

- Promote partnerships to allow them to grow and be used by stakeholders.
- Educate all stakeholders in the intent of partnerships, ensuring that stakeholders know that partnerships exist to improve educational opportunities for all children.

School districts who have a high percentage of Military-connected children may find it useful to devote a segment of pre-service staff development to Military culture and life. One school district partnered with the local installation to accomplish this task. The district served about 7500 students attending 12 campuses; there is a 58 percent mobility rate for students. There have been numerous deployments from this installation, and recently a ceremony was held to honor 14 soldiers killed in combat over the last year. One teacher spoke of the value she found in the one activity presented in partnership with the installation:

"This fall when the new teachers came in during their week of staff development they had a short course called Army 101. It was especially helpful in identifying what programs are available to Military Families.

The commander and his wife came and talked to us about what Military life is like – they have five children and they have been moved every two to three years. They described the Soldiers' clothing and talked about rank and what it looks like on the clothing. Then they had all of the Military services come and within two sessions, two Wednesday nights for four hours, they spoke about every program that Military Families could access so that we could ask questions. The second night a representative from the Wounded Warriors came. The gal that heads it up from the hospital came and talked about this or that behavior when you have a parent teacher conference – say the person in the Military gets angry very quickly – she told us what could be the possible reason for it. She explained what is going on with these multiple deployments.

I would like to see that be a presentation every year or every two or three years, because we need to be aware of what is available. I think it should be required for all of us "golden oldies" who have been here for so many years, because we tend to forget that things change. I would like to see it done through a staff development day. They can do all that on a staff development day."

Teacher

Work Cited

Students At the Center: An Education Resource for Families, the Military, and Schools, MilitaryK-12Partners – a DODEA Partnership Program, **www.MilitaryK12partners.dodea.edu/studentsatthecenter;** accessed 3 January 2011.

Robertson Piedad F., Chapman Brian G., and Gaskin, Fred, eds. "Systems for Offering Concurrent Enrollment at High Schools and Community Colleges," New Directions for Community Colleges

Ways School Districts and Installations May Partner

Partnerships may produce many opportunities to connect the Military community to the public school system.

Some of the partnerships activities may include:

- Guest readers for classrooms or events
- Playground activities and volunteers
- School festival/student activities volunteers
- Military Appreciation ceremonies at school events
- PTA events and meeting attendance
- Develop a flexible attendance policy that allows time and supports for deployment-related absences
- Encouragement and time for Soldiers to attend Parent Teacher Conferences
- Resources for teachers who have students with deployed parents

Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Programs

- Tutoring program focused on credit recovery for students who have recently moved into the community
- Celebrations hosted by CYSS with local schools
- Shared professional training opportunities between CYSS and other health professionals
- Social networking/deployment support groups held during lunch
- CYSS Sports fields utilization by district schools for events
- Schools provides homework assignments to CYSS Homework Labs
- MFLC available to service students in need of added support

Installation supports

- Fire and Safety provide training and inspections for the on post schools
- Army Community Services training and activity support
- School Band performs at a variety of installation events
- Transportation support throughout the school year, both on installation and school district, to extracurricular performances or tutoring sessions
- Staff development trainings to teach school staff about Military culture and life
- Military Appreciation events recognize those in the community who are supportive
- Army Strong Awards presented at local schools
- Spouses Club Scholarships

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SETS UPDATE THEMES AND FINDINGS

Themes	Findings
Calendars and Schedules	• The different ways schools structure their time can amplify transition challenges for students. • School calendars are inconsistent and can vary even within a district. • Moving between a traditional or block schedule can cause loss of credit. • Loss of Credit may be mitigated by credit recovery classes, especially online classes in which a student may work at his own pace.
Special Needs	• Families who have children with special needs are particularly affected by mobility, and each move entails a level of complexity in resetting Family life activities that other Families will not have. • There is inconsistency in programs and services available to students with special needs from state to state and district to district. • Educators are concerned that delays in receiving records may result in delayed initiation of services and can cause students to lost learning time.
Extracurricular Activities	• Data from the study shows the value of extracurricular activities for the mobile student and supports the literature. • The study indicates that, while schools may understand how important extracurricular activities are to mobile students, extracurricular activities are governed by state associations, thus limiting their flexibility to work with the mobile student. • In 40 states and the District of Columbia, this flexibility has been enhanced by The Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunities for Military Children. • Activities that are portable, such as band and choir, can provide a broad and instant group of friends at a new location. • Students and parents look to all forms of extracurricular activities as a means of keeping students actively engaged and of obtaining scholarships. Being denied access to scholarshilps can affect post-secondary options.
Enrichment Programs	• Students who are served by enrichment programs often have challenges in transition, as well as program continuity. • These challenges include different programs in the new location, having to re-qualify for inclusion in a gifted program, and differing program requirements such as some states identifying able learners as special needs students and requiring an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to receive services. • Elementary students are particularly affected by those barriers, since identification as a gifted student affords them entrée into specialized services.
Academics	• Data from the study points to a range of experiences and perceptions regarding students' ability to be successful academically when they enter a receiving school's classroom from prior settings. • Some teachers report students entering their class underprepared for the local academic requirements, while others speak about students come in ahead. • Curricula differed from school to school with differences in scope and sequence the most commonly discussed; mathematics, specifically as it leads up to algebra and higher level mathematics coursework. • Middle schools offering algebra and geometry courses to advanced students along with the mechanics of awarding credit for those courses was a concern mentioned frequently by school personnel. • Few states require a state history course in high school to graduate. • The MIC3 placement provision gives the receiving school flexibility to waive prerequisite courses and other preconditions to enrollment in courses as well as the ability to place the student who transfers into classes based on the student's enrollment in the sending state, including enrolling in similar courses in other schools if the receiving school does not offer such coursework.

Graduation	• Graduation requirements, tiered diplomas, prerequisite courses, grading variations, and state high stakes testing are all challenges to the student in transition.
	• The majority of school personnel participating in the study showed their understanding that incoming high school students may have additional needs that those who have attended their school long-term may not have.
	• The Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunities for Military Children has three provisions affecting graduation for mobile Military-connected students: a waiver graduation for mobile Military-connected students: a waiver requirement, an exit exam requirement, and a transfer during senior year requirement that make a formal structure of reciprocal graduation agreements.
Partnerships	• Data indicates that partnerships between school districts and installations have developed unevenly since the 2001 SETS publication.
	• In many of the locations of the EMC-21 Study, deployments have been frequent, and Military focus and resources have been directed to mission.
Technology	• The Internet is beginning to free education from the traditional constraints of resources, specifically books, buildings, and time.
	• Most virtual schools are structured like traditional schools with a central office, administrators, teachers, professional development, curriculum, daily attendance, grades, report cards, and parent conferences.
	• Online learning gives students the opportunity to have individualized, interactive, and self-paced instruction.
	• Children of high-mobility Military Families are served well by the flexibility and portability made possible by virtual schools.
	• Gifted students benefit from the availability of higher level coursework that might not otherwise be available because of the lack of demand for those classes.

Taken in its totality, the EMC-21 Study validates that student and parent perspectives and attitudes are generally positive. A wealth of "promising practices" was uncovered by the research in each area of the study. The overwhelming majority of Military-connected children who participated in the research have adopted effective strategies to build and sustain resilience. Ten years of war and multiple, repeated deployments, and numerous school transitions have exposed these children to some risk, which has in turn, allowed them to develop a panoply of coping skills.

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In the ten years since SETS, education professionals have become sensitive to the need of Military children, and parents have become more aware of school business. The business of education has become more complex, especially so for mobile Military Families who can be highly affected by the complexity. At the same time that there are growing national initiatives such as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that are moving towards more shared standards across states, Military Families may be still fall into the frustrating gaps across state policies, especially for families with children with special needs. Advocates for mobile Military-connected students need to press for national initiatives that create standards across states such as the CCSS.

Within the research, only 40 percent of the school districts were able to identify their military-connected students as a subgroup. To understand and support the student, the school district and the installation, a unique student identifier for this subgroup is needed. Adding this identifier will enable schools to make education decisions that mitigate the effects of mobility and deployments for military-connected students.

It is evident in the research that CYSS efforts in many initiatives, including the School Liaision Officer Program and the Military Family Life Consultant Program, and the availability of technology, have eased the turmoil caused by transition that SETS 2001 pointed out.

Appendices

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Margin sidebar labels (vertical):

Introduction and Central Themes

More than 670,000 Army Reservists have mobilized and deployed in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001.[1] This means that over 205,000 "suddenly Military" children have been impacted by the absence of a parent due to at least one deployment.[2] These children, who prior to 2001 may have never identified themselves as a Military-connected child, now have a parent who has deployed in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Enduring Freedom (OEF), or New Dawn (OND) one or more times. The Education of the Military Child in the 21st Century (EMC-21) Study included a component of research that examined the academic concerns, challenges, and school-related needs of children whose parents serve as our nation's citizen Soldiers.

Participants in this study were members or family members of the North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) and the 63rd Regional Support Command[3] (63rd RSC). The NCNG has seven units located throughout the state of North Carolina and the 63rd RSC, headquartered in Mountain View, California, supports over 40,000 U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers who reside in seven states (California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas). Ten service members, 30 spouses, and 18 children between the ages of 11 and 17 were interviewed. All participants were recruited at Yellow Ribbon events, a series of events organized to prepare activated members of the Reserve Force and their Families for deployment. The interview participants attended one of the events in California, North Carolina, or Texas. Attendees at Yellow Ribbon events were given information about the study and interested participants volunteered to be interviewed at the event or agreed to be interviewed via telephone at a later time.

The primary focus of this exploratory study was to identify the stressors and challenges related to the education of children that result from being part of the U.S. Army Reserve Military culture as well as some of the strengths and resilience factors demonstrated by children whose parents serve in the U.S. Army Reserve Forces. Specific topics addressed were:

Transitions

- Is the education of children whose parents serve in the Reserve Forces impacted by mobility?

Deployment

- How has the deployment of a parent impacted the child's education?
- What avenues of support are available?
- What types of support programs and services are being accessed?
- What type of support programs or service would parents and children like to have available?

Reintegration

- Does the reintegration of a service member back into the home and life of the child have any impact on the student's education?

The 58 interviews represented a variety of family structures:

- Single mothers
- Single fathers
- Dual Military couples
- Blended Families with parents or stepparents as service members
- Married couples with either the father or mother as the service member

The parent interviews spanned a wide range of their children's grade levels starting in pre-kindergarten or younger and advancing to the post-secondary level. The students involved in the interviews had to be at least 11 years old; however, the lowest grade level represented by the students was fifth grade.

Grade	0-2	Pre-K	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Post Secondary
Number	3	11	6	2	5	4	9	3	5	2	4	6	8	6	2	5

Table 1: Parent Interview Demographics

5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
1	5	5	3	2	2

Table 2: Grade Level of Students Interviewed

Children were educated in:

- Public School (86%)
- Private School (9%)
- Home School (5%)

Both the responses to the interview questions and stories of the parents and students provide insight into the some of the unique challenges for the "suddenly Military" children (i.e. children whose parents serve in the U.S. Army National Guard or U.S. Army Reserve and who are mobilized for a deployment). Themes and findings from this exploratory study are as follows:

THEME	FINDINGS
Transitions	• Though they may not move as frequently as their Active Duty counterparts, many members of the Reserve are mobile and their children encounter school transition challenges.
Deployments	• Parents are informing the schools about the deployment status of the service member parent.
Support During Deployments	• The parent's perception of the way the child's school supported and helped the child during a parent's deployment correlates to the overall view of how the parent sees the impact of deployment on the child's education. Parents who reported highly supportive schools or teachers also reported positive or no impact of the deployment experience on the student's education, while parents who reported schools were not helpful or ambivalent to the child's situation were more likely to express that their child's education was negatively impacted by the deployment experience. • School support differs depending on the school level (elementary, middle, or high school). Students who attend elementary school and their parents develop personal relationships with the child's teacher that facilitates this support. • More Families receive support from their church during a deployment than any other community resource, including extended Family.

Transitions

Unlike Active Duty Soldiers and their Families, U.S. Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve Families do not typically relocate as a requirement of their military service. In response to questions about moving and school transition 48 percent of Families represented in the study had relocated at some point after children began attending school. They moved for one of three reasons: a change in a parent's civilian job; a desire to relocate to a different area of town, or, as in just three instances, as the result of a Military assignment.[4] In the entire sample, there was only one parent who spent his entire life in one geographical area (city). Two students reported they had lived in the same place "my whole life."

	Move involved a school transition	Move did not involve a school transition*	Spent 20 years or more in one area	Spent entire life in one area
Parents	19	12	8	1
Students	9	7		2

Table 3: Respondents Relocation Experience
*Children were not school-age.

Transition Challenges

Transitions that are Military-related do not impact the U.S. Reservist-connected Family as frequently as Active Duty Soldiers. However, for those children who have to change schools – whether military-related, a personal choice, or for a civilian job — the most significant transition challenge is the same as it is for their Active Duty counterparts who move on an average of every three years: they must determine how and where they "fit in."

In schools on or near military installations, the "new kid" is only the "new kid" for a very short time and there are likely other highly mobile students in the school who share their experience. These schools will often have established programs to orient and help new students connect quickly, especially at the middle and high school level. There is even a good possibility the student whose parent is on Active Duty will discover friends from a previous duty assignment.

> **"...the first few days I didn't have many friends, didn't talk to anybody; just sat in class, did my work, and left. If you're not in with a group, it's really hard to make friends."**
>
> Student (U.S. Army Reserve Parent)

This is not true for the child who moves from one civilian community to another. They may be the only "new kid" in a school of strangers, especially in a small school. Most public schools not associated with a military installation typically do not experience significant turbulence and turnover within their population. Therefore the adjustment for the new student may be a little more difficult and take a little more time. Connectedness to school is a critical element in the educational arena. "In order to succeed, students need to feel they 'belong'." (Blum, 2004).

4 Four of the interview participants were family members of a full-time U.S. Army National Guard Soldier.

"I didn't know anybody in ____. I didn't know any kids that went (to the school) so I just felt uncomfortable."

Student (U.S. Army Reserve Parent)

The availability and variety of extracurricular activities was another transition-related concern. This was most prevalent among U.S. Reserve Component-connected parents living in rural areas (not atypical for many U.S. Reserve units) despite the length of time they had resided there. The variety of extracurricular opportunities was a specific concern reported by the parents who live in rural areas whether they have moved to the rural area or have lived in that area for several years.

"One of the downsides to moving to ___ was smaller schools and not as many activities for him to be able to participate in. The principal at his old school actually transferred to his new school...he knew that my husband was in the military so that gave me a sense of comfort."

Parent

"We live in a rural area about an hour and a half from Fort ____. It's a very depressed area; the entire school district population is only 338 kids, so there is not a lot available."

Parent

The student responses were more positive about extracurricular activities. All of the students reported being involved in school-sponsored sports or clubs in addition to a variety of out-of-school activities. These included 4-H, gymnastics, martial arts, private instrumental music lessons, community sports leagues, dance lessons, and art lessons. Several students also responded they simply liked to "hang out" with their friends after school.

Only three parents had moved a high school-age student. They reported the same concerns that were raised in the EMC-21 Study: academic options, course rigor, transferring credits, and social adjustments. One parent recalled her son's adjustment to a new high school taking several weeks. Her story is typical of a student finding their way by connecting themselves to a group, in this case, the band.

"It was somewhat of an adjustment... coming into an area where he didn't really know anybody. I asked 'Was there anybody to talk to?' He said, 'No, ma'am,' and he told me they laugh at him. The last week of band (camp) he slowly started opening himself up to some of his friends. When school actually started, they were pulling him into the little cliques in the band group - this is where we sit, and this is where we hang out, and these are the things that we do. If it wasn't for the band it would have take a greater toll on him trying to get adjusted to being around different people."

Parent

Another challenging transition story came from a parent who transferred her five year old first grader from a private school to a public school. The parent expressed she struggled convincing the principal to let the child be in first grade because she was so much younger than the other first grade students. Additionally, one parent reported that his children had "culture shock" when they moved from a large city in New York to a small area in Texas. And finally, two parents who moved from one city to another within their state reported differences with immunization requirements.

For the child whose parent serves on Active Duty there is always "another potential move" looming in the future, while transitions for members of the U.S. Reserve Component are not typically as frequent.

The transition stories and experiences shared by these parents – the majority of whom moved their children in their elementary years and generally only once – indicated that the transition was not a significant concern. Parents of elementary-age children do not contend with issues such as transferring high school credits, pre-requisite course requirements, try-outs for participation in athletics, and interpretation of grades for class ranking. For the child whose parent serves on Active Duty there is always "another potential move" looming in the future, while transitions for members of the U.S. Reserves are not typically as frequent.

Enrichment/Gifted Education

Eighteen of the parents interviewed responded that one or more of their children participated in some type of gifted education or enrichment program. Ten of the students interviewed were also identified (by their parents prior to the interview) as a gifted student. Three of the identified gifted students stated they attended a magnet school, and three parents said their child or children attended a magnet school. Gifted education for the high school students consisted primarily of students taking Advanced Placement (AP) classes. At the elementary level, parents described the gifted education as a pull-out program where the child leaves the classroom for a short period of time, usually once a week, or gifted education programs were described as extracurricular programs offered after regular school hours.

One concern raised in the EMC-21 Study is the process students must go through to be re-qualified for gifted and talented programs when they transition. For the U.S. Reservist parents in the study, this was never mentioned as a problem. One parent did report that the school tested her second grade student for placement in the gifted program immediately after the mother informed the child that she was deploying; the parent expressed her belief that the child was upset and did not meet the cut-off score for the gifted program. The school would not re-test the child.

The Impact of Deployment

The parents and children interviewed for this study were identified during their attendance at Yellow Ribbon events. Yellow Ribbon programs (or Beyond the Yellow Ribbon) may differ depending on the State or Reserve Command, but the program (in some places referred to as a "process") helps prepare U.S. Reservists and their Families for deployment, provide information and support during the deployment, and assist service members and Families during the reintegration process. They consist of workshops, classes and briefings for the parents, and activities for the children. Service members are required to attend all of the events (except those deployed) and Family members are invited to attend some of the phases. Examples of the differences between State Army National Guard (specifically North Carolina) and Regional Army Reserve Yellow Ribbon programs are highlighted below:

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	ATTENDEES
Phase 1	Pre-Deployment Preparation	Soldiers and Family Members
Phase 2	Deployment	Family Members
Phase 3	Post Deployment at 30, 60, and 90 Day Intervals	Soldiers and Family Members

North Carolina National Guard Yellow Ribbon

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	LENGTH	ATTENDEES
Event 1	Alert Phase	1 Day	Soldiers and Family Members
Event 2	Pre-Deployment	1 Day	Soldiers and Family Members
Event 3	Deployment	1 Day	Family Members
Event 4	Re-Deployment	1 Day	Family Members
Event 5	Post Deployment 30 Days	2 Days	Soldiers and Family Members
Event 6	Post Deployment 60 Days	2 Days	Soldiers and Family Members
Event 7	Post Deployment 90 Days	1 Day	Soldiers Only

63rd Regional Support Command Yellow Ribbon Program

The tables below summarize the number of and the relationships of the deployed parent and child of deployment experiences for the interview participants.

NUMBER OF DEPLOYMENTS	0	1	2	3	4 or more
Students Interviews (Parent or Stepparent Deployed)	-	6	11	1	-
Parent Interviews (Spouse or Soldier Deployed)	1	9	24	4	2

RELATIONSHIP OF DEPLOYED SOLDIER TO CHILD (or children)	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
Father	46*
Mother	8**
Both Parents	3

*Two were single parents; two were stepparents

** Four were single parents

All but a few of the parents interviewed said they went to the school and personally spoke with their child's teacher, principal, or counselor about the upcoming deployment. Many of them also reported they had ongoing communication with the teachers throughout the deployment via e-mail or telephone.

Students, Deployment, and School Work

The students interviewed were asked if the deployment of their parent impacted their school work.

No Impact	Grades Declined	Grades Improved
10	7	1

They responded as follows:

- Ten students said there was no impact at all;
- Seven students said their grades went down a little (six stated that they were unable to focus and one said he just quit doing homework); and
- One student said her grades went up because she tried harder.

When asked about support from schools and teachers, the students reported that at least one of their teachers (and sometimes counselors and principals) knew they had a deployed parent; however, the students did not report any specific ways these adults were supportive. Students were also asked who helped them when their parents were deployed. Without exception "friends" were viewed as the most important support.

Deployment, Schools, and Caring Adults

Each parent has a unique view of how deployment impacts their child's education thereby making it difficult to generalize the skills and abilities needed to cope with deployment. However, one trend seen in the EMC-21 Study: when parents perceive their child's school or teacher as supportive, they did not report any negative impact on the child's education. The personal attention given to the student by a teacher or administrator – and not the availability of programs – seems to be the critical element that influences the parent's perception of how well the school supports their child.

Support may be as simple as a teacher spending a few extra minutes with a student asking them how they are doing. It also may have been something on a larger scale such as the class writing letters or assembling care packages for the deployed parent's unit, or in one case, a teacher offering to be the student's guardian while the parent was deployed. For example, positive response from parents included:

> "I think that my friends helped me out a lot. Whenever your friends are there for you, it makes you feel like really good, that really helps."
>
> Student (Parent Deployment Count: 2º

> "All my best friends gave me company and advice that he would normally give me."
>
> Student (Parent Deployment Count: 1)

> "All my friends were really supportive; we're all really, really close in the Catholic schools even if you just got there that first year."
>
> Student (Parent Deployment Count: 2)

Description of Family	Comment about School Support from the Parent	Response by Parent on the Impact Deployment had on their Child's Education
Married couple with one child in the seventh grade. Father has deployed one time to Iraq.	"Her first grade teacher asked 'How is your mom? How is your dad? How are you doing?'"	"It was positive in a way that she was focused more on school...It's showing her that she can be independent or responsible. Maybe there's a challenge for her; 'while my daddy's away, I'll do better'."
Married couple with two adult children and one third grader. Father has deployed three times to Iraq.	"[The school] is fantastic. They all know, they always ask; are very, very supportive."	"I don't think it (deployment) has had any impact at all on her (education)."

Conversely, in those few instances when the parent did not view the school as supportive, their response about the impact of deployment on their child's education included issues with grades or behavior in school.

Description of Family	Comment about School Support from the Parent	Response by Parent on the Impact Deployment had on their Child's Education
Married couple with three children, an eleventh grader, a fourth grader, and a preschooler. Father has deployed two times to Iraq.	"The teachers at my daughter's school were disinterested, they didn't care, and it was no big deal to them. Her counselor was concerned and showed empathy but that's it. It was almost as if she didn't have the tools to offer."	"I would say yes. She would not be in summer school this summer for Algebra II if Dad had not been deployed I really think that if he had been home, her focus would have been just on school. She wouldn't have had to focus on him."
"Blended" family. Father/ Stepfather has deployed and Mom/stepmom cares for the children ages twelve, seven and four.	"The counselor knew about it and knew the situation [that I was staying with my stepchildren] but I couldn't say that they helped me at all."	"They were not doing well at school and I started noticing that their grades were started lowering. I would look for counseling outside of the school because the school didn't help me at all. "

There were ten parents who had children in multiple schools. Fifty percent of these parents responded with their experiences of support from one school, but not the other. It is possible that the parents viewed each child's reaction to the absence of the deployed parent separately, and was most prevalent when parents had a high school and elementary aged child. Although informed of the deployment, the high schools were perceived by parents as doing little, if anything, to acknowledge the child's situation or address problems that may have been related to the deployment.

"At the elementary schools, they allowed him to wear his little uniform. They made a big deal about it. At the high school, it wasn't the same support; it was, 'Thanks for telling us,' and that was it."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 2)

"They were ambivalent. In the elementary years they helped a lot more knowing that he was gone and they made the kids feel 'your dad is doing something important.' During the older years, they just pushed it to the side and never made a difference."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 2)

Many of the parents reported that occasionally their child would just have a "bad day," or would be feeling particularly sad about a deployed parent. When school personnel recognized this and demonstrated compassion and understanding, the sadness was short-lived. When there are caring, sensitive adults interacting with the child, problems may arise, but they are temporary and easily addressed. One concern expressed by several of the parents is that school personnel are not equipped or do not know what they should do to help children who have a deployed parent.

"I don't think they have the skills to really offer support; they really don't know how to talk to him to help him if he's having a bad day or if he seems a little bit withdrawn."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 2)

"The teachers were supportive but they weren't plugged in to any resources for students whose parents were deployed. They were doing the best that they could and trying to figure it out on their own."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 1)

"The school was very unequipped because my daughter [I think there are 3,500 kids in her high school] is the only Military child and they still did not know how to help her or support her."

Parent (Deployment Count: 2)

To this end, when asked what type of support would be helpful, several parents suggested training for school personnel to help them understand how to work with and support the Military-connected child dealing with a deployed parent would be helpful. Some parents also expressed their opinion that school counselors need to actively engage with children who have deployed parents; parents suggested counselors check up on the children, initiate conversations with the child and, when appropriate, arrange for children to meet in small groups with other children who have deployed parents. Students also expressed that teachers need to understand and be empathetic to a child with a deployed parent.

"It was harder at school when some of my teachers didn't know about my dad being away; they really couldn't connect with me because they didn't know what was going on."

Student (Parent Deployment Count: 2)

Recognizing that their child may be one of very few children who are experiencing the deployment of a parent, parents have no expectations for the schools to implement special programs. Forty-seven percent of the parents interviewed rated the support their child received from the school as "satisfactory," and they had no suggestions to improve school support.

"We don't live near a Military base so teachers and guidance counselors don't deal with Military kids on a daily basis; but they are sensitive to what we might be going through. [They are] supportive and concerned and ask questions and it was very positive."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 1)

The responses are clear: parents simply want to know that someone at the school cares. "Research has taught us that second only to family, school is the most stabilizing force in the lives of young people" (Blum, 2004). Children need to know that educators care not only about their learning but also about them as individuals. The core of a students' success is having a personal relationship with the adults in their school.

"His teacher [and] assistant teacher was superb. I was so overwhelmed about the concern they had about his father's deployment. I felt like they knew our family personally even before his father left. "

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 2)

"I didn't want my daughter to get treated differently from the others just because I was deployed."

Parent (Deployment Count: 1)

Parents' responses did not indicate they were requesting special treatment. They want their children to be held to high standards and in a safe learning environment, but they also want the educators to recognize the stressful and emotional impact a deployment may have on the student, and respond to that need with compassion and the resources available.

Informal Community Support

Both parents and students responded there were both formal and informal means of support for parents and children. "Church" was mentioned the most frequently and, in some cases, was the only support parents and children reported. Church members help with yard work, small household repairs, babysitting, taking mom out for a break, and remembering the deployed soldier with letters and packages. Church as a resource for support was mentioned twice as often as "Family." Interview participants with extended Family nearby responded they relied on grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins for assistance. Friends were mentioned with the same frequency as Family, and were primarily associated with emotional support. Many parents and children also mentioned that their neighbors had been helpful. Other informal support was found through coaches and co-workers.

Church	"My church. They were always sending care packages to my husband, and if we needed them they were there for us."
	"Not a Sunday would go by that they didn't ask how he was. I would have three or four men asking me if I needed anything done around my house."
Extended Family	"I had one uncle, my brother-in-law, who would take my son out to run and to lift weights and go to the gym; that was good."
Neighbors	"A couple individuals helped. A few came over and helped around the house. One neighbor cut our grass and another took my kids to the store when they needed something."
Members of the Deployed Soldier' Unit	"The members of his Reserve unit and members of his civilian job where he is a police officer were very helpful, called a lot and would check on me."

Parent Comments Regarding Informal Support

There were two parents who stated they had no support from anyone in the community and their children had challenges either at school or at home while their parent was deployed. These two individuals also told the field researchers that the schools were not helpful or supportive.

The type and amount of support Families received in their community varied for each person interviewed. When asked what else would be helpful, parents' ideas centered around the school and included:

- More involvement from school counselors initiating conversation individually or in small groups with children whose parents have deployed.

- Opportunities for the students to connect with other children who have a deployed parent.
- Recognition and Military appreciation programs that help the child feel special.

Formal Support Programs and Service

Both parents and children who were interviewed mentioned using formal support programs. Several parents and children responded they had accessed Our Military Kids for scholarship money to pay for private lessons (dance, music, martial arts).[5] Military One Source was frequently cited as a resource that provided helpful information and directed Families to local agencies when they need assistance. A few of the parents participated in Family Readiness Groups. Parents also reported their children had attended the National Military Family Members' Association's Operation Purple Camp, and Operation Military Kids 4-H camps.

The spouses who responded to this study were *voluntarily* attending a Yellow Ribbon Event, which

Yellow Ribbon events are an effective way to inform Families of the resources available for the spouse and children.

potentially speaks to their involvement and willingness to access available programs. A few parents did tell the field researchers that they had some difficulty determining the resources that were available, or that they found out too late in the deployment process. There are spouses who may not attend the pre-deployment events (which cover much information in a compressed period of time) and if their Soldier does not convey all the pertinent information, they may not have any other way to receive it. Yellow Ribbon events can be an effective way to inform Families of the resources available for the spouse and children. However, because attendance is not mandatory, the U.S. Reserve Commands still face the challenge of communicating available resource options to all their Families.

5 The Our Military Kids foundation gives up to $500.00 per child for participation in extra-curricular activities to Families that have deployed parents.

Reintegration

The reintegration experience for the Reservist returning to "civilian life" may be very different than for the Active Duty Soldier, but the experiences for the Family have some common elements. Parents' responses to a question about reintegration contained recurring themes such as the challenge of re-negotiating roles; often, the returning parent would need to "give up" some of the responsibilities that the parent at home had become accustomed to performing.

"The main adjustment is let him be the husband, the provider, the father to his children. He doesn't parent like I parent and there were just some things that worked for us when he was gone that we have to re-adjust to doing his way when he came home."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 2)

"It is really different when he comes home. He thought everything would be exactly the same as when he left but obviously we had changed during that year."

Student (Parent Deployment Count: 2)

"I've slowly learned to let him help me, and not look at it as if he is taking power away but he's actually helping me."

Parent (Spouse Deployment Count: 3)

Findings and Themes

U.S. Army National Guard and Reserve Families experience many of the same challenges and stresses as Active Duty Families experiencing deployment, but with potentially diminished Military and community support structures on which to rely. Children of Guard and Reserve parents are less likely to attend schools that have experience supporting children of deployed parents.

UNIT	• **Dissemination of Information**. Connect with every family through e-mail, Facebook, web-based groups, or other electronic venues to ensure every Family has access to information about the programs and services available in their community and nationally, such as Our Military Kids. In those rare instances when a family may not have home internet access, printed information should be disseminated through the mail. • **Well-Being Calls.** Several parents mentioned receiving phone calls from the unit "checking up on them." Other parents said they never received this type of call or if they did, only once. The wellness call program must be consistent and dependable. • **Continue Yellow Ribbon Events.** Parents and children were positive in their assessment of these programs.
EDUCATORS	• **Training.** Families look to the school to support and help them through the challenges of a deployment. Train and equip school personnel to work with children who have a deployed parent using a proactive, preventative approach that facilitates resilience. • **Information for the School.** Provide schools with resources [publications] that offer insight and promising practices for working with the military-connected student at all levels. Have informative publications that parents can share with their child's school.
COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES	• **Maintain Community Strength.** Geographic dispersion of the members of the U.S. Army Reserve Component can make Family support challenging. While it is not feasible to bring Military support programs to every community where Reservists live, maintaining the strength of the communities and the already existing supports could be the most feasible means of supporting the unique needs of a Family.

Conclusions

Multiple and frequent deployments over the past ten years have been a big change for the Reserve forces. Children who may have never recognized themselves as connected to the Military have a new normal that includes the extended absence of a parent, communicating with that parent via email and video chats, attending camps with other Military-connected children, and Yellow Ribbon events. Though they may not maintain this connection throughout childhood, Guard and Reserve-connected children deserve the attention, recognition, and resource investment of their Active Duty-connected peers. All of these Military-connected children serve too. The Army Reserves have recognized the impact of over ten years of deployment and the need for school transition support for Families. In 2009, the Army Reserves initiated a School Support Services Program to provide transition, deployment, and reintegration support for its Families.

Appendices

EMC
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Appendix A: Summary of Literature by Category

Topic	Citation	Method	Sample Info/Military Service
1 Academic Outcomes	(2009) Military deployments and students' academic achievement: evidence from DOD Education Activity Schools - Engel, R.C., Gallagher, L.B., & Lyle, D.S Economics of Education in Review (in press)	Comparison of Terra Nova Exam Scores	56,000 school-age students U.S. Army
2 Academic Outcomes	(1996) Implications of deployed and non-deployed fathers on 7th graders' California Achievement Test scores during a Military crisis - Pisano, M.C *Paper presented at Annual Meeting of NASP*	Questionnaire by parents and CAT percentile scores were compared	U.S. Army - 158 students 7th graders (82 females, 76 males)
3 Academic Outcomes	2006 – Using Military deployments and job assignments to estimate the effect of parental absences and household relocations on students' academic achievement – Lyle, D.S *Journal of Labor Economics*	Used U.S. Army's records of HFP to identify those with deployed parents and a rich set of descriptive statistics	13,000 observations on Military students ages 6-19 whose parents serving in active duty in Texas in 1997 or 1998.
4 Academic Outcomes	(1999) Why are residential and school moves associated with poor school performance - Pribesh, S. & Downey, D.B. *Demography*	Longitudinal Study - Questionnaire	14,929 civilian school-age students - National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988
5 Academic Outcomes	(1989) Geographic mobility and student achievement in an urban setting – Ingersoll, G.M., Scamman, J.P., & Eckerling, W.D. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*	Scores from a database	Five groups taken from 60,000 civilian students in Denver public school system
6 Academic Outcomes	(1996)Students in motion: School transfers and elementary performance – Alexander, K.L., & Entwisle, D.R. *The Journal of Education Research*	Followed each child from first to sixth grade and tracked how often and what type of move each did.	Civilian - 767 students from Baltimore public schools - assigned to three categories, "movers," "stayers," and "exiters"
7 Academic Outcomes	(2005) Consultation with Military students and schools: A proposed model – Horton, D. – *Consulting Psychology*	A model for counseling Military students	Military students

- A child whose parent deploys during the current school year scores .42 percent points, or three percent of a standard deviation, lower on his or her Terra Nova score than a child whose parent does not deploy. – A one month increase in the length of a parent's deployment reduces a child's total NCE (normal curve equivalent) score by .11 percent.
- A child whose parent is deployed during the month of the exam experiences a .92 percent point reduction in his or her MATH score relative to a child whose parent is not deployed at that time.
- For all five subjects and the total score, we observe a statistically significant negative effect, indicating that these students experience a decline in academic achievement that results from deployments as far back as five years. (Penalty associated with deployments dissipates quite slowly.)
- These findings show that the effects of a parental deployment during the school year are relatively modest and tend to dissipate after a parent's return.

The results showed a decrease in the average reading score for females for both deployed and non-deployed parents from 1990 to 1991. A statistically significant decrease was noted in average reading scores for the females of deployed fathers; however, there was no statically significant different in CAT scores for any other area among males or females.

Race, gender, parent's gender, Military parent's marital status, education level, and AFQT scores - Based on students' TAAS scores (Texas Learning Index) Math scores only. Officers' students score five to six points higher on the math section and have a smaller standard deviation in test scores than enlisted soldier's students. A child's math scores decline as the duration of the parental absence increases. Correlations are statistically significant, but their magnitudes are small. There is no significant decline in academic achievement for students with parents in the 40 percent of AFQT distribution who experience a parental absence, yet there is a significant negative effect for students with parents in the bottom 60 percent of the AFQT distribution. This finding further supports the U.S. Army's use of the AFQT score as a measure of potential success in the armed forces: the households of soldiers who have higher AFQT scores are better able to handle the parental absences associated with a Military vocation. At first glance, the fairly small magnitude of the negative effects found in this study suggests that parental absences and household relocations had little impact on the educational achievement of Military students in the late 1990's. A longitudinal study to explore how absences and relocations affect students' academic achievement over time is recommended.

We believe the association between moving and school performance is not spurious because it is robust across a wide range of subgroups. We found that even students living with both biological parents in high income families tended to experience a decline in test scores if they moved. Indeed, we were unable to identify any group that consistently benefited from moving.

Geographic mobility aversive effects are most notable in the more unstable populations and persist even under attempts to control for socioeconomic status.

The higher SES and the whites moved out of the school city system while the poor and minorities moved within the school system. Frequent movers had the lowest average on all four measures of academic achievement, whereas exiters had the highest average. The students who move most often are 'at risk" academically for other reasons as well.

Reported – Guidance Counselor at Fort Hood, Texas – "75 percent of seniors have already dropped out or skipped too much school to graduate on time" – Barbara Critchfield – Called school district; they are refuting her comments.

Topic	Citation	Method	Sample Info/Military Service
8 Geographic Mobility	(2003) Geographic mobility, Family, and maternal variables as related to the psychosocial adjustment of Military students - Kelley, M.L., Finkel, L.B., Ashby, J. *Military Medicine*	Questionnaire to assess Family cohesiveness, Family adaptability, marital satisfaction, depression, and stress.	86 (not specified Military service) mothers also completed questionnaire assessing students' psychosocial development
9 Geographic Mobility	(2000) School transitions among adolescent students of Military personnel: A strengths perspective – Stobino, J. & Salvaterra, M. *Social Work in Education*	Questionnaire was administered in group settings	All branches - 6,382 students (w/a low response rate) - potential biases in data
10 Geographic Mobility	(1994) Geographic mobility and students' emotional/behavioral adjustment and school functioning – Simpson, G.A., Fowler, M.G. *Pediatrics*	Data from the 1988 National Health Interview Survey - parent responded BPI Index	Civilian - 10,362 school-age students and their Families
11 Geographic Mobility	(2006) Military Families: The impact of relocation on Family well-being, employment, and commitment to the Military – Ender, M.G. *Military Life: The psychology of serving in peace and combat, vol. 3: The Military Family*	Review of the Literature	Military Families
12 Geographic Mobility	(1987) Adjustment and achievement associated with mobility in Military families – Marchant, K.H., & Medway, F.J. – *Psychology in the Schools*	Metropolitan Achieve-ment Test (MAT) which measures reading comprehension, mathe-matics, language, social studies, and science.	40 Military Families living on the Fort Jackson U.S. Army Base – in all cases except four, the service member was male; 90 percent enlisted and average years in Military was 13.
13 Geographic Mobility	(2010). Residential mobility, well-being, and mortality. Oishi, S., & Schimmack, U *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*	Panel study of 7,108 adults self-reported well being measures	Not Military
14 Deployment	(2007). A positive youth development model for students considered at-risk. Edwards, O.W., Mumford, V.E., & Serra-Roldan, R. *School Psychology International*	Model based on previous research	Not Military
15 Deployment	(2010). The long war and parental combat deployment: Effects on Military students and at-home spouses. Lester, P. et al *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*	Interviews	272 Military students and at-home civilian or returned Active Duty parent interviewed.
16 Deployment	(2010) The impact of deployment on U.S. Military families. Sheppard, S.C., Malatras, J.W., & Israel, A.C. *American Psychologist*	Review and commentary	N/A

Findings

Although rate of mobility was not related to child or maternal reports of students' adjustment, the longer the students had lived in their current residence, the fewer difficulties they experienced in peer relationships and fewer symptoms of loneliness they reported. These findings should be considered preliminary; similar to previous research, moving per se may not be as important as other aspects of maternal functioning and Family relationships for the psychosocial adjustment and behavior of Military students.

These data are consistent with finding of Pittman and Bowen (1994) who wrote that transitions may either strengthen or weaken academic achievement, depending on the support systems available. Academic grades for the majority were reported at the A or B level. 75 percent reported teacher instruction is good; > 50 percent of parents had more than high school education; on average students participated in two activities (ranging from 0 to more than 10); 66 percent of parents were actively involved in child's education; 68 percent attended a school function.

This article cites (Marchant & Medway, 1987) and (Whalen, 1973) who note that "multiple moves are reported to have had no negative impact on students in Military families...because the Military has support services to facilitate moving."

The most fundamental point from the research findings is that moving is associated with many negative psychological outcomes. However, it should be noted that moving can also be a positive experience that allows the Military Family to make friends in many different places, gives them the opportunity to travel and learn about different cultures, and allows for potential career growth for the service member. The findings also imply that while certain aspects of the move (e.g., previous experience, with moving, the timing and the location of the move) and certain aspects of the individual (e.g., personality, spouse employment) can influence the outcomes; the effects are always tied to just one person. The spouse, the service members, the students, Military, and civilian communities all are likely to affect how the move is perceived and how the Family copes with the process.

Contrary to expectations, the more a child had moved the greater his or her participation in social activities. The frequent mover is likely to take part in more activities and organizations than the less frequent mover and participation in such activities is positively related to school achievement.

More moves reported as students lower well-being as adults. More so for introverts because of the lack of close social relationship. Risk factor for introverts.

Asset building is beneficial to at-risk students. Resilience advocated.

Parental distress and cumulative length of deployment (combat) during a child's lifetime predicted depression, anxiety.

Research needed to inform future efforts. Model of Family stability needed and more data from current deployments is necessary.

Topic	Citation	Method	Sample Info/Military Service
17 **Deployment**	(2009) The impact of parental deployment on child social and emotional functioning: Perspectives of school staff – Chandra, A., Martin, L.T., Hawkins, S.A., Richardson, A. *Journal of Adolescent Health*	Focus groups & semi-structured interviews	148 School Staff near U.S. Army base
18 **Deployment**	(1976) Father absence in Military families – Hillenbrand, E.D. *The Family Coordinator*	Questionnaire (completed by students, mothers, and teachers)	Marine - 73 boys and 53 girls (77 officers and 49 enlisted)
19 **Deployment**	(2007) Perceived stress, changes in heart rate and blood pressure among adolescents with Family members deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom - Barnes, V.A., Davis, H.D., & Treiber, F.A. *Military Medicine*	Questionnaire	U.S. Army - 121 students (20 with deployed parent, 53 without a deployed parent and 48 civilian (All attended same school near Fort Gordon in Georgia. 74 percent were non-Caucasian
20 **Deployment**	(2007) Effect of deployment on the occurrence of child maltreatment in Military and non-military Families –Rentz, E.D, Marshall, S.W., Loomis, D., Casteel, C., Martin, S.L., Gibbs, D.A *American Journal of Epidemiology*	Review of 2000-2003 Child Files for the Texas National Child Abuse and Neglect data system	All branches - Child victims of reported maltreatment (1,399 Military and 146,583 non-Military)
21 **Deployment**	(1993) Students' reactions to the Desert Storm deployment: initial findings from a survey of U.S. Army families – Rosen, L.N. *Military Medicine*	Questionnaire	U.S. Army - 1601 students and parents filled out questionnaires
22 **Deployment**	(2009) Military deployment: the impact on students and Family adjustment and the need for care - McFarlane, A.C *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*	Review of the Literature - summarizes recent findings	Military Families
23 **Deployment**	(2007) Child maltreatment in enlisted solders' families during combat related deployments – Gibbs, D.A., Martin, S.L. & Kupper, L.L *Journal of American Medical Association*	Linked data from ACR and U.S. Army human resources data	1771 U.S. Army families who had at least one reported incidence of child maltreatment
24 **Deployment**	(2007) Parental deployment and youth in Military Families: exploring uncertainty and ambiguous loss – Huebner, A.J., Mancini, J.A., Wilcox, R.M., Grass, S.R., & Grass, G.A. *Family Relations*	Semi-structured focus groups from study participation via free camp sponsored by 4-H Military Liaisons	107 (12-18 yr old) U.S. Army – 39 percent; U.S. Navy – 10 percent; U.S. Marine - 23 percent; U.S. Air Force – 10 percent; U.S. National Guard & Reserve – 13 percent

Findings

Some students cope well with deployment, and positive aspects of deployment are increased camaraderie, sense of Family pride, and financial benefits; still, school staff felt that some students experience anxiety related to parental absence, increased responsibilities at home, poor mental health of non-deployed parents, and difficulty accessing mental health services. School staff reported that some students have displayed exceptional resiliency in the face of the deployments. Staff members shared that although there might have been a decline in academic performance when the parent was initially deployed, these students were able to organize themselves to perform well in future.

For boys - absence beginning earlier in life was associated with greater aggressiveness, irritability, depression, and impulsiveness. Perceived maternal dominance was positively related in boys to verbal ability and quantitative ability, and to Full Scale I.Q. For girls - earlier beginning absence was related to lower quantitative ability. A correlation was found between increased mathematical ability and paternal absence in eldest boys - Perhaps eldest son fills the role vacated by his father as a way to cope. Mothers reported they felt stress lowered their students' schoolwork, but many also reported their students appeared to gain responsibility and "grow up."

Adolescent offspring of Military personnel reported higher levels of stress and showed higher SBP compared with civilian adolescents. Several limitations in the study however. Trying to show link between heart rate and blood pressure to conduct disorder, major depression, and separation anxiety.

These findings indicate that both departures to, and return from, operational deployment impose stresses on Military Families and likely increase the rate of child maltreatment. Intervention programs should be implemented to mitigate Family dysfunction in times of potential stress. There is no consensus in the literature on how Military rates of child maltreatment compare with civilian rates. However, this study suggests that the rate of occurrence of substantiated child maltreatment is generally lower in Military Families but may increases as Military Families are threatened by war.

Certain symptoms such as sadness were common, but very few parents considered their students' problems serious enough to require counseling. The strongest predictor of students' receiving counseling during ODS was a previous history of being in counseling for emotional problems. Reported by parents as doing poorly in school: 13 to 18 years old boys (25 percent) and girls (15 percent); 10 to12 years old boys (24 percent) and girls (10 percent); six to nine years old boys (16 percent) and girls (two percent).

The deployment of parents confronts students with a series of developmental challenges and stresses. At times there is a need for emotional detachment, adoption of differing Family responsibilities and roles, and later, reintegration of the returning parent with the challenges of reestablishing old models of discipline and caretaking. Limitations in current literature: little research has been done on nontraditional Families, Families of female veterans, dual-career families, and single parent service members. Interventions involving Family and students are less stigmatized than treatment seeking by veterans who are identified as the patients.

Overall rate of child maltreatment was higher during the times when the soldier-parents deployed compared to the times when they were not deployed; however, the rate of physical abuse was lower during deployments. These findings are consistent with Rentz (2007) and McCaroll (2006).

1. Overall perceptions of uncertainty and loss: emotional interpretation of adolescent adaptability is individual; conflicting feelings; missing parent in everyday life, homework, activities, guidance.
2. Boundary ambiguity: changes in roles and responsibilities; routine changes at reintegration of returning parent.
3. Changes in mental health: 33 percent made statements reflecting changes in mental health.
4. Relationship conflict: 34 percent increased Family emotional intensity; changes in parent-child relationship and reunion and integration; 52 percent reported difficulty.

Topic	Citation	Method	Sample Info/Military Service
25 **Deployment**	(1996) Students' response to parental separation during operation desert storm - Jensen, P.S., Martin, D., & Watanabe, H. *Journal of American Academy Child Adolescent Psychiatry*	Questionnaire (completed by students and parents)	383 Military families - of deployed personnel (cross-sections were compared as well as longitudinally, using data collected prior to any knowledge of ODS.)
26 **Deployment**	(1998) Effects of war – induced maternal separation on students' adjustment during the gulf war and two years later – Pierce, P.F., Vinokur, A.D., and Buck, C.L. *Journal of Applied School Psychology*	Retrospective Survey	263 Air Force Mothers - Two years after Gulf War
27 **Deployment**	(2010) Deployment and the use of mental health services among U.S. Army wives – Mansfield, A., Kaufman, J.S., & Engel, C.C. *New England Journal of Medicine*	Data from electronic medical records	256,626 Wives of U.S. Army soldiers (18-48 yr old)
28 **Deployment**	(2001) Internalizing and externalizing behavior of students with Navy mothers experiencing Military-induced separation – Kelly, M., Hock, E., Smith, K.M., Jarvis, M., Bonney, J. & Gaffney, M.S. *Journal of American Academic Adolescent Psychiatry*	Mothers completed measures assessing students' behavior before and after deployment	52 U.S. Navy mothers (deployed) and 75 (non-deployed) and 32 civilian mothers
29 **Deployment**	(2009) Shadowed by war: Building community capacity to support Military families – Huebner, A.J., Mancini, J.A., Bowen, G.L., & Orthner, D.K. *Family Relations*	Suggests a new approach to support Military Families - implementing community capacity-building model	Military Families
30 **Deployment**	(2009) Caring for America's students: Military youth in time of war – Lemmon, K.M., & Chartrand, M.M. *Pediatrics in Review*	Review of the literature and recommend actions for pediatricians when treating Military students	Military families
31 **Deployment**	(2009) The psychosocial effects of deployment on Military students – Flake, E.M., Davis, B., Johnson, P.L., Middleton, L.S. *Journal of Developmental*	Questionnaire - Pediatric Symptom checklist, Parenting Stress-Index and Perceived Stress Scales	U.S. Army - 116 Spouses with a deployed service member and at least one child aged 5 - 12 years old
32 **Deployment**	(2009) Students on the home front: The experience of students from the Military Families – Chandra, A., Cinisommo, S.L, Jaycox, L.H., Taneilian, T., Burns, R.M., Ruder, T. & Han, B. *Pediatrics*	Computer assisted telephone interview with students (11-17 years old) and primary caregiver	1507 Military Families 57 percent - U.S. Army 20 percent - U.S. Air Force 16 percent - U.S. Navy

Findings

Students of deployed personnel experienced elevated self-reported systems of depression, as did their parents. Families of deployed personnel reported significantly more intervening stressors, compared with students and families of non-deployed personnel. For students showing more persistent or pervasive psychopathology, factors other than simple deployment should be considered. However, deployment per se rarely provoked pathological levels of symptoms in otherwise healthy students. Boys and younger students appear to be especially vulnerable to deployment effects.

The main predictors of students' adjustment problems at time of war were mothers' difficulties in providing for the care of the students, mother's deployment in the theatre of war (vs. deployed elsewhere) and degree of changes in students' lives. Most important: war-adjustment problems were not related to students' adjustment two years later, suggesting that the effects of maternal separation during the war were transient. Also found in this study: parental strain that accumulates from feelings of guilt and responsibility for inadequate arrangements for the care of the students contributes to poor mental health of the mother, which in turn, adversely affects the students' well-being.

The deployment of spouses and the length of deployment were associated with mental health diagnosis; received more diagnosis of depressive disorders: sleep disorders, and anxiety; the longer the deployment the more excessive the symptoms.

U.S. Navy students with deployed mothers exhibited higher levels of internalizing behavior than students with non-deployed U.S. Navy mothers. U.S. Navy students whose mothers experienced deployment were more likely to exhibit clinical levels of internalizing behavior than U.S. Navy students with non-deployed mothers or civilian students. Group differences, however, were modest and overall mean scores were in the normal range. These findings do not suggest greater pathology in students of U.S. Navy mothers; however, findings do indicate there should be particular attention to deployed mothers and their students.

The community (larger context), power of informal and formal networks, are endemic to a community perspective as partner in support of Military Families. Connect potentially isolated families to areas of support – strengthen informal networks of support for Military Families. 4-H/U.S. Army Youth Development Project, Operation: Military Kids, (recreational, social, and educational programming, camps, the AF Community Readiness Consultation model, Essential Life Skills for Military Families (program - ELSMF).

Younger students, boys, students with pre-existing emotional or behavioral problems, and students whose non-deployed parent evidenced psychopathology were at higher risk for mental health difficulties. The attempts of the Military member to assume pre-deployment roles may lead to Family conflict as roles are renegotiated; 78 percent of battle-injured soldiers who screen positive for PTSD or depression at seven months post-deployment had screened negative for these conditions one month after return. Successful adaptation to these stresses is an essential feature of healthy development and most Military youth tolerate this stress well, as do other students who experience relocation and parental absences.

Parenting stress significantly predicted an increase in child psychosocial morbidity; Parents utilizing Military support reported less child psychosocial morbidity; parental college education was related to decrease in child psychosocial morbidity; the effects of Military rank, child gender, child age, and race did not reach statistical significance; positive school climate has been shown to impact not only academic performance but also positively influence emotions and behaviors of students; students of younger-age parents, shorter duration of marriage, and lower SES were at higher risk for having psychosocial symptoms in this sample; the majority of parents (64 percent) felt supported by the Military.

Length of parental deployment and poorer non-deployed caregiver mental health were significantly associated with a greater number of challenges for students both during deployed and deployed-parent reintegration. Family characteristics were also associated with difficulties from deployment. Older youth and girls of all ages reported significantly more school, Family, and peer-related difficulties with parental deployment.

Topic	Citation	Method	Sample Info/Military Service
33 **Deployment**	(2009) Military Students: When parents are deployed oversees – Fitzsimons, V.M., & Krause-Parello, C.A. *The Journal of School Nursing*	Literature Review & Guidelines for School Nurses	Military Families
34 **Deployment**	(2009) Developmental issues impacting Military Families with young students during single and multiple deployments – Barker, L.H., Berry, K.D. *Military Medicine*	Surveys for during deployment and after – also survey for non-deployed Families	U.S. Army and National Guard - 57 families
35 **Deployment**	(2008) Ambiguous absence, ambiguous presence: A qualitative study of Military Reserve families in wartime –Faber, A.J., Willeton, E., Clymer, S.R., MacDermid, S.M., & Weiss, H.W. *Journal of Family Psychology*	Interviewed a year after returning from Iraq - seven waves of interviews (home and telephone)	16 Reservists (14 male, two female) 87 percent white, 13 percent black
36 **Deployment**	(2009) When a parent goes off to war: Exploring the issues faced by adolescents and their families – Mmari, K. Roche, K.M., Sudhinarest, M. & Blum, R. *Youth and Society*	Eleven focus groups - focus different perspectives (parents, youth, and school personnel)	All branches - Military youth (39 students), parents (24) , and school personnel (35)
37 **Deployment**	(1996) Parent-child separation: A comparison of maternally and paternally separated students in Military families – Applewhite, L.W. & Mays, R.A. - *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*	Mailed surveys; 110 instruments were collected; telephone interviews conducted	U.S. Army - 55 students of active duty fathers and 55 students of active duty mothers. Students' ages were 9-10 years old.
38 **Deployment**	(2008) Psychological adjustment and treatment of students and families with parents deployed in Military combat – Lincoln, A., Swift, E., & Shorteno-Fraser, M. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*	Review of the literature and case vignettes	Military Families
39 **Deployment**	(1981) Paternal Separation and the Military dependent child – Yeatman, G.W. *Military Medicine*	Questionnaire	159 wives of servicemen and 33 servicemen - U.S. Army

(Pincus, et. Al, 2007) Students with deployed parents experience emotional cycle through the five stages of deployment. Failure of school community and Family to identify and help the child cope with emotional needs in the school setting can lead to conflict and risk of poor educational outcomes. Ryan-Wenger (2001) compared students of active duty, reserve, and civilian Families' perceptions of war and its psychosocial manifestations (91 students total – 48 (civilian) 25 (reservist) and 18 (active) the statistically significant finds indicated that students from Military Families are adaptive and resilient in response to the stress of war. The results suggest that Military students are not overly anxious and are able to effectively cope with negative effects of war or the threats of war. However, these findings are not generalizable and more research from the students' perspective is needed.

About one quarter parents responded that though they were depressed during the deployment, nearly half reported depression upon return/reunion. Results suggest that students with deployed parent showed increased behavior problems at deployment and attachment behaviors at reunion with students whose parents had not recently deployed. This is consistent with finding by (Chartrand, 2008 et al) which described elevated behavior problems in young students with a deployed parent that were not accounted for by other variables. Students in this study seem confused and distressed by the sudden reappearance for their parent; though most adjusted quickly.

Not much mentioned on students; Reservists described feeling disconnected psychologically and many families experienced boundary ambiguity in the form of ambiguous presence. Although the reservist was physically present, Family members said it seems as if the reservist was psychologically absent. Family members had experienced ambiguous absence throughout the deployment characterized by the reservist's psychological presence but physical absence within the Family; the biggest concerns were safety, redistribution of roles and responsibilities and rejoining the Family.

Students reported three sources of emotional strain: 1. Pre-deployment sadness about a parent's departure. 2. Anxiety regarding a parent's death in war. 3. Concern for the stress and worry of the parent remaining at home. Adolescents also remarked about having changing responsibilities (i.e., housework, care of younger siblings) both negative and positive consequences. Some report stress on top of already busy schedules while others noted that these responsibilities enabled them to grow up faster and be more responsible and dependable. Students also described the parent's return from deployment as posing great stresses and challenges to the Family. In Iraq and Afghanistan long deployments of separation, parent might be a new person; confusion about adjusting to new parenting styles, new rules, getting reacquainted with returned parent as the most difficult; takes a great deal of time, energy, and stress to get to know each other again. Feeling pressured to spend all their free time with returned parent. The students were witnessing negative changes to their parents' marital relationship.

The analysis provides evidence those students who must separate from their mothers for extended periods do not develop less effective psychosocial functioning than students who separate from their fathers.

Most students are resilient to the effects of deployment of at least one of their parents but students with preexisting psychological conditions, such as anxiety or depression, may be particularly vulnerable, as well as students with specific risk factors, such as child abuse, family violence, or parental substance abuse.

Though readjustment problems were usually mild and of a transient nature, they were sometimes more severe and long-lasting than problems during separation. Although most students seem to recover from the effects of sudden paternal separation, some students seem to be at risk for severe permanent behavior disorders. Separation may constitute institutional neglect.

Topic	Citation	Method	Sample Info/Military Service
40 **Military Families**	(2003) Military families under stress – Drummet, Coleman, Cable, *Family Relations*	Literature Review & Guidelines for Family Life Educators (FLE)	Military Families
41 **Military Families**	(2003) Adaptation to stress: An investigation into the lives of United States Military Families with a child who is disabled – Fallon, M.A., & Russo, T.J. *Early Childhood Education Journal*	Questionnaires consisting of 101 items	253 Military Families (all branches)
42 **Military Families**	(2006) Voices from the backseat: Demands of growing up in Military Families – Burrell, L.M. *Military Life: The psychology of serving in peace and combat, vol. 3: The Military Family*	Review of the literature and perspectives of adults who grew up in Military Families	Military Families
43 **Socio-Emotional Factors affecting Academic Outcome**	(2002) Emotions matter: Making the case for the role of young students'emotional development for early school readiness – Raver, C.C. *Social Policy Report*	Review of the Literature	Civilian
44 **Socio-Emotional Factors affecting Academic Outcome**	(2000) Students at risk for early academic problems: The role of learning-related social skills – McClelland, M.M., Morrison, F.J., and Holmes, D.L. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*	Selected from sample of 450	450 students based on low-work related skills scores on Cooper-Farran Behavioral Rating Scales
45 **Socio-Emotional Factors affecting Academic Outcome**	(2002) Social-Emotional factors affecting achievement outcomes among disadvantaged students: closing the achievement gap – Becker, B.E., & Luther, S.S. *Educational Psychologist*	Four critical socio-emotional components that influence achievement performance are discussed	Civilian students

Military Family Syndrome is suggested to be time limited (Jensen, 1999) and some research (Merchant & Medway) suggest that Military students are less affected by relocation than non-military because the Military provides a structured environment. Some students use move as an opportunity to change behavior (1987). Unfortunately, helping professionals continue to believe in MFS leading many to stigmatize Military Families. Understand boundary ambiguity (Family becomes unclear about which roles each member plays).

Military Families who have a child that is disabled are not different from any other Family in using Family cohesion to adapt to new levels of stress. Supports the current literature that Families learn over time to adapt to the stress in their lives. Perceived social supports were important in buffering the effects of stress on a Family with a child who is disabled.

Watanabe and Jensen (2000) conclude in their review of the research that Military students have equal adjustment or are even less psychopathological on the whole when compared to their civilian peers. Given the divergence of opinion about the psychological consequences of growing up in Military Family, acknowledging the potential for both positive and negative outcomes is necessary. Cold War era research showed better than average College Board scores from DoDEA school students in all four major testing areas (Walling, 1985). Another study that followed high school students beyond graduation found positive effects associated with the experience of studying in an overseas school when compared to civilian peers in U.S. (U.S. DOD, 1980).

Young students' emotional and behavioral problems are costly to their chance of school success; these problems are identifiable early, are amenable to change, and can be reduced over time. Students who have difficulty paying attention, following directions, getting along with others, and controlling negative emotions of anger and distress do less well in school; this link may be causal and bi-directionally related; students with emotional difficulties are likely to "lose out" academically, in a number of ways:
1. Disruptive students are hard to teach and get less positive feedback, spend less time on task and receive less instruction (Harmre & Pinata, 2001).
2. Emotionally negative, angry students may lose opportunities to work on projects together, help each other with homework, and provide each other with support and encouragement (Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Ladd et al. 1999).
3. Students who are disliked by teachers have low school attendance.

Students with poor work-related skills (n=82) were found to differ from the overall sample on a number of students, Family, and socio-cultural variables including: significantly lower IQ's, more behavior difficulties, and more medical problems such as hearing and language problems. Students with low work-related skills scored lower on academic outcomes at the beginning of kindergarten and at the end of second grade.

Four critical social–emotional components that influence achievement performance:
1. Academic and school attachment – school characteristics
2. Teacher support and expectations – student's perceptions of teacher support have been consistently linked with increased achievement motivation, academic success, and feelings of well being.
3. Peer values – attention to peer group values should be valuable in understanding whys some students pursue goals of achievement whereas others disparage academic perseverance
4. Mental health – (important and often neglected) evidence shows that 12-30 percent of all school-age students have emotional disorders damaging enough that eventually these students will suffer severe education problems.

Topic	Citation	Method	Sample Info/Military Service
46 **Socio-Emotional Factors affecting Academic Outcome**	(2003) Research on the academic status of students with emotional and behavioral disorders – Trout, A.L., Nordness, P.H., Pierce, C.D., Epstein, M.H. – *Journal of Behavioral and Emotional Disorders*	Review of the Literature	Civilian students
47 **Socio-Emotional Factors affecting Academic Outcome**	(2006) Contributions of teacher-child relationships to positive school adjustment during elementary school – Baker, J.A. – *Journal of School Psychology*	Permission forms sent to students' home; teachers completed study measures as part of a larger battery	1310 Kindergarten through fifth grade students from four elementary schools and 68 teachers

Findings

Of the reports obtained from the 16 data sets in which the academic status of students with EBD (Emotional Behavioral Disorder) was described, none reported that the students had performed above grade or age level; 91 percent reported that students with EBD were academically deficient (i.e., below grade level or years behind peers), 89 percent in reading and 92 percent in arithmetic; both of the reports on written expression reported that these students presented academic deficits.

Reading composite scores from the either the Iowa Test of Basic skills or the Stanford Achievement Test Series (9th ed) were used as a measure of academic attainment. Students experiencing behavioral or learning problems showed poorer school outcomes and were less able to benefit from a closer teacher relationship when compared to peers without such problems.

Appendix B:

Educational/Academic Outcomes in Relation to Transition and Deployment Experiences of Military Students

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Periodic transitions and disruptions are common to Military life. In addition to Military members themselves, their families, and in particular, their school-age students face these transitions and disruptions. While strain on families continues to mount, requisite funding for Family support is not assured. Despite Military families being a priority and estimates of more than 2 million American students affected by their parents' deployments so far, budgets for Military Family programs are susceptible to cuts.

The popular press has sounded alarms with regard to the levels of stress and isolation being born by our Military members and their families. Mental health practitioners warn of the cumulative effects and long term toll of parental deployment on Military students. Further, generalizations from past generations and contexts are not likely to hold. Today's families can expect to deal with ambiguous loss—dealing with the stress of a physically absent parent (multiple times perhaps) during deployment and perhaps the stress of a psychologically absent parent upon return. Despite the myriad questions posed by lengthy, repeated deployments of Military members who are in the Reserves and National Guard as well as in the Active Duty force, there is a paucity of rigorous research addressing the effects of geographic mobility and deployments on educational and academic outcomes among Military students.

Few studies directly assess the effects of the Military Family lifestyle on academic achievement among Military students. Such paucity of research does not so much reflect a lack of interest, but rather is likely attributable to logistic and methodological difficulties that plague such investigation. Access to appropriate participants and academic measures is hampered by the mobility and geographic dispersion of Military families. Furthermore, Military students experience a variety of school environments (e.g., public, private, Military-sponsored, home school, etc.) Requirements with regard to protecting human subjects also complicate research design and resulting data. Sample representativeness is a major confounding factor that threatens the ability to generalize findings. Further, criterion measures may lack direct comparability across samples and may be otherwise deficient and contaminated. Given such impediments, conflicting results should come as no surprise.

Academic Outcomes

Relatively few studies of Military students directly assess educational or academic outcomes. The scant and conflicting findings regarding academic outcomes include:

- Small but significantly lower reading scores for 7th grade girls
- Lower math scores for girls
- Small but significant declines in standardized math test scores for both boys and girls
- Deployment status and length of deployment showed modest negative effects on test scores in multiple domains for students attending DoDEA schools. The magnitude of score decline was greater for math and science than for language arts, social studies, and reading.

Socio-Emotional Outcomes

While hardly abundant and not without confounds, studies focusing on socio-emotional outcomes are more common. There is evidence, albeit indirect, that such studies are relevant to questions regarding the school related effects of Military transitions.

- The civilian education literature shows that emotional and behavioral disorders coincide with academic deficiencies in reading, arithmetic, and writing. Even short of a diagnosis of a disorder, emotional and behavioral adjustment has been found to be related to subsequent school success. Owing to such factors as being harder to teach, missing out on opportunities to work with others and avoiding school, students with emotional difficulties tend to lose academically. Social skills—interpersonal and work-related—have been shown to be related to learning.
- Supporting emotional and behavioral adjustment is important for school readiness and performance.

Teacher-child relationships affect school adjustment and academic attainment. Social support, especially from teachers, has been found to be related to academic achievement and school performance among disadvantaged students.

Effects of Geographic Mobility on Academic and Socio-Emotional Outcomes

Residential mobility, while seemingly simple, is quite a complex event. Frequency of moves can be associated with economic advancements and setbacks. Studies based on samples of civilian students show uniform negative effects of geographic mobility on student achievement. A substantive study among over 7,000 civilian adults found evidence that adults who reported more childhood moves also reported lower levels of well-being. The apparent deleterious effects of multiple moves was more pronounced for introverts than for extraverts and attributed to a lack of close social relationships. Caution should be used in generalizing these findings to Military students. Although research on the effects of geographic mobility on Military students is scant and is based on potentially biased, convenience samples, findings suggest that:

- Harmful effects of multiple moves may be moderated by Family well-being and social support. School-age Military students with residence stability tend to experience fewer difficulties in peer relationships and less loneliness than those students who experience mobility.
- Maternal functioning and Family relationships are keys to psychosocial adjustment and behavior.
- Parental involvement and a caring school environment can overcome negative effects of changing schools.
- Moving in Military families is associated with many negative outcomes including decreased marital satisfaction, financial hardship, disruptions in spousal employment, and reduced social support.
- Moving can be a positive experience. It offers opportunities for travel, new experiences, and career growth for the Military member. Based on a small sample of U.S. Army students attending on-base elementary schools, mobility showed no negative, and in some cases positive effects with regard to measures of well-being, social competence, or academic achievement. Indeed, there are likely to be benefits resulting from Military transitions. Further, the support services available for Military families may mitigate the negative effects of multiple moves on students.

Effects of Deployment on Academic and Socio-Emotional Outcomes

Military life is characterized not only by frequent moves to new duty stations but by deployment of the Military member. Whereas deployment is associated with the relocation of the Military member in response to an operational mission, Family members may or may not move in response. Regardless of whether member deployment leads to residence relocation and school transition for Military students, stress, disruption, and developmental challenges may result.

- Studies have found increased levels of reported stress among Military students whose parents were deployed. Studies consistently find parental deployment to be a Family stressor that can negatively affect school adjustment.

- Parents tend to report that deployment has a negative effect on their school-age students's psychological and social functioning as well as on their school performance. Deployment has been found to exacerbate pre-existing emotional and behavioral problems. Although existing or previously reported emotional problems may flare with deployment, such problems may not be serious enough to require counseling.

- There are conflicting findings with regard to the ages at which students are most vulnerable to the effects of parental deployment.

- Whereas a number of studies reviewed reported that boys were more susceptible to school and social difficulties, girls also have been found to have more school, Family, and peer difficulties. And in yet another study, gender of child was found to be unrelated to risk of psychosocial problems.

- Increased stress and psychosocial difficulties in connection with deployment do not necessarily suggest that Military students exhibit psychopathology or school failure. In fact, while deployment has been reported to have negative effects, the general health and positive characteristics of the Military population may mitigate such stress with deployment not provoking pathological levels of behavioral and emotional difficulties.

- There is scant data on the effects of recent, long, multiple, combat deployments on students' outcomes. Among students (ages 6-12) of U.S. Army and Marine Corps parents recently returned or deployed in connection with missions in Iraq and Afghanistan there was evidence that the cumulative length of deployment was associated with an increased risk of depression and other adjustment problems. This research based on a convenience sample provides an early warning of potential heightened problems for and needs of Military students.

- There remains concern over the long term social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes for Military families. Maintaining necessary Family stability for those who experience long deployments, repeated deployments and deployments among young and inexperienced families (e.g., Reserve and National Guard) is critical and in need of rigorous empirical study.

- Studies of Family stress in response to deployment indicate that mental health levels and emotional responses of the non-deployed parent as well as pre-deployment mental health levels have a substantive effect on students' academic, emotional, and behavioral levels or symptoms. Deployment status and the length of deployment correlate with the mental health of the non-deployed parent. However, the higher levels of stress compared to normative levels experienced by U.S. Army spouses and the concomitant psychosocial effects on Military students have been shown to be lessened by parents' use of Military support. Further, a supportive environment including a positive school climate was related to higher academic, emotional, and behavioral functioning for Military students, ages 5 to 12.

- Efforts to enhance resilience in students considered at-risk (a category in which Military students of deployed parents may fall) are beneficial to physical, social, and emotional and hence academic well-being and competence. Furthermore, significant supporting social relationships (oftentimes in the person of a caring teacher) as well as a positive school climate mitigate risk factors and enhance outcomes for students facing challenging circumstances.

- Qualitative studies provide potential for detailed descriptive detail of perceived deployment effects for Military students. Focus groups with adolescents representing all services indicate that there are changes in mental health with such youth experiencing uncertainty, loss, relationship conflict, and boundary ambiguity. Recent interviews regarding academic, behavioral, and emotional issues of "deployed" Military students suggest that deployment is associated with negative academic, social and emotional outcomes, especially among boys, that are exacerbated by coping problems experienced by non-deployed parents.
- It is important to increase vigilance for behavioral signs of stress among students of deployed soldiers since school social and emotional support can promote resilience.
- Some have suggested that the negative effects of deployment may be transient. Furthermore, positive aspects of deployment such as pride, development of responsibility and increased dependability have been noted in passing. However, the focus has been on the negative aspects of deployment.

Conclusions and Gaps

Existing studies are deficient and contaminated by confounds, thus compromising generalizations that can be drawn. Powerful, random samples across Military subgroups (e.g., Service and component), school environments (e.g., public schools, private schools, Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools), and geographic regions are lacking. Rather, small and highly select samples of students of active duty parents attending DODEA schools are typical. Thus, the knowledge base to inform policy is unstable.

Tentative conclusions from the extant literature suggest that geographic mobility and deployment have detrimental effects on the emotional and academic growth of Military students. There are conflicting results with regard to whether such effects are moderated by gender or age; that is, findings vary as to whether boys or girls, or older or younger students are more at risk. Social support systems, particularly within the school environment can ameliorate the disruptive effects of residential mobility. Although such Military transitions have been shown to be associated with negative impacts, evidence does not indicate that conclusions of egregious academic deficiencies and psychopathology are warranted. Findings that Family and curricular disruptions are stressful, even for highly select Military families, are not surprising. Further, reports that prior emotional problems and parental reaction and functioning in the face of moves and deployment influence outcomes among students are expected. Figure 1 provides a hypothetical model of the basic factors affecting outcomes for Military students as gleaned from the literature.
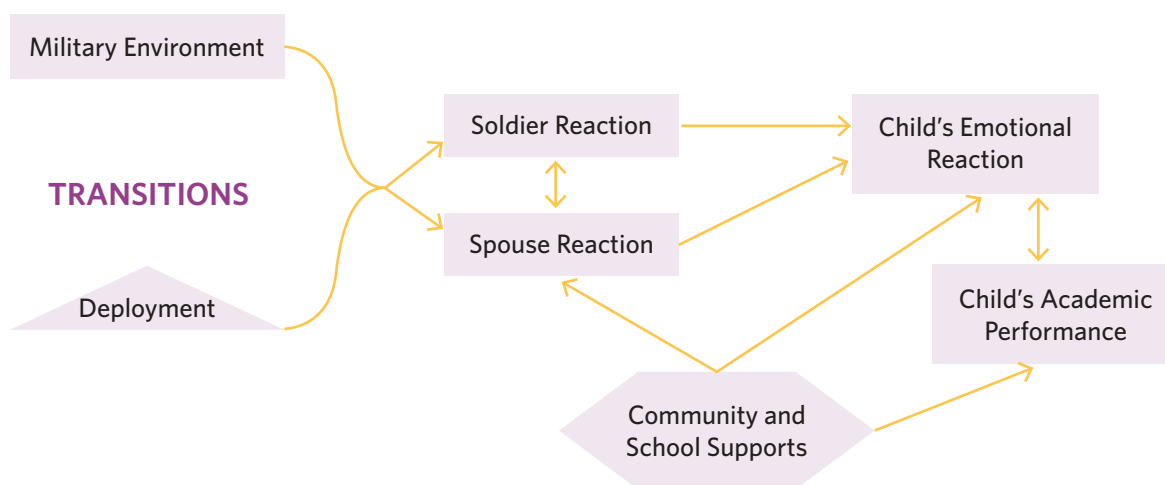
Figure 1. Hypothetical Model of Factors Affect Academic Outcomes among Military Students

A few studies casually mentioned the possibility of positive effects of geographic mobility and deployment for Military students. However, the underlying hypothesis or assumption is that of a negative impact, with students likely to experience anxiety, depression, feelings of isolation, resentment, and academic difficulties or decline. A focus on coping and resiliency among Military students is sorely needed.

Clearer evidence is needed to design appropriate prevention and intervention services to support the mental health and academic needs of Military students. Studies must go beyond risk and decline. Characteristics, situations, and experiences associated with emotional and academic maintenance or growth should be examined. In addition to the inclusion of positive outcomes in research hypotheses, longitudinal designs are needed to explore the effects of deployment and relocations over time. Such designs would go beyond the concurrent, cross sectional studies conducted heretofore and promote causal inferences.

The extant literature can serve as a useful pilot study suggesting pertinent characteristics of Military students and aspects of transition, Family situation, and school context to include. Among the myriad of characteristics and circumstances suggested for inclusion as potential moderators of risk and resilience are age and gender of the Military child and parent; deployment status and phase; Military service and component; type and location of school; housing status; frequency of moves; and Military rank. Furthermore, contextual or ecological factors such as peace or wartime setting, operational tempo, and circumstances of the transition and deployment may prove elucidating.

The academic and emotional/behavioral health needs of Military students in schools are understudied. We lack solid evidence regarding who is at risk and what can promote resiliency. Thus, the evidence base for selecting appropriate prevention and intervention strategies is deficient. We must understand the stressors and sources of strength (resources) that influence educational and academic outcomes for Military students. Understanding the mechanisms by which socio-emotional and academic outcomes are linked would inform efforts aimed at resiliency. Support for Military families should include the pursuit of educational quality. Quality research is needed to design and match appropriate intervention/prevention strategies in accordance with the diverse population of Military students.

Anecdotal information is not enough when deciding among support initiatives. Reliable information about the educational/academic outcomes of Military students is vital to support Military families and schools. As we design unbiased, focused studies to gather vital information on how to best meet the academic needs of Military students' awareness and social support must be enhanced.

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Appendix C: Home Schooling Styles

Home schooling style, or the way parents teach their children is also a consideration when selecting a curriculum. There are many styles of home schooling that parents may consider. Some of the more popular styles include:

STYLE	DESCRIPTION
Charlotte Mason	Charlotte Mason was a British educator who believed that education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life; it is about finding out who we are and how we fit into the world of human beings and into the universe God created. Her methods include an extensive use of books (other than text books) and observing the world. The Charlotte Mason Method of home schooling has specific approaches to subject areas, for example, literature and history are taught as one subject; If a student is studying the Civil War they would read literature written during and about that time. This method also includes teaching children specific disciplines and habits.
Unit Study	A Unit Study style of home schooling is defined as an in-depth study of a topic (planets, trees, trains, etc.) that takes into account many areas of the topic, such as math, science, language, history, etc. The student sees the topic as a whole instead of a small part. It is a complete immersion into the topic to learn everything about the topic.
Un-Schooling	The Un-schooling method of home schooling is more about the process of learning than the content. It is allowing the child to lead the learning and the parent is there to answer questions. Un-schoolers believe that if a child is given a rich and stimulating environment, they will learn.
Classical	A Classical home schooling style employs a three-part process of training the mind. The early years of school are spent in absorbing facts, systematically laying the foundations for advanced study. In the middle grades, students learn to think through arguments. In the high school years, they learn to express themselves.
Eclectic	Eclectic homeschoolers take parts of what may be different styles (for example unschooling and traditional) and merge then into their own unique style that they feel best addresses the educational needs of their student.
School at Home	Also called School-in-a-Box, this approach is the method which most closely follows a traditional school model and strives to mirror a classroom setting at home. Parents usually purchase a complete curriculum which includes textbooks, teacher's guides, tests, schedules, and grading and record keeping materials. Each child has his or her own set of textbooks and workbooks, and studies each subject separately according to grade level.

Appendix D: State and Local Home Schooling Policies and Regulations

State	Home School Statute[1]	Compulsory Attendance Age[1]	Required Days of Instruction[1]	Required Subjects[1]
CA	NONE	Between age 6 by December 2 and under age 18	175 (public schools only)	English, mathematics, social sciences, science, fine arts, health, physical education (grades 1-6)
CO	CO: Rev.St. 22-33-104.5	Public school: age 6 on or before August 1 and is under age 17; Home-based education program Option 1, age 7 to 16	172 days averaging 4 hours per day	Including, but not limited to, Constitution of the United States, reading, writing, speaking, math, history, civics, literature, and science.
FL	FL ST: 1002.41, 1002.01 (2), 1002.43	Age 6 by February 1 and less than age 16	180 days for public and private school (excludes option 1 students)	Option 1: Portfolio of educational activities
GA	GA Code Ann 20-2-690 c	Between 6th and 16th birthdays; if under 7 and attended more than 20 days in a Georgia public school, subject to compulsory attendance laws.	180 days for public and private school (excludes option 1 students)	Include, but not limited to, reading, language arts, math, social studies, and science
KS	NONE	Reached age 7 and under age 18. Compulsory attendance ends at age 16 with parental consent	Teach for a time "substantially equivalent" to the local public school (180 days)	Non-accredited private schools: None. Accredited private schools: reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, spelling, English grammar and composition, civil government, United States and Kansas history, patriotism and duties of a citizen, health, and hygiene

1 Policy information downloaded from the Home Schooling Legal Defense Association http://www.hslda.org/

2 Education Commission of the States "State Policies on Home schooling" State Notes October 2009. All information downloaded on April 14, 2010.

Options[1]	Qualifications for Instructors[1,2]	Required Student Testing or Evaluation[1,2]
(1) Individual home school; (2) private school satellite program; (3) certified private tutor; (4) independent study program at home using public school curriculum	Certification is required if the home school parents elect the private tutor options	NONE
(1) Home-based instructional program; (2) enroll in a Colorado "independent school" but teach at home; (3) if a home schooling parent or other person is certified in Colorado to teach, the home school in which they are providing instruction is exempt from all other requirements, including testing.	If parent elects to be a private tutor, the parent must be certified to teach in California. Under these circumstances, the home school is exempt from other requirements, including testing.	Options 1 and 2: Must be evaluated in grades 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. Required composite above 13 percentile or must enroll in a public or independent parochial school until the next testing period. May retest.
(1) Home education program directed by parent or guardian; (2) Groups of home schools can file as a private school, parochial, religious, or denominational school (exempt from compulsory attendance); (3) home school under private tutor law.	There are no teacher qualifications for parents. When home schools operate under the private tutor law, the teacher must hold a Florida certificate to teach the subjects/grades instructed.	Option 1: Home education program directed by tutor or guardian, the student must be assessed annually. Progress can be reviewed by a Florida certified teacher; the students may be administered a nationally normed student achievement test; the student may be assessed with the state student assessment under approved school district guidelines; or, another approved assessment may be administered.
Parents/guardians may instruct home school study for their own children. May employ a tutor.	A parent who teaches must have at least a high school diploma or a GED. Private tutors must have a high school diploma or a GED.	Beginning in grade 3, students must take a national standardized test every three years.
(1) Non-accredited private school; (2) Home schools operating as a "satellite" of an existing Kansas private school	Teachers must be "competent."	NONE

State	Home School Statute[1]	Compulsory Attendance Age[1]	Required Days of Instruction[1]	Required Subjects[1]
LA	LA Rev St: 17:236	7th birthday until 18th birthday but under Option 1, if approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, is exempt.	180 days for public and private school (excludes option 1 students)	Curriculum "at least equal to that offered by public schools at the same grade level." To include: Declaration of Independence and the Federalist Papers (elementary and high school, respectively
NC	Article 39 115C-547 through 115C-565	Between the ages of 7 and 16	At least 9 calendar months, excluding reasonable holidays and vacations	None required
OK	NONE	Over age 5 and under age 18	180 days	None; court rulings suggest equivalent or comparable to public school education. Strongly recommends: math, language arts, science, and social studies.
TX	Home school statute: None Alternative statute TX Educ. Code 25.086 (a)(1)	At least age 6, or "who is younger than 6 years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade," and is less than 18. A 17 year old who has earned an equivalency certificate is exempt.	180 (public schools only)	Good citizenship, math, reading, spelling, and grammar.
VA	VA Code Ann 22.1-254.1	Reached 5th birthday on or before September 30 and not past the 18th birthday. A parent may request waiting until age 6 "if child is not mentally, physically, or emotionally prepared to attend school."	180 days (same as public school)	Option 1: Parents submit a "description of Curriculum," otherwise, NONE

1 Policy information downloaded from the Home Schooling Legal Defense Association http://www.hslda.org/

2 Education Commission of the States "State Policies on Home schooling" State Notes October 2009. All information downloaded on April 14, 2010.

Options[1]	Qualifications for Instructors[1,2]	Required Student Testing or Evaluation[1,2]
(1) Home School Statute- home study program. (2) Home-based private school operating under fixed criteria.	Option2: Has instruction staff members.	Under Option 1, home-study program, student must be assessed. Renewal applications are approved if the child passes the Louisiana Assessment Program, scores at above grade level on the California Achievement Test or another approved standardized exam, or a certified teacher for that child's grade level documents that the student is being taught using a public grade level equivalent program.
"Nonpublic school in which children of not more than two families receive academic instruction from patent or legal guardians or a member from either household." Must designate if a "private church school or school of religious charter" or a "qualified nonpublic school."	Parents must have a high school diploma or a GED.	Annual standardized test administration that measure achievement in English grammar, reading, spelling, and mathematics is required.
An Oklahoma constitutional provision guarantees the right to home school.	NONE	NONE
"Home schools can legally operate as private schools in Texas."	NONE	NONE
(1) Home instruction; (2) religious exemption statute; (3) certified (in Virginia) tutor; and (4) private or denominational school composed of groups of homeschoolers.	NONE	Option 1 only: (1) Composite score at or above the 23 percentile on a nationally normed standardized test. Failure to score at that level requires remediation and the program may be placed on probation; (2) Certified teacher documentation that student is progressing adequately; (3) Report card of transcript from distance-learning or college-learning program; (4) Assessment evaluation approved by the superintendent documenting educational growth

Appendix E: Special Needs

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), enacted in 1975, mandates children and youth ages 3–21 with disabilities are provided a free and appropriate public school education. The overall percentage of public school students being served in programs for those with disabilities decreased between 2003–04 (13.7 percent) and 2008–09 (13.2 percent). However, there were different patterns of change in the percentages served with some specific conditions between 2003–04 and 2008–09. The percentage of children identified as having other health impairments (limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems such as a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes) rose from 1.0 to 1.3 percent of total public school enrollment; the percentage with autism rose from 0.3 to 0.7 percent; and the percentage with developmental delays rose from 0.6 to 0.7 percent. The percentage of children with specific learning disabilities declined from 5.8 percent to 5.0 percent of total public school enrollment during this period.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2011). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2010* (NCES 2011-015), Chapter 2.

CHILDREN 3 TO 21 YEARS OLD SERVED IN FEDERALLY SUPPORTED PROGRAMS FOR THE DISABLED, BY TYPE OF DISABILITY: SELECTED YEARS, 1976-77 THROUGH 2008-09

Type of Disability	1976 -77	1980 -81	1990 -91	1998 -99	2000 -01	2002 -03	2004 -05	2005 -06	2006 -07	2007 -08[1]	2008 -09[1]
Number served (in thousands)											
All Disabilities	3,694	4,144	4,710	6,056	6,296	6,523	6,719	6,713	6,686	6,606	6,483
Specific Learning Disabilities	796	1,462	2,129	2,790	2,868	2,848	2,798	2,735	2,665	2,573	2,476
Speech or Language Impairments	1,302	1,168	985	1,068	1,409	1,412	1,463	1,468	1,475	1,456	1,426
Intellectual Disability	961	830	534	597	624	602	578	556	534	500	478
Emotional Disturbance	283	347	389	462	481	485	489	477	464	442	420
Hearing Impairments	88	79	58	70	78	78	79	79	80	79	78
Orthopedic Impairments	87	58	49	69	83	83	73	71	69	67	70
Other Health Impairments[2]	141	98	55	220	303	403	521	570	611	641	659
Visual Impairments	38	31	23	26	29	29	29	29	29	29	29

Type of Disability	1976 -77	1980 -81	1990 -91	1998 -99	2000 -01	2002 -03	2004 -05	2005 -06	2006 -07	2007 -08[1]	2008 -09[1]
Multiple Disabilities	---	68	96	106	133	138	140	141	142	138	130
Deaf-blindness	---	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Autism	---	---	---	53	94	137	191	223	258	296	336
Traumatic Brain Injury	---	---	---	13	16	22	24	24	25	25	26
Developmental Delay	---	---	---	12	178	283	332	339	333	358	354
Preschool Disabled[3]	†	†	390	568	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Number Served as a Percent of Total Enrollment[4]											
All Disabilities	8.3	10.1	11.4	13.0	13.3	13.5	13.8	13.7	13.6	13.4	13.2
Specific Learning Disabilities	1.8	3.6	5.2	6.0	6.1	5.9	5.7	5.6	5.4	5.2	5.0
Speech or Language Impairments	2.9	2.9	2.4	2.3	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.9
Intellectual Disability	2.2	2.0	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0
Emotional Disturbance	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9
Hearing Impairments	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Orthopedic Impairments	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other Health Impairments[2]	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.6	0.8	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3
Visual Impairments	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Multiple Disabilities	---	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Deaf-blindness	---	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
Autism	---	---	---	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7

Type of Disability	1976 -77	1980 -81	1990 -91	1998 -99	2000 -01	2002 -03	2004 -05	2005 -06	2006 -07	2007 -08[1]	2008 -09[1]
Traumatic Brain Injury	---	---	---	#	#	#	#	#	0.1	0.1	0.1
Developmental Delay	---	---	---	#	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Preschool Disabled[3]	†	†	0.9	1.2	†	†	†	†	†	†	†

--- Not available.

† Not applicable.

Rounds to zero.

1 Data do not include Vermont, for which 2007-08 and 2008-09 data were not available. In 2006-07, the total number of 3-to-21-year-olds served in Vermont was 14,010.

2 Other health impairments include having limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems such as a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes.

3 Prior to 1990-91 and after 1999-2000, preschool children are included in the counts by disability condition. For other years, preschool children are not included in the counts by disability condition, but are separately reported.

4 Based on the total enrollment in public schools, prekindergarten through 12th grade.

Note: Prior to October 1994, children and youth with disabilities were served under Chapter 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as well as under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. Data reported in this table for years prior to 1994–95 include children ages 0–21 served under Chapter 1. Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia only. Increases since 1987–88 are due in part to new legislation enacted in fall 1986, which added a mandate for public school special education services for three- to five-year-old disabled children. Some data have been revised from previously published figures. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2011). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2010* (NCES 2011-015), Table 45.

Appendix F:
Outline of Major U.S. Army Regulations Affecting Students with Special Needs

Following is a brief outline of several U.S. Army regulations and documents that touch on service to students with special needs. These descriptions highlight only main points in the regulations that are most applicable to this study. This outline is in no way meant to substitute for the full regulations or documents. Those who have questions or desire more information are urged to refer to the original source.

Army Regulation 608-75
Personal Affairs
Exceptional Family Member Program

AR 608-75 establishes the Exceptional Family Member Program by outlining the personnel responsibilities, policies, and procedures of the program. The concept of the program, as stated in section 1-6 is, "...to provide a comprehensive, coordinated, multiagency approach for community support, housing, medical, educational, and personnel services to Families with special needs." AR

608-75 consists of forty pages of EFMP regulations, all important to reform efforts. Below we list some particularly relevant sections:

1–9. Objectives of the Exceptional Family Member Program

The following are objectives of the EFMP:

a. To provide certain reimbursable and non-reimbursable medically related services to children with disabilities per DODI 1342.12 with the same priority as medical care to the active duty soldier.
b. To assess, document, and code the special education and medical needs of eligible Family members in all locations, and forward these coded needs to the Military personnel agencies in paragraph 3–1 for consideration during the assignment process.
c. To consider the medical needs of the EFM during the continental United States (CONUS) and outside the continental United States (OCONUS) assignment process. To consider the special education needs of the EFM during the OCONUS assignment process (excludes Alaska and Hawaii). To assign soldiers to an area where the EFM's medical and special education needs can be accommodated, provided there is a valid personnel requirement for the soldier's grade and specialty.
d. To provide a mechanism for DA civilians to—
   (1) Inform the Department of Defense Dependents Schools of the arrival of dependent children with special education and medically related service needs.
   (2) Inform the gaining medical activity of the arrival of Family members with medical needs.
e. To ensure that all eligible Family members receive information and assistance needed to involve them with community support services to meet their needs.
f. To ensure facility and program accessibility to individuals with disabilities (see AR 600–7).
g. To provide EIS to eligible infants and toddlers and their Families per 32 CFR Part 80 and DODI 1342.12.

AR 608-75 provides a complete description of the duties required of the EFMP program in regards to Military personnel, Department of the Army civilian employees, medical services, housing, and community support services. See the following excerpts:

2–1. Military personnel

a. Assignment policies.
    (1) Assignment managers will consider the documented special education and medical needs of Family members in the assignment of soldiers.
    (2) When possible, assignment managers will assign soldiers to an area where the special needs of their EFMs can be accommodated. Assignments will depend on the existence of valid personnel requirements for the soldier's grade, Military occupational specialty code, or specialty skill identifier, and eligibility for tour. All soldiers will remain eligible for worldwide assignments.
    (3) When consistent with the needs of the Army and the career progression of the soldier, assignment managers will assign soldiers with children who have educational disabilities within the Army's area of geographic responsibility for the provision of medically related services.
    (4) Soldiers who enroll in the EFMP after receipt of OCONUS assignment instructions need to be aware that enrollment may not affect that assignment. If general medical care is not available, the soldier may be required to serve an "all others" tour.
    (5) Requests for deletion, deferment, or compassionate reassignment must be processed under AR 614–100 or AR 614–200. Participation in the EFMP is not the basis for deletion, deferment, or compassionate reassignment.
    (6) Requests for a second PCS within the same fiscal year will continue to be processed under AR 614–6 on a case-by-case basis.

2–5. Community support services

a. Information, referral, and placement.
    (1) The ACS centers will maintain comprehensive, accurate, easily accessible, and up-to-date information on Military and civilian community resources related to disabilities and chronic illnesses Information will be collected from existing data sources.
    (2) In response to specific requests for assistance, ACS will support exceptional Family members and their Families by informing them about the availability of community support services and educational resources.
    (3) In response to specific requests for assistance, ACS will support eligible Family members by informing them of the availability of community support services in the local Military and civilian communities.

b. Advocacy.
    (1) ACS will provide eligible Family members with information on the following:
        (a) Their rights and responsibilities under local, State, and Federal laws following coordination with servicing staff or command judge advocate.
        (b) The type of advocacy services available to meet their needs and facilitate support groups.
    (2) The losing ACS will ensure that relocating Families of exceptional school age children obtain the following information for transitioning to the new school.
        (a) A copy of the IEP.
        (b) A summary of educational activities and performance for the current or past school year.
        (c) Any medical records.
    (3) The gaining ACS will ensure that parents are linked with appropriate special education school officials and medical care providers and, upon request of parents, assist in the IEP process.

c. Family-find activities. ACS will initiate an EFMP command information and education program to include on and off-post publicity, awareness briefings, and education and training sessions to locate Family members who show indications that they might be in need of specialized medical care, therapy, developmental services, or special education. DOD schools conduct ongoing activities designed to locate children who might be in need of special education and related services. In many instances, ACS and DODDS activities will be conducted jointly. Once located, ACS will refer Families to the nearest Army MTF EFMP case coordinator for screening and evaluation. In locations outside the United States, the ACS will report the birth date, sex of child, Military service, and projected date of rotation of EFMs (from birth to 21) to the local DODDS schools.

d. Respite care.

(1) If not available or accessible through Military CYS (for example, adult respite care and care user's home) and civilian resources, ACS will establish and maintain a respite care program for eligible Family members with disabilities per guidelines in paragraphs 2–5d(2) through (7). Such a program will provide a temporary rest period for Family members responsible for regular care of the person with a disability.

(2) Two levels of care will be available according to the needs of Family members with disabilities. These are supervision only, and supervision with personal care. Respite care is provided on an hourly, daily, or weekly basis. It may be provided either in the respite care user's home or a caregiver's home approved by ACS.

Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-8-21 Personnel-General Soldier Application Program

The Soldier Application Program is designed to regulate and improve the process by which soldiers apply for new positions. The purpose is to efficiently serve the best interests of both the soldier and the Army. Soldiers with an exceptional Family member must follow certain procedures and utilize proper documents when submitting an application. The pamphlet contains a table listing all the necessary forms, the responsible work centers, and relevant references. See the following example.

Application	Reference	Forms	Workcenters
Exceptional Family Member Program	AR 600-75	DA Form 209 DA Form 4036-F DA Form 4787 DA Form 4787-1 DA Form 5288 DA Form 5291 Series	BN S1 Personnel Reassignment

Army Regulation 614-200
Assignments, Details, and Transfers
Enlisted Assignments and Utilization Management

Army Regulation 614-200 is a detailed outline of the policies and procedures regulating assignment of enlisted soldiers. The regulations are very specific and state what conditions will be considered by which Army personnel when assignment decisions are being made. As stated in the excerpt below, Human Resources will consider the needs of EFMP Family members when assigning a soldier.

1–6. Exceptional Family Member Program

The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) allows the U.S. Army Human Resources Command (USA HRC) to consider the special education and medical needs of exceptional Family members during the assignment process and reassigns soldiers, when readiness does not require a specific reassignment, to an area where the Family member's needs can be accommodated. The EFMP is governed by AR 608–75. AR 614-200 also states the conditions under which travel may be deferred when medical evaluation or testing for an EFMP Family member was delayed.

5–13. Compassionate requests when problems are temporary

c. Commanders with GCMCA, on a one–time basis, may—
  (1) Temporarily defer, up to 60 days, soldiers' AIs when the request for Family travel was submitted late due to extensive evaluation and testing of Family members identified during mandatory medical screening in support of the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) (not applicable to IET students).

Appendix G:

States that have signed the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission as of April, 2012.

Alabama	Iowa	New Jersey	Texas
Alaska	Kansas	New Mexico	Utah
Arizona	Kentucky	North Carolina	Vermont
California	Louisiana	North Dakota	Virginia
Colorado	Maine	Ohio	Washington
Connecticut	Maryland	Oklahoma	West Virginia
Delaware	Michigan	Pennsylvania	Wisconsin
Florida	Mississippi	Rhode Island	Wyoming
Hawaii	Missouri	South Carolina	
Illinois	Nebraska*	South Dakota	
Indiana	Nevada	Tennessee	

*The Compact will become effective July 1, 2012.

Appendix H:
Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission's Interstate Compact on Education Opportunities for Military Children (MIC3)

Graduating on time can be a concern for the mobile Military-connected student. The student may, however, be able to graduate under rules established by the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission's Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children (MIC3). Working with the MIC3 goal of resolving education transition issues for Military Families, 39 states recognize the graduation challenges faced by high school students and have signed the Compact and agreeing to the following:

"In order to facilitate the on-time graduation of children of Military Families states and local education agencies shall incorporate the following procedures:

A. Waiver requirements – Local education agency administrative officials shall waive specific courses required for graduation if similar course work has been satisfactorily completed in another local education agency or shall provide reasonable justification for denial. Should a waiver not be granted to a student who would qualify to graduate from the sending school, the local education agency shall provide an alternative means of acquiring required coursework so that graduation may occur on time.

B. Exit exams – States shall accept: 1) exit or end-of-course exams required for graduation from the sending state; or 2) national norm-referenced achievement tests or 3) alternative testing, in lieu of testing requirements for graduation in the receiving state. In the event the above alternatives cannot be accommodated by the receiving state for a student transferring in his or her Senior year, then the provisions of Article VII, Section C shall apply.

C. Transfers during Senior year – Should a Military student transferring at the beginning or during his or her Senior year be ineligible to graduate from the receiving local education agency after all alternatives have been considered, the sending and receiving local education agencies shall ensure the receipt of a diploma from the sending local education agency, if the student meets the graduation requirements of the sending local education agency. In the event that one of the states in question is not a member of this compact, the member state shall use best efforts to facilitate the on-time graduation of the student in accordance with Sections A and B of this Article." (**http://www.mic3.net/**)

The Compact applies only to children of parents who:

- Are on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserve,
- Are severely injured and medically discharged or retired for a period of one year after discharge or retirement, or
- Die on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty for a period of one year after death.

Appendix I: EMC-21 Research Design-Technical Report

Introduction:

Family Morale Welfare Recreation Command (FMWRC) asked the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) to conduct an inquiry into the academic and school-related needs, concerns and challenges unique to Military-connected children. Since 1999, the MCEC has been supporting the educational needs of Military-connected children and has conducted a number of studies that have led to both State and DoD policy changes. A portion of this study is an update to the Secondary Education Transition Study published in 2001 by the MCEC.

Given the frequent relocations and deployments experienced by military members and their families, it is imperative to understand the impact of transition and turbulence in military families in respect to the education of their children. Family well-being is crucial to military readiness. Good educational experiences, support, and quality resources are recognized as fundamental contributors to family well-being.

The initial Education of the Military Child-21st Century (EMC-21) meeting was held at General George Casey's home in March 2009. At this inaugural meeting, the research constructs were briefed to 14 installation Commanders/representatives and to 13 School Superintendents/representatives. From this meeting 11 sites agreed to support and participate in the research.

Purpose:

The primary purpose of the research was discovery in nature: to determine how school policies, practices, processes, programs, and systems impact the education of the military child, with particular emphasis on the effects of mobility and military parent deployments as it pertains to education. The results of this study will be used to make recommendations to both educators and military leadership to support the education of military students. The Education of the Military Child-21st Century study consists of five components:

- **Update of the Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS).** Given the significantly changed landscape for Soldiers and their Families since its data collection in 2000 and publication in 2001, this Phase Two research addresses factors that impact today's transitions, including:
  - ~ the ways in which Federal and State testing requirements affect highly mobile students
  - ~ the impact of high stakes testing as a result of No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
  - ~ the impact that frequent parent deployments have on student education
  - ~ technology advances that have changed communication and the transfer of records

  This research focused on current challenges for highly mobile secondary students (grades 5 through 12).

- **Enrichment Programs.** One finding of the 2001 SETS study indicated that students who had been identified as Gifted and Talented (known by different names at different locations and referenced as "enrichment programs") often had significant challenges in transition, including program continuity. For able learners in elementary, middle school and high school, there is a need to discover what barriers, options and opportunities, are available. This inquiry considers the range of choices for parents, schools, and military communities to respond to the transition challenges and program access issues for them. This research focuses on students in grades kindergarten through twelfth grade.

- **The education-related effects of multiple deployments on school-age children.** Looking at children in grades kindergarten through twelve, this study develops an understanding of school-related issues that are associated with repeated deployments of a parent.

- **Home schooling choices, implications, and transition challenges for U.S. Army Families.** With the implementation of No Child Left Behind, parental choice has opened up many new options for the education of children. A growing area is home schooling. This was an initial exploratory part of the research and examines the reasons that families make the choice to home school, how they undertake the task, what expectations they have for their children's outcomes, how transition affects home schooled students, and how the military supports this decision.

- **Many National Guard and Reserve Families face challenges** that result from the multiple deployments of their Military Family member. Many Families live far from Military installations and are unable to access services and supports designed to help deal with deployment and reintegration. The study explores the education challenges students face in their "new normal."

Study questions are threefold:

1. What are the educational barriers and stressors for military families when they transition from one location to another?
2. What is the phenomenology of the Home Schooling community within the military environment? What resources could support this population?
3. Are multiple deployments causing stress on the education of Military-connected students? What is the impact on schools?

Method:

A combination of qualitative and quantitative data was collected, leading to a mixed methods research design. Mixed methods research has been described as a theoretical lens or perspective to guide a study ((Mertens, 2003); (Creswell, 2009)). The design used quantitative data as variables to further analyze the themes/nodes of qualitative data. As an example, we were able to compare the number of deployments the respondent indicated to the social emotional node of anger/frustration that respondents described in response to questions regarding their reactions to deployment. The mixed methods allowed the research team to look through the quantitative patterns and the qualitative depth and track their interactions. Researchers were able to triangulate the data by interview type (confirming nodes or themes by different groups), literature review, and use variables to yield a finer lens in the analysis.

Interview Design-Question Development:

The overall interview design for EMC-21 was a Semi-structured interview that allows the interviewee to develop ideas and to speak more openly (Denscombe, 2007). The Semi-structured question design is best used for one time interviews with multiple field researchers collecting the data (Benard, 1988). Additional Likert scale questions and Cantril's Self-anchoring Ladder were also included in the student interviews. It has been the research team's experience that Semi-structured interviews produce a higher fidelity of information from the interviewee which leads to better discovery. However a drawback to the Semi-structure design is its complexity in analysis and interviewer problems with mediation and steering (Flick, 1998). Where an interviewer must decide if the research questions have been answered, to change the sequence of the questions, or skip a question which has already been answered in a previous question.

In building the questions for EMC-21, the research team conducted an extensive literature review to focus on four areas of research and to look for the known issues within each subject. Warm-up questions were included to make interviewees more comfortable and closing questions to insure that nothing significant was overlooked. Semi-structured, open-ended questions were used with exploratory verbs that were non-directional, rather than directional words that suggest quantitative research such as "impact", "determine",

"cause" and" relate". (Creswell, 2009). Within the design we specifically embedded some questions that yielded short answers (closed questions), (Denscombe, 2007). These short-answer questions were used to build variables; for example how many times has a loved one deployed. The research team also paid close attention to question sequence both with the four major topics and within each topic (Flick, 1998). We sequenced the topics as follows: *Warm-up Questions; Multiple Deployment; Secondary Education Transition Study; Home Schooling; Enrichment;* and *Closing.*

Once the questions were built we provided them to "critical friends" for review. The total number of questions developed is listed below.

Question Type	# of Questions
Warm-up Questions	7
Enrichment Questions	21
Home Schooling Questions	6
Multiple Deployment Questions	17
Secondary Education Transition Questions	28
Home Schooling Questions for HS Populations	5
Closing Questions	4

Study participants were Installation School Personnel, School Administrators, Teachers, Parents and Students. Not all questions were asked of each participant group. The research team also designed questions that were asked of all groups, which provided comparison data.

With a completed draft set of questions for parents, students, administrators, and teachers, the research team selected three individuals from each group to field test the questions. During the testing the researchers reframed a number of questions; especially within the student interview questions. Some questions were too complex and the students had a tendency to be restrictive in their answers. Warm up questions were redesigned to build a comfort level prior to the interview. Age of student was also critical in design. The research team developed two sets of questions, one for grades 9-12 and another for grades 5-8. The researchers who modified and developed questions later became the coders of the project.

Theoretical Sampling:

"Theoretical sampling is done in order to discover categories and their properties and to suggest the interrelationships into a theory"

(Barney G. Glaser/Anselm L. Strauss 1967, p. 62)

In building our sampling plan we wanted to insure a representative sample of the different major groups working within the school systems and adjoining installations (Barney G. Glaser, 2008). We selected installation personnel, administrators, teachers, parents, and students to interview. Due to logistics, time, and complexity this research project conducted only one interview per respondent (Benard, 1988). In

addition, expert interviews were conducted with both top level school district administrators and key installation personnel. Interviews in the Home Schooling study were collected at four locations.

In considering, sample set and locations researchers looked at factors such as:

- Size of school system (both large and small systems were required)
- Grades 5-12 (for student interviews)
- Connections to Home Schooling groups or individuals.
- Location of school systems within the US (rural or metropolitan area)
- Structure of school schedules
- Type of respondent (Student, Parent, Teacher and School Administrator)
- Size of military installation within close proximity of school district
- Equal distribution of the number of interviews between groups.
- Potential biases
  ~ The school age children (grades 5-12) that we sampled, typically had middle to upper ranks of both and enlisted and officer personnel general; middle age parents.
  ~ Consent/assent process may have preclude certain individuals from participating

Below is the locations were the study took place:

Installation	School District	Home Schooling
Ft. Benning, Georgia	Muscogee County School	
Ft. Bliss, Texas	El Paso Independent Schools	•
Ft. Bragg, North Carolina	Cumberland County Schools	•
Ft. Carson, Colorado	Fountain Ft. Carson-District 8	
Ft. Hood, Texas	Killeen Independent School District	•
Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas	Ft. Leavenworth USD & Leavenworth USD	
Ft. Polk, Louisiana	Vernon Parish Schools	•
Ft. Riley, Kansas	Geary County Schools	
Ft. Sam Houston, Texas	Ft. Sam Houston Schools	
Ft. Sill, Oklahoma	Lawton Public Schools	
Ft. Stewart, Georgia	Liberty County Schools	
North Carolina National Guard	(No School District Selected)	
63rd Regional Readiness Command	(No School District Selected)	

At each location we wanted to have a strong representative sample to make it possible for each Installation/ School District to stand by itself for later independent analysis. Children below 5th grade were not sampled, though parents and teachers interviewed were asked about the experiences of younger children. Researchers understood that interview data below that age group would be limited by the ability of young children to express complex feelings and emotions (Merrell, 2008). At the conclusion of the sampling phase, eleven installations/12 school districts yielded a very large number of interviews for qualitative studies; researchers had collected 923 interviews, a 75% success rate. Due to the number of interviews, researchers were concerned with over sampling and early saturation of the study, but with the variables that we collected, we could slice the data fairly finely and, as mentioned above, we wanted each location to stand on its own for subsequent analysis.

"Put simply, saturation indicates you have covered the breadth of your data nothing new is coming up.

(Lyn Richards, 2008, p. 36)

Sampling:

The study design used random sampling within the school systems. District personnel within the school systems accessed and pulled randomized rosters. The Home Schooling study presented an issue in randomized subject selection: home schooled children are not listed on a roster. The research team selected snowballing to collect interviews. Snowball sampling is especially useful when you are trying to reach populations that are inaccessible or hard to find (Trochim, 2006). Based on our knowledge of the installations and connections to Home Schooling groups/individuals, we chose 4 installations to conduct the Home Schooling study. Due to logistics, time, and complexity, this research project conducted only one interview per respondent (Benard, 1988).

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS:

Type of interview	Who
Semi-structured	Administrators, (included Administrators and School Counselors)
Semi-structured	Teachers (Grades 5-12)
Semi-structured	Parents (Grades 5-12)
Semi-structured and Likert Scale Questions	Students (Grades 5-12)
Semi-structured	24 Expert interviews (formal interviews of both Installation and School District Leadership about partnerships and supports for military children) (Meuser & Nagel, 1991), (Flick, 1998)

Respondent	Number of interviews
Administrators	175
Educators	162
Parents (Includes Active Duty, Guard & Reserve Home Schooling)	261
Students (Includes Active Duty, Guard & Reserve Home Schooling)	301
Landscape Interviews	24
Total:	923

Field Researchers:

For each of the 11 locations there was a team of 3 field researchers Their duties included setting up the interviews, conducting the interview, and taking observational notes. Each field researcher underwent training at the MCEC Headquarters. This training included:

- Appropriate conduct inside a school system (proper protocols)
- Collaborative Institute Training Initiative (CITI) on the protection of human subjects (https://www.citiprogram.org/Default.asp?)
- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Interview training and practice
- Situational training ("what if" scenarios, i.e. What if a student revealed sensitive information where he or she may be a danger to himself or others)
- Legal discussions with an attorney versed in school law

Field researchers underwent a background investigation and were selected based on their work experience in school systems and their degree qualifications/experience. Many field researchers were retired school administrators or teachers. During the initial interview process, the MCEC core researchers monitored each field researcher for the correct interview techniques; 4 of the 33 field researchers required retraining or were re-assigned to other duties.

Interviews were conducted at schools in a quiet environment. Two field researchers were present at each interview; one asking questions and the other recording the conversation on digital recorder and taking notes (Patton, 2002).

Coding:

"There are many ways of coding and many purposes for coding activities across the different qualitative methods. They all share the goal of getting from unstructured and messy data to ideas about what is going on in the data"

   (Lyn Richards & Janice M Morse, 2007, p. 133)

Considering the immense amount of data from over 900 interviews within EMC-21, a coding team was developed. Building a team that coded correctly but allowed for development of topics within the data is

difficult to do (see below). Building a coding system where all coded items are in the correct node can be done and must be done to ensure both academic and statistical accuracy.

- **Project Setup:** Correctly setting up a project in the Qualitative Software, NVIVO is critical. An outside consultant was employed that had worked on several hundred projects and had been an advisor on past the MCEC projects. The level of planning and setup was quite detailed, with the research team spending several hundred hours in project setup to assure a quality outcome. Below is an example of the detail:

   Once the interviews were recorded they were transcribed into Microsoft Word format with "Heading 1" marking the questions header. The format did not incorporate the full questions into the transcript, rather the question header was abbreviated; like MULD08 as the question for multiple deployment question 8. By using Heading 1 format, we were also able to auto code our project so we had each question response from all respondents in one node. An example, MULD08 node contained responses from 261 parents to that question. We also abbreviated questions like "MULD08" to avoid word searches picking up data from the questions rather than the respondents data.

- **Training:** This process was fairly straightforward considering the complexity of NVIVO software. The core research team was trained and included the following topics:
   ~ Tree Development-building the initial themes or categories
   ~ Coding Structure
   ~ Building a Code Book
   ~ Coding Accuracy- development of procedures for both 1st and 2nd pass coding, code book and inter-coder reliability.

- **Tree development:** Initially came from review of the questions, scan of the interviews, and looking at the original SETS study tree. However, validity of the tree came through a series of training exercises. Project coders coded the same documents and discussed in detail questions like: did the node cover the topic, had the thought been coded correctly, did this thought need to be placed in several different nodes? The research team also conducted a number of percent agreement exercises/inter-coder reliability queries (Guest & MacQueen, 2008). Within the NVIVO software we had specific reports that the research team ran to do inter-coder reliability analysis. The research team also had a professional qualitative researcher outside the organization review the tree structure for a number of factors such as repetitive coding design. Repetitive coding can create confusion and additional workloads; especially in the analysis phase.

- **Coding Structure:** The research team selected a two-level scheme method used by many researchers. It provides a more general "etic" level and a more specific "emic" level, close to participants' categories but nested in the "etic" codes. Again it also insures accuracy of the coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Qualitative research generally requires two views of the world (Maxwell & Miller,1992) described as categorizing and contextualizing (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

- **Building the Code Book:** A code book was built to increase accuracy of 1st pass coding ("etic" level) and to reduce the anxiety of the coders; it created a framework of definitions to guide coding. (Guest & MacQueen, 2008). Codebook and tree/subject development was designed after the CDC model (Guest & MacQueen, 2008). Building the Code book occurred during the training/development sessions. Similar to the CDC model, the EMC-21 code book contained definitions of the nodes/subjects, examples of inclusion, examples of exclusion, and comments. Building the code book took many hours of discussion, agreements, disagreements and compromise. At times during the development process, out and out battles and disagreements occurred. This is not atypical for code team building

and the nature of strong willed researchers/ coders. "Tuckman (1965) described this process as having four stages: forming, storming, norming and performing." (Guest & MacQueen, 2008). This process strengthens the final product.

- **Coding Accuracy:** As stated above, inter-coder reliability queries were run that gave us useful data on the percentage of agreement of the coders. We also used 1st and 2nd pass coding to ensure the absolute accuracy of the coding. Additionally, second pass coding was use to extend the subjects areas (nodes) or to add additional subjects and was a deliberate process. Unlike first pass coding (where researchers coded to all nodes), the research team assigned a specific coder to a node in 2nd pass coding. Again, researchers looked within the node to insure all of the thoughts and ideas belonged to that node/subject. The researchers also looked for possible extensions of that node.

- **Coding Notes** by team members were required and were used for points of discussion and validation in the code team meetings.

Analysis

EMC-21 began with an extensive literature review within the four subject areas. The literature review help shaped our study and guided our question development. EMC-21 contained over 90 different questions, and over 900 interviews. One response on deployment contained over 55,000 words. Including all the variables, the research team was faced with several hundred permutations to examine. The research team had more than 3.5 million words or approximately 7,000 pages of data to analyze. In the analysis, there were two key milestones. The first milestone was saturation. Saturation is defined as no new additional information as per themes, topics, or findings being found, nothing new emerges (Flick, 1998). Saturation allowed us to begin exploration of the project and look for emergent themes. The second key milestone was locking the project. Declaring the project "locked" to the research team meant that all interviews were loaded and coded, no further information would be imported, and research had reached a point where we could begin to use variables and to deeply analyze emergent themes. Additionally, locking the project allowed researchers to collect exact percentages and numbers.

- **Themes and Findings-validity:** With development of themes and findings, the research team developed a framework for validity (or checklist) to ensure that themes and findings met research standards for publication. These requirements contained generalized elements similar to what is published in "The Good Research Guide" (Denscombe, 2009). The research team also designed elements more specific to the research. Examples included but were not limited to:
  ~ Was there a difference in installation locations on the predominant thought?
  ~ What did slicing the theme by classification (variable) indicate? Was our theme localized by group or variable, or is it generalizeable to the whole population?
  ~ Did different groups (Students, Educators, and Administrators & Parents) have different experiences and perspectives?

- **Writing and Review:** As we began to write the results we realized that a writing plan needed to be developed. Based on the different researchers we were faced with a variety of styles and presentation formats. We established a specific structure for the report and each segment of the report underwent critical review by several experts outside of our study.

- **Software:** NVIVO 8 subsequently upgraded to NVIVO 9 was the Qualitative Software for EMC-21. From the beginning, researchers were concerned about the Qualitative software's ability to handle the large amount of data generated by the interviews. When the project was locked, it contained 3,426,832 words over 7,000 pages of data.

- ~ *Technology:* The research team worked several different computer configurations and finally discovered that computers with solid state hard drives improved the performance so that queries could be run in adequate time. Technical support from QSR, International was invaluable. They provided several recommendations on file structure and software setup to improve performance.
- ~ *Classifications:* NVIVO 9 allowed us to load our variables with a classification sheet and to link the variables to each interview. This allowed the research team to not only cut the data by interviews, but also by the coded nodes. For example, we could take a Likert scale question about outlook on life and cross it against views on deployment.

- **Quantitative Data:** Ten well-being questions were asked of the students. The well-being questions use a 5 point LIKERT scale index. The research team contemplated using one of the well-being inventories (Naar-King, 2004) but felt that for several of reasons self-designed questions were better. The reasons included (but not inclusive) were:
  - ~ The research team's Likert scale questions provided enough data (statistical scoring) to cut across the qualitative data. The results or findings came more from the process of comparing statistical data against the qualitative data.
  - ~ Standardize questions did not align to the research.

One question also used the self-anchoring Cantril Scale. This measure provided an additional way to measure an individual's general sense of well-being (Cantril, 1965). The Cantril scale used worst-to-best life on a 10 point scale. One area we looked at closely with the Cantril scale was the situational aspect of where the scaling fell. In other words, Was a parent deployed? How did students in this category score? Was there a difference between students of non-deployed parents?

> **"The Cantril format tends to accentuate the relative aspects since the respondent quite consciously frames his assessments relative to his own conceptions of "best" and "worst."**

> (Campbell, 1976, p. 31)

Institutional Review Board:

IRB was approved initially on 18 September 2009 by U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC). Because of the nature of the study and the protection of human subjects, consent forms for adults and consent/assent forms for children were required. All researchers were trained at the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) site. They took the Social & Behavioral Investigators and Research Personnel Course on the protection of human subjects. All documentation was assigned coding to guarantee anonymity of participants of the study. The research team's coding system provided structure and organization while still protecting confidentiality. An example, of an interview header is: S_E_K7_CAR_021. This defined the interview as a Student interview, Enrichment, Grade K-7, Located at Ft. Carson, Interview # 021.

Study Limitations:

Conducting random sampling and the consent/assent process led to a few locations not collecting number of desired interviews. These locations could not be analyzed as an entity and it was difficult to do comparative analysis with other locations. Locating the Reserve and National Guard members was difficult, requiring numerous trips and was subsequently done through Yellow Ribbon events. The consent/assent process and the associated logistics was also a factor in the reduced number of desired interviews; 58% of Reserve and National Guard interviews were collected. The Home Schooling population was also hard to locate; 41% of their interviews were collected. One limitation that led to a finding was the inability

of school districts to complete simple demographic data on Military-connected children. Like percent of Military-connected students in TAG programs, ethnic breakdowns or percent with discipline referrals. This finding coincides with a similar finding in a March 2011 GAO Report "Education of Military Dependent Students Better Information Needed to Assess Student Performance". This limited our study by not having a complete set of *some* variables we had intended to use in the analysis phase.

Recommendations for Future Research:

The research team recommends for future research that longitudinal data collection be conducted that captures data both before and after a family's move to a new location, as well as looking at child development over time. This research will require data collection at several installations and require the capacity to follow the mobility of families and children. This data collection will include quantitative data from both the outgoing and incoming school systems. Several theories would possibly be proven or validated, such as a possible inoculation theory, based on the number of family transitions, deployments, and/or time in the EFMP program. Interviews from this study indicate that Home Schooling may be a popular option for Military-connected parents. Validation of this theory, fully understanding the needs and experiences of these families will lead to more support options for this population.

Future of Data Set:

EMC-21 was designed specifically as an educational data set, looking for educational issues that hinder or support the education of children of military families. Within the data collected, there is a wealth of information on family stressors, culture, and the phenomenology of military families. It is recommend the MCEC Science Advisory Board review this data and mine it for specific topics like resiliency, child development, parenting etc.

Opening Statement:

Percent passing AYP is a poor indicator of state and school academic proficiency. Each state negotiates with the U.S. Department of Education on what is considered Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by use of a state's tests. Due to the future requirement of 100 percent AYP, some states are balking at this requirement, accepting more AYP school failures or requesting waivers.

State accountability programs very often use the results from state assessment programs when determining whether or not the state, district, and school has met their state criteria for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), as required by No Child Left Behind. The percentage of schools making AYP, however, cannot be used to compare state student performance. Because state, district, and school AYP is based on different state tests aligned to different curriculum standards graded by different performance standards and reviewed according to different state accountability criteria, there is no way to compare these results. A recent report demonstrated these differences in the percentage Study states' schools that made AYP based on their 2008-09 test administration (Deitz & Malini, 2010).

SAMPLING OF SCHOOLS IN STATES WITH SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY PRESENCE

State	Percent Made AYP		State	Percent Made AYP
California	50%		Louisiana	91%
Colorado	56%		North Carolina	71%
Florida	23%		Oklahoma	89%
Georgia	86%		Texas	95 %
Kansas	88%		Virginia	72%

To reach a clearer perspective, the following chart reveals the changes in the percentage of schools not making AYP from 2006-2010 (2009-10 are tentative results). If a reviewer used only this information to determine which state schools are performing better on state tests, one might conclude that Texas is doing better than all the other states in this study because only five percent of the schools are not meeting the yearly AYP requirements on assessment. Using the same information, one might conclude that Florida schools are the least successful of the states listed: Percentage of States Attaining Adequate Yearly Progress, 2005 through 2009.

PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS NOT ATTAINING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS, 2005 THROUGH 2009 BY STATE

State	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
California	34%	33%	48%	50%	61%
Colorado	25%	27%	43%	44%	38%
Florida	71%	66%	76%	77%	86%
Georgia	21%	18%	20%	14%	29%
Kansas	14%	12%	10%	12%	18%
Louisiana	9%	12%	19%	9%	12%
North Carolina	56%	55%	69%	29%	42%
Oklahoma	11%	12%	7%	11%	41%
Texas	19%	9%	15%	5%	5%
Virginia	23%	26%	62%	58%	46%
United States	29%	28%	35%	33%	38%

(Usher, 2011)

The assumptions of a robustness of a state's education system drawn from the above table would be misleading. The evaluation is influenced by so many factors that no real comparison can be made using AYP. Factors influencing a school's success on AYP include:

- How well the curriculum is linked to the test
- The difficulty level of the test
- The question format and the format of answers (Multiple choice answers are easy to score and easier to guess. Short answers, completing a chart, gridding in an answer, or showing all work indicates more difficult answers to complete and score.)
- The definition of passing (basic or proficient)
- The cut scores (passing scores)
- Students who retest (if those new results are counted this influences the percentage of passing students)
- The type of model used in reporting, for example, a growth model
- Whose scores are used in calculating the percent passing (the definition of the academic year is critical in determining which mobile student scores are used in state, district, and school passing rates and therefore counted for AYP purposes; often the scores will be used for the district but not for the school.)
- The number count for each of the groups reviewed for AYP (Does the state require 30 students, 50 students, or ten percent of the student body to require review for AYP?)
- If there is a new test this year, these results could be counted this year, or they may not be used for two years.
- The amount of tests used to determine AYP (As more states begin to use end-of-course tests rather than comprehensive English/language arts and mathematics tests to determine AYP, this will become a more important issue.)

- The AYP requirement, by subject area and year, is to meet the 100 percent requirement by the 2013-2014 school years.

One Factor Can Affect Calculations

States have established yearly Annual Measurement Objectives (AMOs) – goals to reach the NCLB mandated 100 percent pass rate in the 2013-2014 school year for both English/Language Arts and Mathematics. Most states report distinct goals for each English/Language Arts and Mathematics and they may also differ by grade level.

The data in the two tables below was taken from the most recent state consolidated state application accountability workbooks posted on the Department of Education website. Note the required increase based on those years to reach the mandated goal of 100 percent passing by the 2013-2014 school year.

STATES HEAVILY IMPACTED BY MILITARY PRESENCE: REQUIRED INCREASE TO MEET 100 PERCENT PASS RATE FOR ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS AYP 2002-2014

Year	California High Schools	Colorado High Schools	Florida	Georgia High Schools	Kansas 9-12	Louisiana	North Carolina Grade 10	Texas	Virginia
2001-02	11.2	79.65	31	Not given	44	36.9	52	Not given	60.7
2002-03	11.2	79.65	31	88.0	44	36.9	52	47	61
2003-04	11.2	79.65	31	81.6	51	36.9	52	47	61
2004-05	22.3	84.74	37	81.6	58	47.4	35.4	53	65
2005-06	22.3	84.74	44	84.7	58	47.4	35.4	53	69
2006-07	22.3	84.74	51	84.7	65	47.4	35.4	60	73
2007-08	33.4	89.83	58	87.7	72	57.9	38.5	60	77
2008-09	44.5	89.83	65	87.7	76.7	57.9	38.5	67	81
2009-10	55.6	89.83	72	87.7	81.3	57.9	38.5	73	81
2010-11	66.7	94.92	79	90.8	86	68.4	69.3	80	86
2011-12	77.8	94.92	86	93.9	90.7	78.9	69.3	87	91
2012-13	88.9	94.92	93	96.9	95.3	89.4	69.3	93	96
2013-14	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

STATES HEAVILY IMPACTED BY MILITARY PRESENCE: REQUIRED INCREASE TO MEET 100 PERCENT PASS RATE FOR MATHEMATICS AYP 2002-2014

Year	California High Schools	Colorado High Schools	Florida	Georgia High Schools	Kansas 9-12	Louisiana	North Carolina Grade 10	Texas	Virginia
2001-02	9.6	47	38	Not listed	29.1	30.1	54.9	Not listed	58.4
2002-03	9.6	47	38	81	29.1	30.1	54.9	33	59
2003-04	9.6	47	38	62.3	38	30.1	54.9	33	59
2004-05	20.9	60.25	44	62.3	46.8	41.8	70.8	42	63
2005-06	20.9	60.25	50	68.6	46.8	41.8	70.8	42	37
2006-07	20.9	60.25	56	68.6	55.7	41.8	70.8	50	71
2007-08	32.2	73.5	62	74.9	64.6	53.5	68.4	50	75
2008-09	43.5	73.5	68	74.9	70.5	53.5	68.4	58	79
2009-10	54.8	73.5	74	74.9	76.4	53.5	68.4	67	79
2010-11	66.1	86.75	80	81.2	82.3	65.2	84	75	85
2011-12	77.4	86.75	86	87.4	88.2	76.9	84.2	83	90
2012-13	88.7	86.75	93	93.7	94.1	88.6	84.2	92	95
2013-14	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Search completed on U.S. Government website on May 17, 2011. (Approved State Accountability Plans, 2011)
- *Georgia reset annual measurable objectives after the March 2005 administration.*
- *North Carolina modified January 5, 2005.*
- *Virginia revised in 2005, 2010, and 2011.*
- *Oklahoma reports AYP according to meeting Academic Performance Index Goals with 1500 equated to 100 percent.*

What the Military Family Should Know and Can Do

Although parents cannot compare the results of states using their individual AYP assessment programs, it is important to know what students are supposed to know, when they should know it, how it is assessed, and how their school has performed on state assessments in the past. Additionally, parents need to know when benchmarks are given, how their children are prepared for assessments, and how teachers use those results to assist children who have not mastered material.

When moving, parents can consult state-prepared district and school report cards to determine school performance over time. If a student is assigned to a school that has consistently not performed well, parents need to know to ask about options such as school choice (parent making a choice for their children to go to another school with free transportation) and supplemental services.

Career Readiness

Opening Statement:

Career/Technical Education (CTE) can serve many purposes for high school students, including helping them explore career options, remain engaged in school, gain skills that are broadly useful in the labor market, gain job-specific skills for direct labor market entry, and prepare for further study in postsecondary education.

What is Career Ready?

Today, when someone says that their goal is for students to graduate from school both college- and career-ready, the idea of college-readiness may be clear, but is "career-ready" really understood?

Today's concept of career-ready is different that it was even 20 years ago: the 1991 Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) reported there five competencies and three foundations of workplace knowhow (What work requires of schools: A SCANS report for America 2000, 1991). SCANS specifically listed the competencies of effective workers in allocating resources, demonstrating interpersonal skills, acquiring/interpreting/ evaluating data, understanding social/organizational, and technological systems, and selecting/using/ maintaining technologies. Workforce foundations included knowledge of basic academic skills, thinking skills, and personal qualities.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) poll reported in 2008 the most important skills needed for the workplace of both experienced and new entrants. The following charts compare the SCANS competencies and foundations to those most frequently cited in the poll along with the descriptions of those skills as interpreted through SHRM and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. Note the top skills are adaptability/flexibility (46 percent) and critical thinking/problem solving (35 percent), professionalism/work ethic (31 percent), information technology application (30 percent), teamwork/collaboration (26 percent), and diversity (26 percent). (Critical skills needs and resources for the changing workforce: A study by the society for Human Resource Management and WSJ.com/Careers, 2008).

SCANS Report: What Work Requires of Schools Workplace Know-How Competencies for 2000 (1991)	Society for Human Resource Management: Poll on Skills for New Entrants to the Workforce on Importance (2008) compared to two years ago (2006)	Definition of Applied Skill as Listed in "Are they really ready to work?" List was derived from the Partnership for 21st Century Skills
Basic Skills – reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics, speaking and listening	<u>Written Communications</u> conveying written messages clearly and effectively (24 percent); writing in English (grammar, spelling, etc.) (18 percent)	Write memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively
	<u>Oral Communication</u> (21 percent)	Articulate thoughts, ideas clearly and effectively; have public speaking skills
	<u>Reading Comprehension</u> (English) (19 percent)	Other subjects listed include science, government/economics, humanities/arts, and history/geography
	<u>Foreign Languages</u> (10 percent) <u>Mathematics</u> (6 percent)	

SCANS Report: What Work Requires of Schools Workplace Know-How Competencies for 2000 (1991)	Society for Human Resource Management: Poll on Skills for New Entrants to the Workforce on Importance (2008) compared to two years ago (2006)	Definition of Applied Skill as Listed in "Are they really ready to work?" List was derived from the Partnership for 21st Century Skills
Thinking Skills – thinking creatively, making decisions, solving problems, seeing things in the mind's eye, knowing how to learn, and reasoning	Critical Thinking/Problem Solving Skills (35 percent)	Sound reasoning and analytical thinking: use knowledge, facts, and data to solve workplace problems; apply math and science concepts to problem solving
	Creativity/Innovation (25 percent)	Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work; communicate new ideas to others; integrate knowledge across different disciplines
Personal Qualities – individual responsibility, self-esteem, social ability, self-management, and integrity	Professionalism/Work Ethic (31 percent)	Demonstrate personal accountability; effective work habits, such as punctuality, working productively with others, and time and work load management
	Ethics/Social Responsibility (20 percent)	Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior; act responsibly with interests of the larger community in mind
	Lifelong Learning/Self-Direction (15 percent)	Be able to continuously acquire new knowledge and skills; monitor one's own learning needs; be able to learn from one's mistakes
	Employee Adaptability/Flexibility (46 percent)	
Interpersonal Skills – working on teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, and working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds	Teamwork/Collaboration (26 percent)	Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers; be able to work with diverse teams; negotiate and manage conflicts
	Leadership (20 percent)	Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals; use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others
	Diversity (26 percent)	Learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, races, ages, gender, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints
Information – acquiring and evaluating data, organizing and maintaining files, interpreting and communicating, and using computers to process information	Information Technology Application (30 percent)	Information: acquires and evaluates; organizes and maintains, interprets and communicates; uses computers to process
Technology – selecting equipment and tools, applying technology to specific tasks, and maintaining and troubleshooting technologies		Select and use appropriate technology to accomplish a given task, apply computing skills to problem solving

This chart was compiled using the three reports: What work requires of schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000 (What work requires of schools: A SCANS report for America 2000, 1991), *Are they really ready to work?: Employers' perspectives on the basic knowledge and applied skills of new entrants to the 21st century U.S. workforce* (Casner-Lotto & Benner, 2006), and *Critical skills needs and resources for the Changing Workforce* (What work requires of schools: A SCANS report for America 2000, 1991).

In an effort to clarify the definition of career readiness in 2010, the Association for Career and Technical Education reduced the discussion to three major skills areas required of students to demonstrate career readiness: core academic skills; employability skills; and job-specific skills.

Agreeing that "all high school students need the academic skills necessary to pursue postsecondary education without remediation – the measure many consider 'college readiness,'" these students also need to be able to apply this knowledge and communicate with others effectively in their chosen technological field. This also means that students must be able to apply job-related math skills in their profession (What is "Career Ready"?, 2010).

"Employability skills have often been cited by employers as the skills most critical to workplace success in the 21st-Century economy."

Employability skills are the same skills reported by the Society for Human Resource Management poll: critical thinking, adaptability, problem solving, communication skills, and so on…. How many of these skills are also required for college success?

Finally, the student must be able to demonstrate job-specific skills. Today, through the work of the National Career Technical Education Foundation (NCTEF), the States' Career Clusters Initiative has developed and assisted the states in preparing students successfully for the 21st workforce with its technological needs in the 16 identified career clusters which consolidate the 79 pathways to reach a particular occupation. Depending on the selected occupation, some students can develop sufficient skills to earn a certificate or license, but many will still require postsecondary education studies.

How many states have defined "work readiness"?

Quality Counts 2011 reports that 33 states have defined work readiness with an additional eight states in the process of development. Of the ten statesmost impacted by military presence, eight have defined work readiness and two – Florida and Kansas - are in the process of defining work readiness.

 Additional facts of interest include:

- Thirty-eight states offer a high school diploma with career specialization.
- Forty-two states offer pathways leading to either an industry recognized certificate or license.
- Only Montana, Nebraska, and North Dakota do not offer pathways to earn credits that will transfer to postsecondary education.

Are states required to offer Career/Vocational Programs?

- In 2008, only 11 states did not require school districts to offer programs. Of the ten states most impacted by military presence, the picture of the states varies. California, Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, and Texas require programs be offered. In Kansas, it is a local school district decision. Louisiana must offer not less than one vocational program in every high school and Virginia school districts must offer a minimum of three programs.

What are the Recognized Career Clusters?

As of August 2008, 23 states had adopted the 16 career clusters. Florida, Texas, and Virginia have adopted all 16, while Oklahoma adopted all except government and public administration.

RECOGNIZED CAREER CLUSTERS IN THE STATES IN THE EMC-21 STUDY

	CA	CO	FL	GA	KS	LA	NC	OK	TX	VA
Agriculture				•						
Agriculture Education Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources						•				
Agricultural and Natural Resources			•					•	•	•
Agricultural and Natural Resources Technologies							•			
Architecture and Construction			•					•	•	•
Architecture, Construction, Communications, and Transportation				•						
Arts, Communication, and Information					•					
Arts, A/V Technology, and Communication			•					•	•	•
Arts and Communication Services	•									
Arts and Sciences							•			
Biological and Chemical Technologies							•			
Business and Administrative Services	•	•								
Business and Computer Science				•						
Business and Marketing Education							•			
Business Management and Administration			•					•	•	•
Business, Marketing, and Management					•					
Business Technologies							•			
Commercial and Artistic Production Technologies							•			

	CA	CO	FL	GA	KS	LA	NC	OK	TX	VA
Computing				•						
Construction	•									
Construction Technologies							•			
Education and Training (Services)	•		•					•	•	•
Engineering and Technology				•						
Environmental and Agricultural Systems					•					
Family and Consumer Sciences						•				
Financial Services (Finance)	•		•					•	•	•
General Trade and Technical Education						•				
Government and Public Administration			•						•	•
Health Occupations						•				
Healthcare Science										
Health Services	•									
Health Science(s)			•		•		•	•	•	•
Health Sciences and Public Safety		•								
Hospitality and Tourism	•		•					•	•	•
Hospitality, Human Services, and Education	•		•					•	•	•
Human Resources and Services					•					
Human Services	•		•					•	•	•
Industrial, Manufacturing and Engineering Systems					•					
Industrial Technologies							•			
Information Technology	•		•					•	•	•
Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security			•					•	•	•
Legal and Protective Services	•									
Logistics, Transportation and Distribution Services	•									
Manufacturing	•		•					•	•	•
Marketing, Sales and Service			•	•				•	•	•

	CA	CO	FL	GA	KS	LA	NC	OK	TX	VA
Public Service Technologies							•			
Scientific Research and Technical Services	•									
Skilled Trades and Technical Sciences		•								
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)		•						•	•	•
STEM, Arts, Design and Information Technology		•								
Technology Education						•				
Transportation, Distribution and Logistics			•					•	•	•
Transport Systems Technologies							•			
Wholesale/Retail Sales and Services	•									

(Bush, 2008)

From the table *What are Recognized Career Clusters*, it appears that some states focus on specific career/technical areas. Is this correct?

Yes. Twenty states did in 2008. Samples are:

- The San Diego and Pasadena/Los Angeles areas focus on biotechnology and bioscience, respectively.
- Kansas and Project Lead the Way address engineering, biomechanics, aeronautics, and applied math/science.
- Colorado teachers have assisted in the development of the Math-in-CTE program.
- Texas targets advanced technologies and manufacturing, aerospace and defense, biotechnology and life sciences, information and computer technology, petroleum refining and chemical products, and energy.
- Virginia focuses on STEM, high performance manufacturing, high academic and technical skills.

When vocational preparation requires more preparation than can be provided at the secondary level, are there programs available to continue study seamlessly between secondary and postsecondary?

Many career/technical programs require coordination between public high schools and higher education for students to complete their study and skills development. Tech Prep and other similar programs offer a combination of multiple-year programs between high schools and colleges ("2+2" means the first two years in high school followed by two years in college). Another option states may offer is a Career Academy or career-themed schools which may be either a stand-alone school or housed within another high school.

Which options are available in states participating in the EMC-21 Study?

Some of the options found in the states included the following:

- Tech Prep programs were found in all states.
- Many states operate career academies: Florida (400+), Georgia, and North Carolina (133+), Colorado (5). Other states with similar programs include California Preparation Academies.
- Oklahoma has established technology center districts with 56 campuses.

Why is it important for Military Families to determine state and district policies for career technology programs?

If a student participates in a career/technology program that requires study beyond high school, it is important the transition to postsecondary study be smooth. Will all coursework transfer? What happens if the student enrolls at a postsecondary school in another state? Is there a certification that is earned upon completion? Is assessment part of the criteria for qualifying for certification?

Another concern may be a student's initial entry into the program. Just as in academic programs, study may require participation over a two or three year period and may not be open to seniors. Families should check with the school as soon as possible when anticipating a transition to determine career/technical options and the requirements to participate.

The sites below can assist in locating information about the career technology programs in the study states.

- Colorado School to Career **http://www.cde.state.co.us/schooltocareer/index.htm**
- Georgia Career, Technical and Agricultural education **http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_cta.aspx**
- Kansas Career and Technical Education **http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=249**
- Louisiana College and Career Readiness **http://www.doe.state.la.us/offices/ccr/**
- North Carolina Career and Technical Education **http://www.ncpublicschools.org/cte/**
- Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology **http://www.okcareertech.org/**
- Texas Career and Technical Education **http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=4881&menu_id=720**

Charter Schools

Opening Statement:

"Today, a record number of school districts – four – have at least 30 percent of public school students enrolled in charter schools. Additionally, 16 school districts have more than 20 percent of their public school students enrolled in charter schools"

(A Growing Movement: America's Largest Charter School Communities, 2010).
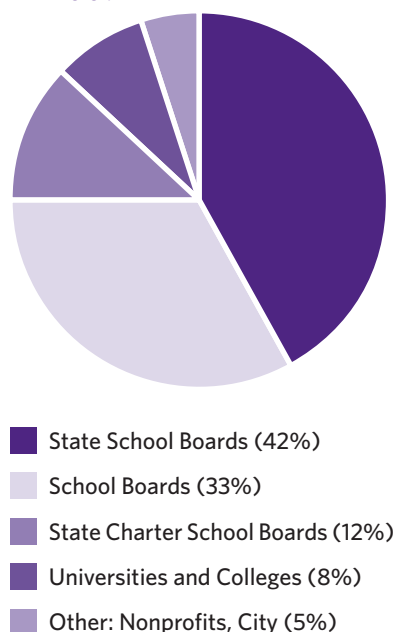
What are charter schools?

Charter schools are public schools run under a specific charter granted to the school by their state legislature, a state or local school board, a postsecondary institution, or a nonprofit organization. Exempted from many state regulations, these schools are often created to meet the academic needs of subpopulations that are not performing as well as other groups.

In 2006, WestEd identified several characteristics of successful charter high schools. The ideal charter school is well managed by empowered leaders capable of making decisions. Staffed by mission-driven faculty who respond to both students' academic and social needs, the school is supported by the community and students' Families. The focus is not limited to high school completion, but rather on college preparation. Professional development is ongoing (WestEd, 2006).

Who authorizes charter schools?

State school boards and local school boards authorize the majority of charter schools, 42 percent and 33 percent, respectively. The remaining schools may be authorized by state charter school boards (12 percent), universities and colleges (eight percent), and nonprofit organizations or cities (five percent) (Allen & Consoletti, 2010).

CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS IN 2009

- State School Boards (42%)
- School Boards (33%)
- State Charter School Boards (12%)
- Universities and Colleges (8%)
- Other: Nonprofits, City (5%)

Management organizations working through states and districts also have a role in the growth of charter schools. In September 2010, twelve charter managment organizations were awarded a total of $50 million in Race to the Top funds to create 127 new schools and expand another 31 schools in Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, the Rio Grande Valley and Houston in Texas, and Washington, D.C. These include the following programs: Achievement First, Aspire, Foundation for a Greater Opportunity, IDEA, KIPP, LEARN, Mastery, Noble, Project YES, Propel, Success, and Uncommon (U.S. Department of Education to give grants to 12 charter schools, 2010).

Who attends charter schools?

Charter schools are schools of choice. Some students attend because they seek a better opportunity to learn – academic achievement at their zoned school has not met designated levels for multiple years. Other students seek another disciplinary style, a totally virtual experience, or a theme-school focus. Others attend simply because a sibling already attends that school.

Some districts enroll students on a first-come, first-served basis, a policy which leads Families to stand in lines often hours in advance to enroll their student, or cause online systems to go down when the application hour arrives. Other districts use a lottery system. Many give priority to those students who live in the school zone and siblings of students already attending the school.

Fifty-two percent of charter school students are minority students; 50 percent are at-risk; and 54 percent qualify as free or reduced lunch but many charter schools do not apply for the program due to a lack of cafeteria facilities, shortened schedules, cyber schools, or political concerns. "Nineteen percent of students are English-language learners, 14 percent have special needs, eight percent are teen parents, and almost 14 percent are adjudicated youth" (Allen & Consoletti, 2010).

How many charter schools are there in the United States today?

As of 2009, there were over 5,000 charter schools in 39 states and Washington, D.C. The number of charter schools has grown at a rate of nine percent from 2007 to 2009. Sixty-five percent of charter schools have waiting lists. Not all of them are successful; 13 percent have been closed (Allen & Consoletti, 2010).

Another 465 schools were scheduled to open in 2010-2011 for a total estimated reenrollment of 1,729,963 students (National charter school and enrollment statistics 2010, 2010).

The fall 2010 Race to the Top awards recognized the potential of charter schools as one way of serving low performing students. States that had charter school policies that did not discourage or prohibit their growth, provided equal per student funding and funding for facilities, specify policies for monitoring and holding the schools accountable while still permitting them to operate as innovative and autonomous schools, scored higher on ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter and other innovative schools (State applications for Phase 2, 2010).

How are charter schools financed?

Funded at 68 percent of school district per student rate, charter schools receive about $7,286 per pupil in comparison to $10,754 for other public school students. Still charter schools spend on average $715 per student more than they receive in state funding. Funding for facilities is a major issue because only 26 percent of the survey schools reported receiving funding specifically for facilities (Allen & Consoletti, 2010).

Charter cyber schools and those incorporating virtual learning heavily into their program also encounter financing problems. In November 2010, the Georgia cyber charter school called for additional funding for state virtual schools which are supported at $3,300 per pupil, $3,200 below funding for students enrolled in regular public schools ($6,500) (Dodd, D. Aileen, 2010).

What are the differences in charter school curriculum?

Charter schools often have a special academic or disciplinary focus. Often using innovative curriculum, schools may concentrate on college preparation (31 percent), a career area back-to-basics (13 percent), science/math/technology (12 percent), arts (five percent), or GED/high school completion (five percent) (Allen & Consoletti, 2010).

Extended days with tutoring after school, longer school years, Saturday tutoring, and summer sessions are options used by charter schools to improve instruction.

Unless these schools serve dropouts, students with severe disabilities, or very young children, students must take the same mandatory state assessments that students in other public schools take. The schools also must meet the same state accountability system which uses achievement data from those state assessments for accountability purposes.

What is the presence of charter schools States Heavily Impacted by Military Presence?

The chart Charter School Enrollment and Closures in the EMC-21 Study lists the number of charter schools operating in the states in the EMC-21 Study, the number opened that year, those closed, and the total enrollment that year.

CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND CLOSURES IN THE EMC-21 STUDY

STATE	Operating in 2009-2010	Opening in 2010-2011	Total Operating	Total Estimated Enrollment
CA	827	114	941	348,686
CO	161	15	176	66,186
FL	427	56	483	150,199
GA	92	17	109	57,987
KS	37	0	37	5,003
LA	82	14	96	33,083
NC	101	3	104	36,577
OK	17	0	17	5,970
TX	402	20	422	139,665
VA	3	1	4	341
US TOTAL	4,988	465	5,453	1,729,963

The Center for Education Reform. *Annual Survey of America's Charter Schools: 2011.*

A recent district website search found there are at least six charter high schools in the Fort Carson area: Colorado Springs Early College, Community Prep Charter School, James Irwin Charter High School, Life Skills Center of Colorado Springs, the Classical Academy High School, and the Vanguard School. The Fort Hood area has two charter schools: Richard Milburn Alternative High School and Transformative Charter

Academy. Fort Bliss has one charter school in Canutillo: Northwest Early College High School; and Fort Benning has one charter high school, Chattahoochee County High School, located south of Columbus.

Charter schools in New Orleans outnumber traditional schools with 47 charter schools in the Recovery School District; sixty-one percent of the schools in the New Orleans Public School System are charters. The District of Columbia Public Schools has the next highest percentage of charters at 38 percent. In terms of actual number of students, the school district with the most students enrolled in charter schools is Los Angeles Unified School District with over 68,000 students or ten percent of the total district enrollment. Of importance in these statistics are the District of Columbia Public School, New Orleans Public School System and Broward County Public Schools with 26,660, 22,481, and 21,603 students, respectively (A Growing Movement: America's Largest Charter School Communities, 2010).

What states currently have charter school policies in place?

As of October 2010, thirty-nine states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have charter school legislation. A review of the state policies by the Education Commission of the States shows:

- All states require state standards and assessments be followed at charter schools.
- Generally waivers are granted to charter schools in many areas; exceptions are in health and safety issues; required state assessment and accountability reporting.
- Twenty-two states have limited the number of charter schools (caps) that can operate in the state.
- Only five states do not list policy-preferred students. Normally students who live in the attendance area, have siblings in the school, are children of staff members, or are at-risk receive preference. Florida requires charters to give preference to children of Active Duty Military personnel.
- Fifteen states require that teachers be certified. Several states require that teachers be qualified but the school can seek waivers. Other states set various percentages of certified teacher criteria, while two do not require certified teachers.
- All state policies, except Maryland, stipulate criteria for terminating a charter school contract. Maryland requires districts to develop that policy.
- All states, except Maryland, require charter schools to submit annual reports and audits.

(Molly Ryan, 2010)

Do state charter schools policies enable authorizers and schools more autonomy in some states?

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute review of autonomy in a charter school provides another way of looking at charter school policies. Generally the institute found that charter schools had control over staffing, curriculum, school calendars, and teacher work rules; however, teacher certification policies were a different issue. Individual charters in California and Texas were awarded an A- for autonomy but the state received much different scores for their charter law (three and 21 respectively). Similarly, three states (Florida, Louisiana, and North Carolina) were rated a B+ in autonomy but the states were rated 11, 9, and 32 on their charter school law. Clearly some charter schools are more in charge than others. Some are more successful than others as well (Brincon, Dana and Winkler, Amber M., 2010).

Do some state charter school policies facilitate the learning environment more than others?

Yes. In early 2010, the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools reviewed state charter school policies in terms of the twenty essential components they had identified in their model public school law. Many components are important to the administrative operations and, although vitally important to successful

operation, are not of direct importance to Families. Equitable funding for student programs and facilities effects many aspects of both the curriculum and school academic and social environment. Other areas of concern are related to the student and accountability issues.

The Student:
- Are student recruitment, enrollment, and lottery procedures clearly stated?
- Do students have access to participation in extracurricular and interscholastic activities?
- Do students with special education requirements have access to required services?
- Do all students have access to education programs that enhance learning opportunities?

Accountability:
- Are authorizer and program accountability measures clearly outlined?
- Is there an established method of collecting and monitoring school data?
- Are renewal, nonrenewal, and revocation of charter policies followed?

The top ten state policies in light of this review included three of the EMC-21 Study states: Georgia (four), Colorado (five), and Louisiana (nine) (Ziebarth, Todd, 2010).

Other EMC-21 Study states' ratings were Kansas (36), North Carolina (32), Oklahoma (24), Texas (21), (Ziebarth, Todd, 2010).

Do states really hold charter schools accountable? Do states revoke poorly performing schools' charters?

Accountability is one area of concern previously noted as of importance to all Families. A charter school may be held responsible to the same accountability system as other public schools. The key to closing down a school or revoking a charter lies in the state policy. This is one of the areas that the model charter school law addresses.

A Thomas B. Fordham report examined the status of low-performing K-8 public schools in ten states which house around 70 percent of all U.S. charter schools. Three of the states in this study were EMC-21 Study states: Florida, North Carolina, and Texas. The study found that Arizona, Florida, and California closed a higher percentage of poor-performing charter schools in comparison to other public schools than the other seven states (Stuit D. A., 2010).

Summarize the charter school policies.
- All ten states have a charter school law.
- All ten states permit existing public schools to convert to charter schools.
- All ten states permit start-up charter schools.
- California law includes a "parent trigger" which permits parents to petition the district to convert a failing school into a charter school.
- A charter school can either be a part of a school district, be its own district (CA, GA, LA, and TX), or can be part of a charter school group (CO).
- Only Kansas does not specify preferences for students who may enroll in charter schools.
- Four states limit the number of charter schools permitted (CA, NC, OK, and TX).
- Four states require certified teachers (CA, FL, KS, VA); three may grant certified teacher waivers (CO, GA, OK); two permit a specific percentage to not be certified (LA, NC); and Texas does not require certified teachers (Molly Ryan, 2010).

Are there any features of charter schools that may encourage high school graduation or college attendance?

There is limited research that suggests that charter high school attendance may have a positive effect on high school completion and college attendance. This finding may be influenced by improved academic achievement, smaller schools, and different grade configurations (Booker, Sass, Gill, & Zimmer, 2010).

Why should Military Families know about charter schools?

Charter schools provide an opportunity for those enrolled in a poorer performing school to attend another school with an academic focus as required in No Child Left Behind legislation. They also provide specific learning experiences that may not be available in the regularly zoned school.

When considering enrollment in a charter school, parents should review the school's academic record just as they would for any other school. A facility and staff review is recommended as well because often charters do not receive funding for facilities. Inquiry into curriculum and other instructional resources is appropriate.

The Military Family may meet the problems similar to those with magnet schools, including being present in the district to apply for charter school attendance. Transportation could also be an issue. Also, enrollment in a charter school with a specific academic focus may prevent a junior or senior from entering due to incomplete program prerequisite courses at the charter school.

Of equal importance is what happens when a student, who has completed two years in a focus-specific charter school, transfers to a more traditional school. Will there be any difficulties in transferring credits? Can the student continue in the program previously enrolled? If services such as Saturday, after-school tutoring, or computer software are no longer available, will the student need additional assistance to succeed?

College in High School – A Growing Trend

Opening Statement:

"Since 2002, the partner organizations of the Early College High School Initiative have started or redesigned more than 200 schools in 24 states and the District of Columbia. The schools are designed so that low-income youth, first-generation college goers, English language learners, students of color, and other young people underrepresented in higher education can simultaneously earn a high school diploma and an Associate's degree or up to two years of credit toward a Bachelor's degree—tuition free." (Early College High School Initiative)

One way to prepare students to be college ready is to provide a structure for them to complete college courses either on the college campus, a separate school, or at their home school. Schools may provide one or more methods for their students to earn these college credits. Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs which require successful completion of the required test and acceptance by the prospective college of interest are another way of reaching this goal. The last ten years, dual or concurrent enrollment and a continuum of early college designs have become viable vehicles for encouraging students to complete college goals, especially potential high school dropouts and students who may be the first in their Families to attend college, when those tuition-free programs provide supports/services to encourage success.

What are the basic differences in these programs?

These programs differ in the population served, which grades can participate, the additional services provided, the number and types of college credits that can be earned, and funding. Jobs for the Future coordinates the Early College High School Initiative by supporting members who start new schools or redesign current schools.

Working Definitions:

Dual Enrollment: Originally, dual enrollment programs were designed for high-achieving junior and senior students to take challenging college work. Because students were taking both high school and college courses at the same time, they participated in a dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment program. Successful completion of these courses did not automatically result in granting high school and college credit for the same course.

Dual Credit: Students who participate in dual enrollment college courses and receive both high school and college credit for successfully completed courses receive "dual credit."

Early College High School: Early College High Schools are schools that are geared towards serving low-income students who are often first-generation college students. Many may be English language learners. Through student support services, these students may complete an Associate's degree or a technical certification within five years of beginning the respective program.

Middle College High School: Middle College High Schools were the precursors for early college high schools. They serve a similar population for a longer period of time with similar supports including summer activities, such as grades nine through thirteen or even grades six or seven through twelve in middle school into college programs. Students may earn a substantial number of college credits.

Forty-six states have statewide policies that apply to one or more of their dual enrollment programs but, as of August 2008, only seven states have policies that specifically target early college high schools. For this reason, it is necessary to review dual enrollment policies and the considerations Families must review first.

What are important features of dual enrollment policies?

These summary statements are based on the Education Commission of the States dual enrollment database (Dounay, ECS Database: Dual enrollment, 2008).

- Who will pay for courses? In 22 states, students and parents are responsible for paying tuition. When there is more than one program in the state (Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas), this can get complicated.
- Where is the course taught? Like most states (30), all of the states except Louisiana allow courses to be taught at either a high school or a postsecondary institution. Three states (Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas) also offer classes online.
- Who is eligible for the classes? Many states (20) require students to be in at least grade 11. This is also the case in Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, and Virginia. Kansas extends to grade ten while Colorado permits students as early as ninth grade to participate.
  > Additional requirements could be age, a fixed Grade Point Average (GPA), or set scores on a college readiness assessment.
  > Other states require students to meet the postsecondary specific requirements (Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Virginia).
- Is there a limit to the number of courses that a student can earn? Ten states allow students to register either as full-time or part-time students (Florida, Georgia, and Louisiana). California, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas limit the number of courses to two courses a semester, 11 units a semester, 24 units if a partnership program, and no more than 19 total semester credits between high school and postsecondary classes, respectively. Florida and Georgia limit to no more than two years for a student enrolled in eleventh and twelfth grade while Georgia also limits to one year for a student who enrolls only in courses during the senior year.
- Is credit granted at both the high school and postsecondary level or is it restricted to one level or another? Nationwide, students in 26 states earn both high school and postsecondary credit (Florida, Georgia, Texas, and Virginia). Kansas and North Carolina grant only postsecondary credit; California and Oklahoma do not specify in policy, while program participation determines where credit is granted.
- Are public postsecondary institutions required to accept credits earned through dual enrollment? Only 15 states required two-year and four-year schools to accept transfer credits students earned through dual enrollment (Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas) while another 15 did not (Kansas, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Virginia). Eighteen states did not have a clear policy (California and Colorado). States may also require a minimum grade of a C and that the course is a core curriculum course.

Which states have Early College High School policies?

In 2008, only seven states had specific Early College/Middle College High School policies: California, Colorado, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas. California policy also addresses middle college high schools.

- Who is eligible for the classes? Students in North Carolina and Texas must be in grades 9-12, while Colorado policy is grades 9-12. California and Georgia vary grade groupings: California 9-12, 10-12, and 11-12, and Georgia 6-12, 7-12, and 9-12.
  > Additional criteria include maintaining a fixed GPA: Colorado requires a minimum 2.0.
  > Colorado requires students to participate in year-round classes and requires parent participation.
  > North Carolina students must demonstrate readiness as determined by the early college and partner postsecondary institution. Selection committee reviews academic credentials, disciplinary records, and potential successful completion. Texas also requires assessment for college-readiness curriculum which can be demonstrated by national and state assessments.

The following three questions address policies in only California, Colorado, North Carolina, and Texas.

- Are student counseling, support, and/or mentoring a part of the program? Yes. Colorado students to receive regularly scheduled counseling and appropriate support services through the program. North Carolina policy requires parent conferencing as well. Texas states that programs must provide academic monitoring.
- Are public postsecondary institutions required to accept credits earned through dual enrollment? All four state policies require postsecondary schools to accept credits earned, however, the policy may require that these courses come from an approved state list or core curriculum and the grade be a C or higher.
- Can the program award an Associate's degree? All programs can award an Associate's degree except California. North Carolina policy must provide students with an opportunity "to begin or complete an associate degree program, to master a certificate or vocational program, or to earn up to two years of college credit."

What are the basic differences in Early College High Schools and dual credit programs?

This chart demonstrates the differences in these two programs in terms that Families can quickly understand.

Program	Students	Program Designed for Students	Student Supports	College Connection
Dual Enrollment	Classes taught at college, home school, or online	Student who meet eligibility requirements; usually grade 11 and 12 students	No high school supports	May provide some services but has no responsibility to work with high school students
Early College High School/Middle College High School	Small school in which all students take college-level classes; may be housed within a high school	Low-income, underrepresented students; Early College grades served varies from 9-12 to 9-13. Middle college may include as low as grade 6 students.	Supports are integrated into the academic program at both high school and college level	Joint responsibility as outlined in Memorandum of Understanding

(Hoffman & Vargas, 2010)

What services/resources are provided by Early College High Schools?

Early College High Schools are designed for students to succeed not only in the present but in the future as well.

- College-level developmental courses
- Extended learning time such as in summer and a longer school day
- Tutoring services
- Skills for successful class – to develop note-taking strategies, research design, and study skills for different subject areas
- Opportunities to learn about financial aid, potential student services, and college course major requirements
- Advisory period for addressing personal issues

What is the presence of Early College High Schools in States with a Substantial Military Presence?

- The Foundation for California Community Colleges, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, the North Carolina New School Project (NCNSP), and the Texas High School Project (THSP) assumed early state leads in developing Early College High Schools by partnering with other private funders in 2002.
- The Foundation for California Community Colleges has assisted in the formation of 23 Early College High Schools in the state. Three are located in the San Diego area: San Diego Early Middle High School, San Diego LEADS Academy, and San Diego High School for the Arts.
- Colorado lists three Early College High Schools for the state including one in Denver.
- Georgia Early College opened its first site in 2005 and now there are 12 schools including the Early College Academy of Columbus and Savannah Early College.
- North Carolina has 70 "Learn and Earn" Early College High Schools; most have Memorandums of Understanding with community colleges. Cross Creek Early College High School is the local Early College High School in Cumberland County.
- Texas has 44 Early College High Schools, 51 STEM schools, and whole-district college designs (Hoffman & Vargas, 2010). In the El Paso area there are five schools serving the different school districts all in conjunction with El Paso Community College. The one serving El Paso Independent School District is Transmountain Early College High School or TSTEM.
- Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Virginia do not have Early College High Schools listed in the Early College High School Initiative website.

How many students are enrolled in Early College High School programs?

"Forty-seven thousand students are enrolled in 208 Early College High Schools in 24 states that enable students to earn up to two years of transferable college credit. To date, these newly formed Early College High Schools – though still educate a very small percentage of the nation's 15 million high school students – have achieved an average 92 percent graduation rate" (Balfanz, Bridgeland, Moore, & Fox, 2010).

How many students take courses through dual credit programs?

The last nationally reported data on dual credit participation is dated to 2002-03 when the total enrollment in dual enrollment courses was 1,117,100: 718,800 in academic courses and 398,300 in career/technical courses. (Enrollment of public high school students in dual credit courses taught on a high school campus or on the campus of a postsecondary institution during the 2002–03 12-month school year, by dual credit course focus and school characteristics:2003)

Sample figures for Florida, North Carolina, and Texas reflect attendance at different times. The importance of the online option is noted in the North Carolina iSchool enrollments.

- The American Institutes for Research reported that total state enrollment in dual credit in Texas increased from 71,803 in 2007–08 to 94,232 in 2009–10. "An analysis of enrollment in courses for dual credit by subject area revealed that approximately 70 percent of courses taken by high school students were in core academic subject areas such as social studies/history (31 percent), English language arts (26 percent), mathematics (8 percent), and science (4 percent); 20 percent of courses were in career or technical education and computer science" (American Institutes for Research, 2011).
- In Fiscal Year 2008-09, Florida reported 35,679 high school students were dually enrolled in community colleges and 2,054 were dually enrolled at state universities. Students earned 338,230 credit hours and 9,369 credit hour equivalencies (career and technical programs) through community college dual

enrollment courses (Department of Education Acceleration Programs, 2010).

- A Blackboard Institute paper reports that the North Carolina iSchool enrolled approximately 5,800 in their online Learn and Earn program. Ninety-four percent of the fall 2009 semester iSchool students passed their courses, although only 86 percent earned transferrable credit (Effective practices in online dual enrollment: Spotlight North Carolina).

How successful are Early College High School students?

The graduation statistics from those Early College High Schools that had been open four or more years demonstrate the progress in both number of students completing the program as well as the increase in students earning college credits, to include earning an Associate's degree.

YEAR	Graduates	Number of Schools	Graduates Earning College Credits	Graduates Earning More than One Year of College Credit	Graduates Earning AA or at least Two Years of College Credit
2007	905	18	80 percent	36 percent	10 percent
2008	2,258	37	88 percent	40 percent	11 percent
2009	2,995	64	91 percent	44 percent	24 percent

(Webb & Mayka, 2011)

"In 2009, 3,000 students graduated from the 64 early college schools that had been open for four or more years:

- They earned an average of 20 college credits or more.
- Forty-four percent earned at least a year of transferrable college credit.
- Twenty-five percent earned two full years of college credit or an Associate's degree.
- Eighty-six percent of graduates enrolled immediately in postsecondary education(Hoffman & Vargas, 2010)."

Why is the early college studies concept important to all students?

After a review of the Early College High School and dual enrollment research, Jobs for the Future (JFF) has published its vision for students who complete courses through some early college design. JJF sees every student in the United States having the opportunity to graduate from high school with at least 12 college credits, including college math and college composition. These credits will be acceptable at all public state colleges. Students will not have to take the remedial math and composition courses many do today and the funding that once went to fund those developmental education courses in postsecondary institutions will be used instead to fund college-level work in high school.

To accomplish this, state policies will need to continue to evolve.

What is important for Military Families to know about Early College High School designs?

There are exciting opportunities for students but Families need to examine them carefully, especially if it involves tuition payments. Besides the standard questions to consider when leaving during the school

year or before graduating from high school or completing courses in another state, new questions must be answered:

Will the credits earned be transferrable to another public postsecondary institution in another state?

- How many credits will the other state accept?
- Can students continue in a similar program in another state, especially students who begin a program in grade seven or eight?
- Will a state certification be accepted in another state?

Finally, all states do not require school districts to notify parents and students about these programs so parents and students may have to inquire on their own.

For additional information on programs nationwide, visit the Jobs for the Future or The Early College High School Initiative websites. A sampling of websites that can provide additional information are listed below.

- Jobs for the Future **http://www.jff.org/projects/current/education/early-college-high-school-initiative/57**
- The Early College High School Initiative **http://www.earlycolleges.org/**
- California Early College **http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/echsgen.asp**
- Colorado Dual Enrollment Learning Opportunities **http://www.cde.state.co.us/SecondaryInitiatives/downloads/grid percent202.pdf**
- Georgia Early College **http://www.gaearlycollege.org/**
- North Carolina "Earn and Learn" Early College High School **http://www.nclearnandearn.gov/learnEarnHighschools.aspx**
- Texas Early College High School **http://www.txechs.com/index.php**

Grading Policies

Opening Statement:

Transition between high schools can greatly affect student GPAs. It can impact class standing and college admissions.

Grading Policies, GPA, and Ranking in Class

Although not a trend, the various state and district policies for awarding grades, weighted grade points or quality points, and the methods used to calculate grade point averages has and continues to be a concern for Military Families. In October 2005, there were only four states (Arkansas, Florida, South Carolina, and West Virginia) that had adopted statewide uniform grading scales (Burke, Molly, 2005). Since then Louisiana (2010), Texas (2007), and New Mexico (2007) have passed legislation addressing state grading policies. Texas policy was amended considerably in 2009, but did not require a common numerical scale or calculation (Education Commission of the States, 2010).

A review of three states/districts demonstrates how those districts may award grades of A through C similarly, but below a grade of C shows considerable variation:

GRADE SCALES IN FLORIDA, GEORGIA, AND USD 475 IN KANSAS.

State/District	Florida	Georgia	USD 475 KS
A	90-100	90-100	90-100
B	80-89	80-89	80-89
C	70-79	70-79	70-79
D	60-69	NA	65-69
F	<60	<70	<65

These are simple scales, but they can lead to complications in transcript evaluation. Using the above example, a grade below 70 would not earn credit in Georgia, but would in the other two districts/states, and a student earning a 66 in Florida and the Kansas school district would earn credit, but that credit would not transfer to a school in Georgia.

Using Grade Points to Calculate a Grade Point Average

This system of awarding credit complicates transition for the mobile Military child even more, with some states again having a comprehensive system and others developing a very extensive system that may even differentiate between courses, including even basic classes. Additional points, sometimes known as quality points and generally known as weighting, are awarded to acknowledge achievement in rigorous courses of study such as AP, IB, Honors, and dual enrollment.

Even the simplest grade scale can result in a difference in grade points. For example, although Florida and Fountain-Fort Carson have the same grade scale, their weighted grade points differ in the D range.

Points in Florida					Grade Points in Fountain-Ft. Carson			
	Grade Scale	Regular	Weighted	III Courses		Grade Scale	Regular	Weighted
A	90-100	4	5	4.5	A	90-100	4	5
B	80-89	3	4	3.5	B	80-89	3	4
C	70-79	2	3	2.5	C	70-79	2	3
D	60-69	3	1	1	D	60-69	1	2
F	<60	0	0	0	F	<60	0	0

Weighted courses are AP, IB, Dual Enrollment, and Advanced International Certificate of Education Courses.
Level III courses are advanced high school courses.
Florida School Districts may develop a weighted system, but it is not standardized throughout the state.

Mobile Military Families well understand the effect of these different methods of calculating grades. Whereas once weighting grades functioned primarily as the method by which the valedictorian is selected, today it carries even more importance for students: a difference in .1 of a grade point average (GPA) may mean the difference in automatic acceptance to a major college or qualifying for a scholarship or merit award. As the student moves through schools in different districts and states, the student's grades may be subject to the interpretation of multiple-state/district grading policies, which can have a cumulative effect on the final GPA.

This can become very complicated, as the example of Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) shows: the community concern for grading policies in FCPS resulted in an extensive policy review of 35 regional schools that used a 10-point scale and/or weighted grade point for Honors, AP, IB, and dual enrollments courses. After recalculating the grade point averages of 1,000 Fairfax County high school seniors under the different systems, the report found:

• Other district students with non-weighted and weighted GPAs exceeded FCPS students with GPAs of 3.5 and above.
• When the non-weighted GPA was calculated, students in the 2.25 to 3.5 range GPA increased by 0.17 points.
• Using a 0.5 weight for Honors courses and a 1.0 increase for AP, IB, and dual enrollment classes increased those student GPAs by 0.10.
• When both the grading scale and weighting for Honors and AP, IB, and dual enrollment were applied, the GPAs of students with GPAs below 2.0 (0.15) and those over 3.5 increased by .15 and .31, respectively (Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS): An investigation of the grading policy, 2008).

The concern for GPA calculation became more apparent when the results of a survey of 104 colleges (to which 75 percent of the FCPS students generally apply) were reviewed. From the 64 completed surveys they found:

• Fifty-five percent of the responding colleges did not recalculate GPAs.
• Of the 45 percent that did recalculate GPAs, 62 percent used core courses and 38 percent dropped the plus and minus grades.

- The most important factors in college admissions for these colleges were grades in core courses, rigor of courses, number of advanced courses, SAT/ACT scores, and weighted GPA.
- The two key factors considered for merit-based scholarships and honors program placement were SAT/ACT scores and GPA.
- One-third of the colleges that offered merit scholarships required a 2.5 GPA or above.
- Almost 40 percent of the Honor Programs required a GPA between 3.0 – 3.9.

As a result of this study, the new grading scale for FCPS was changed, effective September 2009, to reflect the 10-point systems for grades C through A, include both plus and minus grades, and weighted quality points (0.5 for honors classes, 1.0 for AP and IB, as well as the dual enrollment classes already identified for weighting) (Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS): An investigation of the grading policy, 2008).

COMPARISON OF THE PREVIOUS FAIRFAX COUNTY GRADE AND GRADE/QUALITY POINT SCALES TO THE NEW (2009)

Original Grading Scale		Quality Points	New Grading Scale		Grade Point Plus Quality Points		
					AP, IB, DE	Honors	All Other Classes
A	94-100	4	A	93-100	5	4.5	4.0
B+	90-93	3.5	A-	90-92	4.7	4.2	3.7
B	84-89	3	B+	87-89	4.3	3.8	3.3
C+	80-83	2.5	B	83-86	4	3.5	3.0
C	74-79	2	B-	0-82	3.7	3.2	2.7
D+	70-73	1.5	C+	77-79	3.3	2.8	2.3
D	64-69	1	C	73-76	3	2.5	2.0
F	Below 64	0	C-	70-72	2.7	2.2	1.7
			D+	67-69	2.3	1.8	1.3
			D	64-66	2	1.5	1.0
			F	<64	0	0	0

One final example of an even more elaborate grading policy that even includes basic classes is the Killeen Independent School District policy (Killeen ISD High School Transcript, 2010).

KILLEEN GRADE POINT INCLUDING QUALITY POINTS

Grading Scale		AP, IB	PreAP/Honors	Regular	Basic
A+	97-100	18	16	13	10
A	94-96	17	15	12	9
A-	90-93	16	14	11	8
B+	87-80	15	13	10	7
B	84-86	14	12	9	6
B-	80-83	13	11	8	5
C+	77-79	12	10	7	4
C	75-76	11	9	6	3
C-	70-74	10	8	5	2
F	<70	0	0	0	0

Other Factors that Enter the GPA Calculation Equation

It is one thing when all students attend the same school for all four years of instruction. It is something else when transcripts from one or more schools must be evaluated and transferred according to the new district's policies. Many factors can influence the calculation process.

- What grades are used? Whether it is a six-weeks, nine-weeks, quarter, semester, or year grade – the shorter the period, the more grades there are to average.
- Which grades get averaged? Are only core academic courses used or all courses? (PE, athletics, band, choir, ROTC, career technology, office worker, special classes like leadership)
- Are grades awarded for high school courses taken in middle school considered for quality grade points? Are they used to calculate the GPA?
- Does the transfer grade policy use number or letter grades to evaluate?
- How does the evaluation treat courses taken as Pass/Fail?
- Can a student retake a course previously passed to raise his grade?
- Do plus/minus policies results in dropping the plus or minus or have their own grade point award?
- Are there limits on the number of courses counted towards the GPA?
- Is a minimal score required on an AP/IB tests prior to granting quality points?
- Are quality points awarded for classes taken through online learning?
- Are quality points awarded for dual enrollment classes?

Other Factors (In Addition to GPA) Used in Determining Class Rank

Some districts may have criteria that influence final recognitions that go beyond a GPA. These criteria may include a residency requirement such as attending the present school for the junior and senior year and the time of calculation of the GPA.

What the Military Family Should Know and Can Do

If a student has attended multiple schools during high school and even taken high school courses in middle school, transcript evaluation is critical. Prior to transferring schools, parents can make sure the transcript reflects the grading policy. If not, parents can take a copy of the school handbook or other documentation that contains the grading scale.

Parents can ask for a copy of the new school district transcript evaluation policy and determine if it is applied correctly.

If a transcript evaluation results in a reduced GPA, students can consider submitting transcripts from all high schools attended when college application time arrives. A "short" statement on the application explaining the reason for multiple-submissions is appropriate. Hopefully the school is one that recalculates GPA according to their standards and the multiple submissions will receive proper review.

It is important to remember that GPA can determine what college a student can go to, as while as effect funding of college.

Online Education: What States Are Doing

Opening Statement:

Virtual Schools, Internet schools, distance learning and online learning are becoming a vital part of educational choices and have the potential to revolutionize education. Online learning requires self-discipline and time management skills. While online learning may never replace connection with a teacher or a group of peers, it may enhance knowledge and provide opportunities. The ideal online environment is a combination of online and face-to-face components.[1]

Online learning attracts a wide variety of learners ranging from students who need credit recovery to former home school students to students who want to accelerate. The flexibility of online learning is appealing to some students and parents.[2] Online learning programs struggle with high dropout rates so students need to be prepared for electronic learning. To meet with success, students need access and means to the online environment; technical, content and study skills; and ongoing support. The ideal online learner is described as mature, disciplined, experienced, and independent. Students with difficulties with self-discipline, attendance, and finishing assignments may need a more regulated learning environment.[2]

Technology support varies across programs. Most schools have a department staffed to assist teachers and students. Some offer computers for those without them in the home. Technology support is important because problems with access may influence a decision whether to continue.[2] It is vital that online or Internet schools provide a strong curriculum and employ licensed and certified teachers. Ongoing assessment must be provided to link teaching strategies with technology standards. Support for the student and professional development activities for teachers must be ongoing.[2]

As reported in *Keeping Pace with Online Learning 2010*, state virtual schools or state-led online learning initiatives exist in 39 states. In 2009-2010, nearly 450.000 enrollments were counted across state virtual schools and almost 200,000 students attend full-time online schools. One reason for its popularity is that online learning enables students to learn individually and at their own pace.[4]

The following table shows state ratings based on expected availability of online learning options to students in all grade levels and all geographic areas for the 2010-11 school year. An important distinction is whether the online program provides a complete curriculum for full-time students or provides supplemental courses to students also enrolled in a physical school. Full-time programs address the same accountability measures as physical schools in their states. Numbers indicate the number of enrollments per state. Availability is indicated by available to ALL; available to MOST but not all; available to SOME but not most; and Not Available (NA).[4]

1 Inglese, Dominick. December, 2010. Examiner.com: *Online learning trends.* http://www.examiner.com/esl-in-national/online-learning-trends#ixzz1FZ5u38RZ.

2 Wallace, Marie. May, 2010. Examiner.com: *Going to school in pajamas: Is online education a good choice for your child.* http://www.examiner.com/k-12-in-national/going-to-school-pajamas-is-online-education-a-good-choice-for-your-child#ixzz1FeWK6los.

3 Ahmed, A. August, 2010. Chicago Tribune. *Online learning attempts to make the grade in Chicago schools: Supporters say online learning is inexpensive and flexible; critics call it untested.* http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/education/ct-met-virtual-education-20100829,0,6659525.story

4 Evergreen Education Group. *Keeping Pace with online learning 2010*. http://kpk12.com

| STATE | SUPPLEMENTAL | | | FULL-TIME | | | Sample of state virtual schools or state initiatives |
	HS	MS	EL	HS	MS	EL	
CA	Some	Some	NA	Most	Most	Most	Many district and online charter schools; University of CA college prep is a state-led initiative.
CO **< 5,000**	Some	NA	NA	All	All	All	CO online learning is a state virtual school; there are 23 multi-district online programs in the state.
FL **>35,000**	All	All	NA	All	All	All	FL Virtual School is the largest in the country, with districts required to allow students to participate. Districts required by law to provide a full-time online learning option to their students.
GA	Most	Some	NA	NA	Some	Some	GA Virtual School is a state virtual school; several suburban Atlanta schools offer online programs. The sole existing full-time virtual charter school only serves through grade nine; very low funding for virtual charter schools currently under review.
KS	Most	Most	NA	All	All	All	Forty-four district programs and charter schools provide online courses; some of these schools serve students statewide.
LA	Most	Some	NA	NA	NA	NA	LA Virtual School, the state virtual school, will begin charging course enrollment fees for the first time in 2010-11.
NC	Most	Some	NA	NA	NA	NA	NC Virtual Public School has the second highest number of enrollments of any state virtual school.
OK	Some	NA	NA	All	All	Most	Two statewide full-time online schools and two university supplemental programs.
TX	Some	NA	NA	Some	Some	Some	TX Virtual School Network is a state virtual school; Electronic course program (ecp) allows for full-time schools operated both by charters and independent school districts for students grades 3-10; some large district programs.
VA	Some	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Virtual VA is a state virtual school; some district programs, especially in northern Virginia.

State virtual schools may be in danger due to funding constraints and policy changes.

While some state virtual schools continue to grow, many are facing budgets that are either flat or reducing. Three state virtual schools show large enrollment increases in 2010. The Florida Virtual School is the largest online school in the country. They have continued to grow rapidly and increased enrollments by 38 percent in 2009-2010. Following the Florida online school was the North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) both of which were funded on a formula tied to the state's public education formula. NCVPS has

become the second largest state virtual school in the country, with a 369 percent increase in enrollments in 2008-09 to 2009-10. Louisiana Virtual School had 27 percent growth 2008-09 to 2009-2010. The total budget for LVS is down by $1.5 million.

The following is a table that depicts the growth in state virtual schools from school year 2008-2009 to 2009-2010.

ANNUAL COURSE ENROLLMENTS IN STATE VIRTUAL SCHOOLS

State Name	2008-2009	2009-2010	State Name	2008-2009	2009-2010
Alabama	28,014	31,187	Mississippi	7,019	6,357
Arkansas	5,300	5,000	Missouri	15,810	2,900
Colorado	1,777	1,379	New Hampshire	5,800	8,000
Connecticut	250	250	New Mexico	2,063	1,508
Florida	154,000	213,926	North Carolina	15,721	73,658
Georgia	9,973	12,143	North Dakota	2,417	2,350
Hawaii	2,500	2,500	South Carolina	12,976	17,181
Idaho	9,646	14,345	South Dakota	2,312	2,900
Illinois	2,898	2,445	Tennessee	1,550	1,754
Iowa	414	750	Texas	103	1,867
Kentucky	2,300	1,615	Utah	7,832	7,846
Louisiana	11,00	14,001	Virginia	5,236	6,276
Maryland	710	633	West Virginia	3,172	3,924
Michigan	16,00	15,060	Wisconsin	1,762	2,212

Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning, 2010, www.kpk12.com

Finding Alternate Paths to Graduation

Online education is growing and providing alternate ways for students to learn and (depending on the state) graduate. Credit recovery or credit replacement/acceleration is also an option that can be helpful for the Military Families. Online education is growing rapidly and is in a state of transition in many states. Many school districts may not be aware of all the options available to the students.

Online Learning

Opening Statement:

In the 2010-2011 school year, technology has brought even more opportunities for learning. White boards, digital textbooks, clickers, online tutorials, and even iphones, ipads, and netbooks have enhanced methods of reaching students in a media they understand. One of the most relevant applications of technology in K-12 education for all students, and especially mobile Military Families, is online learning.

"As of late 2010, online learning opportunities are available to at least some students in 48 of the 50 states, plus Washington, D.C. No state, however, provides the full range of potential online learning opportunities – supplemental and full-time options for all students at all grade levels" (Keeping pace with K-12 online learning: An annual review of policy and practice, 2010).

What are these online opportunities?

Options for programs range from full-time to supplemental programs. These programs can be delivered through state virtual schools, state-led online learning initiatives, consortiums, individual school districts, or postsecondary institutions either in real-time (synchronous) or at different times (asynchronous). Providers and managers range from local school boards to state or independent vendors who serve students in district, magnet, charter, or home schools. A school may offer both full-time and blended courses depending on the structure and purpose of the school as well as individual student needs.

Students at all grade levels can participate in programs described by the amount of time students spent online compared to face-to-face time: less than 30 percent of the time online are web-facilitated; 30-78 percent online are blended; and, fully online programs are more than 78 percent. Teachers may lead instruction, support instruction, or have no involvement in instruction while students receive little or no support, some school support, or both school support and mentoring, respectively to the online delivered. This report addresses fully online programs.

How many students are really participating in online instruction?

In 2010, the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) reported that 1.5 million students were taking one or more online courses. For a more detailed picture, Keeping Pace recently reported in its survey for the 2009-2010 school year, the following:

- Thirty-nine states had either state virtual schools or state-led online learning initiatives.
- State virtual schools had around 450,000 course enrollments in 2009-2010.
- Full-time online schools serving multiple school districts operated in 27 states and Washington D.C.
- About 50 percent of all school districts are either operating or planning to operate online or blended programs.
- The Florida Virtual School (FLVS) opened in 1997 as the first state-wide online public high school. Today it operates its own school district while offering other Florida school districts the option to operate FLVS franchise. In 2009-10, they were the largest online school with 213,926 course enrollments. Their full-time school is the School District Virtual Instruction Program (VIP).

Variance in Online Instruction

Not all of the states that participated in the EMC-21 Study operate a statewide full-time online program. California's original University of California College Prep recently evolved from an online program to a provider of curricular materials for other state programs. Kansas and Oklahoma do not offer statewide programs while the Colorado Online Learning is regarded as a supplemental program.

The following chart reviews the programs available in states with a substantial military presence.

State	State Virtual School	Other	District	Charter	National Education Management Organizations (FT)
CA		Statewide initiative: University of California College Prep with K-12 High Speed Network provides online curriculum to partners	Riverside Virtual School; Clovis Online High School, Los Angeles Academy, City of Angels Virtual Academy	California Virtual Academies (9)	Advanced Academics; Connections Academy; Insight Schools; IQ Academy; K12 Inc.
CO	Colorado Online Learning (COL)	23 multi-district programs	8 Single Districts		Connections Academy; Insights Schools; K12 Inc.
FL	Florida Virtual School (FLVS) (Partners with Connections Academy K-8)	Two state-level virtual schools serve FT students K-8 being replaced by district programs	Districts required by law to provide a FT online learning option: District franchises of FLVS (39), School District Virtual Instruction Programs (VIP) in all 67 districts		FLVS partnered with Connections Academy grades K-8, K12 Inc.
GA	Georgia Virtual School (GAVS)	Georgia Cyber Academy administered through K12 Inc.	Some schools in Atlanta offer programs	Local districts may authorize; GCA submitted applications for two charter schools (2010)	K12 Inc (Odyssey Charter School)
KS	NO	Encourages Advanced Placement	Forty-four Programs: programs within a building, within a district, and buildings within a district, includes charter schools		Connections Academy; Insight Schools; K12 Inc.
LA	Louisiana Virtual School (LVS)	Algebra I online program delivered through web-based course; Dual Credit; AP		Online charter schools are not prohibited	

NC	North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS)	eLearning in state-funded schools must be approved by NCVPS, Learn and Earn Online (LEO) dual enrollment; North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics courses for those qualified but cannot attend due to limited space			Advanced Academics; K12 Inc.
OK	NO	Oklahoma Virtual High School (FT); Oklahoma Virtual Academy (FT); University of Oklahoma Independent Learning High School (S); Oklahoma State University K-12 Distance Learning Academy (S)	Local School Board policies are required for online courses. Programs must be approved by and supervised by the local board of education. Students in districts that do not offer online courses can transfer to one that does during the prescribed dates.		Advanced Academics; K12 Inc.
TX	Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN); Electronic Course Program (eCP) grades 3-10	Dual Credit; AP	District that meet specific criteria, open enrollment charter schools, regional ESCs, and TX public or private higher education institutions may become a TxVSN provider.	Two charter schools in 2009-10	Connections Academy; IQ Academy; K12 Inc.
VA	Virtual Virginia (Vva)	Early College Scholars may take AP courses free of charge.	Includes Fairfax Public Schools Online Campus; Arlington Public Schools Distance Learning; Prince William County Schools Virtual High School, Virtual Virginia Beach; Virginia Governor's Schools, Linwood Holton Virtual Governor's School; Commonwealth Governor's School; Blue Ridge Virtual Governor's School	No FT online charter schools	K12 inc.

(Keeping pace with K-12 online learning: An annual review of policy and practice, 2010)

To comprehend the extent of online instruction, both full-time and online enrollments must be examined. Most enrollment data is reported in terms of both the number of students enrolled and the number of courses in which they are enrolled. A sample of states with full-time virtual schools in the 2008-09 and 2009-2010 school years is reflected in the following chart. Note the Florida VIP program is included in this tally rather than the FLVS.

STATEWIDE FULL-TIME ONLINE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN STATES WITH SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY PRESENCE FOR THE 2008-09 & 2009-10 SCHOOL YEARS

STATE	2008-2009	2009-2010	Percentage of State Students in Full-time Online Schools 2009-10
CA	10,502	n/a	0.17 %
CO	11,641	13,093	1.60 %
FL (VIP)	1,079	2,392	0.09 %
GA	4,300	5,010	0.30 %
OK	1,100	2,500	0.39 %
TX	1,650	4,500	0.09 %

(Keeping pace with K-12 online learning: An annual review of policy and practice, 2010)

Part-time Students: Kansas, Louisiana, and Virginia do not have full-time online programs. Most state schools serve part-time students taking supplemental courses. The actual enrollment is better demonstrated by course enrollments which include both full-time and part-time students taking supplemental courses. The increase in the number of enrollments at the Florida Virtual School shows the fast-growing participation in this option.

STATE VIRTUAL COURSE ENROLLMENTS IN SAMPLE STATES FOR THE 2008-09 & 2009-10 SCHOOL YEARS

STATE	2008-2009	2009-2010
CO	1,777	1,379
FL	154,000	213,926
GA	9,973	12,143
LA	11,000	14,001

STATE	2008-2009	2009-2010
NC	15,721	73,658
TX	103	1,867
VA	5,236	6,276

(Keeping pace with K-12 online learning: An annual review of policy and practice, 2010)

Does anyone other than state boards of education or their designated personnel operate/manage online schools?

Education is big business and national education management organizations (EMOs) realized early the potential of online instruction. Some started as online providers whereas others like Kaplan and Edison have transferred over other education activities As of fall 2010, 27 states and Washington, D.C. have at least one full-time school serving multiple districts (as available). These may be charter or district schools that could be associated with EMOs like Connections Academy, K12 Inc., Advanced Academies, or Insight Schools.

Only one of the states, California, operates at least one school through each of the five selected EMOs. K12 Inc. operates schools in eight of the study states; Connections Academy schools are found in four; and, both Insight Academy and IQ Academy have schools in three states.

Do school districts also establish virtual schools?

Yes, many districts have established their own programs to meet their own specific needs. There are programs that have been operational for many years present in several of the study states including: Riverside Virtual School, Golden, Colorado; Cobb County and Suwannee, Georgia; Wichita, Kansas; and Miami-Dade County, Florida. These may offer supplemental courses or full-time enrollment. Many of these programs focus on recovering lost credits.

What high school courses are normally offered through online schools?

Full-time schools must offer the normal range of courses. In addition, some virtual schools provide courses to meet the needs of smaller and rural schools who often cannot hire a certified teacher for different foreign languages or advanced math and science classes.

Can any student enroll in virtual learning?

It all depends on state and district policies. Some states, like Georgia, offer courses to all public, private, or home school students but courses must be taken during the school day. Courses taken after school hours or during the summer are paid for by the students. Georgia also restricts supplemental courses enrollments to two a year, one each semester.

Florida requires students be enrolled in Florida schools the preceding year although Military dependents who recently moved to Florida, or siblings of students who are already enrolled, may enroll. The FLVS even enrolls out- of-state students.

For a complete answer to this question, see the state's individual policy online.

Can students take Advanced Placement classes online in the EMC-21 Study states?

Online courses are often the only opportunity to take Advanced Placement or dual enrollment classes for students in rural areas. State policy may allow any student to enroll for classes, limit the number of courses, or may limit funding to students in gifted and talented programs.

Students can enroll in AP programs in most EMC-21 Study states' virtual schools although the number of courses varies from three (Colorado Online Learning) to 23 (Florida Virtual School). State options are not limited to state virtual schools, however. The Oklahoma Virtual School, for example, offers ten AP courses.

Finally, online companies such as Apex Learning have become important providers of online curriculum.

Accredited by the Distance Education School by the Commission on Schools of the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS), Apex Learning currently lists 15 AP courses on its site. Although research did not find the study states using the Apex Learning option, this could be an option for mobile Families. Another option is Aventa learning which lists over 20 AP courses on its site.

Are there similar options for International Baccalaureate courses?

The International Baccalaureate program currently does not have any online courses. A new IB virtual community is now accessible for students and educators to share, blog, and communicate online in English, with French and Spanish to follow.

What about dual enrollment courses online?

Again, this depends on state policies. For complete information, consult state virtual school sites.

Sample online course taking information is available for Texas, North Carolina, and Louisiana. The Texas Virtual Network offers dual enrollment courses through Angelina College, Howard College, Lamar University, Tyler Junior College, the University of Texas - Arlington, or the University of Texas – Permian Basin, depending on the course. North Carolina also offers two online programs, Learn and Earn which enables students to enroll for science, math, and technology classes through 45 community colleges; and the University of North Carolina Greensboro iSchool. This program has enrolled over 27,000 in the three school years ending in 2009-10 paying for tuition, fees, and textbooks. Additionally the Louisiana Virtual School offers an introduction to engineering course through the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology at McNeese State University.

How are courses funded? Are there circumstances under which Families are expected to pay for courses?

The answer again is it depends on state policies. For complete information, consult state virtual school sites.

Most state virtual high school programs are financed with state funding. Federal Title II/Race to the Top grants may also be used, especially for credit recovery programs. Monies from Foundations like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation also may be used to support special virtual programs such as Advanced Placement courses, advanced math and science courses, and foreign languages that could not be offered in small or rural schools are most often courses selected by students for online learning. Louisiana's Algebra I Online Project is an excellent example of the use of online instruction to provide quality instruction working with non-certified instructors.

Advanced Placement courses or dual enrollment courses taken online are most often funded by the state or school district. For example, Virginia Early College Scholars may take courses free. Some states like Florida and Texas fund only for successfully completed courses whereas North Carolina bases funding on the previous year's enrollment adjusted for growth. You can find funding policies in the Appendix.

When students elect to complete courses during the summer, they may be asked to pay for these courses.

Is it possible to recover lost credit though online programs?

Yes, but only if state policy allows this demonstration of proficiency. Some school districts like Clark County School District, Nevada, actually started their online program as a means by which students could recover lost credits. An ECS database reports 12 states have policies that allow "proficiency-based" credit including Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and Texas. Those that do may fund the courses through school

funds and grants targeted specifically for at risk students or returning dropouts. When students elect to take additional courses outside the school day or exceed the number of courses or types of courses funded by their state, however, Families may be required to pay for the course(s).

As of July 2010, 140 out of 180 Georgia school districts had participated in the state funded Georgia Virtual School teacher-less credit recovery program. Through this competency-based program, 70 to 80 percent of the participating students recovered credits in core courses with 6,686 enrollments. Students who scored 85 percent on a unit pre-test were permitted to immediately post-test. Students who scored less than 85 percent on a pretest were required to study all the unit content.

Are online teachers certified? Do they have special training to teach online courses?

It all depends on state policy. Most EMC-21 Study states require instructors who teach full-time online classes to be certified or have special training in online instruction. Georgia has developed an online teaching endorsement for teachers of online courses. Local district facilitators who manage or monitor a program may not be certified.

Does online learning offer resources for the student who experiences difficulties in a regular class?

Absolutely! There are ample opportunities for a student who needs extra help in a course. First, many textbook companies also provide websites for students to log onto and access supplementary materials. Families can inquire with the school if this is a local option. Normally students require a school ID and password to log on.

Sample sites include: Pearson Education Inc. for Pearson Prentice Hall and Scott Foresman http://www.pearsonschool.com/ and McGraw Hill Online https://www.mheonline.com/.

What about the students who are in a traditional classroom? Are there any online sites that offer help with homework or one-on-one tutoring?

Yes. Tutor.com offers all Military Families free services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at http://www.tutor.com/military. Professional instructors in math, science, social studies, and English grades K-12 and some college courses are available to help a student with homework, SAT prep, or writing a paper.

Sometimes what a student really needs is another way to learn a topic at one's own pace – a chance to go over the topic one more time without getting embarrassed in class. A good tutorial that can be stopped and started, presenting examples in a non-judgmental format can be the answer. Families can find many free tutorials online, especially for math; one of the newest is Kahn Academy, a non-profit currently offering over 2,100 instructional videos in math and science, as well as some finance topics. http://www.khanacademy.org/

Are there any states that require their students to participate in an online learning experience?

Yes. In 2006, Michigan was the first state to require an online learning graduation requirement. Alabama followed in 2008. Michigan's requirement can be met by either completing an online course or "the student's school district or public school academy has integrated an online experience throughout the high school curriculum by ensuring that each teacher or each course that provides the required credits of the Michigan merit curriculum has integrated an online experience into the course" (Michigan Merit Curriculum High School Graduation Requirements, Undated 2010). Similarly, the Alabama requirement

can be met by an online course or participating "in online experiences incorporated into courses used to fulfill requirements for graduation" (High school distance learning: Online/Technology enhanced course or experience guidance, 2009).

What should mobile Military Families remember about online learning?

When Military Families move to a new school district, they need to ask – "Does the district offer online resources for our children?" and "How do we access them?" If students need to make up credits or lack credits towards graduation, ask if online learning is an option. If a student fails a course, ask if credit recovery is an option. If the school does not offer the course your student needs, an AP course he wanted to study, the dual enrollment class she was ready to take – ask if there is a way to take the course online.

For the student of a Military Family with an impending move, several things must be considered prior to the students enrolling in an online course: Can the student complete the course prior to the move? If not, is there any procedure by which the student can complete the course? Will the family incur a fee for this action? As with so many questions that have been posed in this section, it all depends on state policy.

Why is online learning important to Military Families?

In high school, graduating with your class means completing "x" number of credits as well as a specific number of courses in certain subject areas. When a student moves during the school year, the potential of not being able to complete those courses can become a real possibility, thus increasing the chances of not completing those graduation requirements on time.

Why?

1. The new school doesn't offer German, Japanese, or whatever the course in which the student was enrolled.
2. The new school is on a different schedule, block, or calendar which means there is no class that is at the same place in the curriculum as the student.
3. The student misses too many days in the class due to the transition and cannot complete the state seat time requirements or has gotten so far behind the student cannot make up the work.

There is also a problem for that student who enters a new school at the beginning of the year and discovers:

1. The new state requires more credits to graduate that the previous school.
2. The school does not offer the third and fourth year of a foreign language.
3. The school does not offer the planned Advanced Placement class.
4. There are no local opportunities for earning dual enrollment credit.

Potentially, online learning could be a solution.

"Online learning is emerging as an essential part of the K-12 education landscape. To meet their educational goals and secure their future as active and productive citizens, K-12 students must have access to quality online learning opportunities in a variety of forms that meet their needs. This imperative is reflected in the U.S. Department of Education's National Education Technology Plan as well as in policy discussions in statehouses across the nation" (Wicks, 2010).

Sanctions

Opening Statement:

What are other state actions/policies that affect students when they fail a course or do not pass state assessments?

Two policies that have been adopted by many states: "No Pass, No Play" and "No Drive." Knowledge of these policies may serve as an incentive for students to maintain grade averages.

Sixteen states have "No pass, no play" policies, many of which direct districts to develop policies as well. Eleven of the state policies are based strictly on academic performance. Policies normally include:

- activities covered (extracurricular, co-curricular, or academic);
- the academic performance that triggers probation; and,
- the period of probation.

Three of the EMC-21 Study states (LA, NC, and TX) have no pass, no play policies. Sample policies include:

- California may have a policy that cannot exceed one semester.
- Florida students whose cumulative grade point average falls below 2.0 must have an academic performance contract to include summer school attendance. Probation period is one grading period.
- Texas districts can waive requirements for students in advanced placement, International Baccalaureate, dual credit or honor courses in core subject areas. Probation period is three weeks (Colasanti, Accountability - Sanctions/Interventions - No Pass No Play, 2008).

As of 2007, 27 states have some form of "no drive" policy.

- Seventeen policies were linked to attendance (GA, OK, TX).
- Four policies were linked to both academic performance and attendance (NC).
- Three policies were linked to suspensions, expulsion, and/or safety infractions (KS, LA).
- Two policies concerned attendance and/or suspensions, expulsions or safety infractions.
- One state policy linked to attendance, behavior, and/or academic performance.

Specific state require specific requirements.

- Oklahoma requires "anyone under 18 to have successfully passed the criterion-referenced reading test required for all eighth grade students or an alternative reading proficiency." This requirement can be waived if the person under 18 works at least 24 hours per week.
- Virginia requires minors under 18 to "present a high school diploma or other certificate of completion or be regularly attending school and be in good academic standing" receive a drivers license.
- Texas attendance is more specific in its wording: the minor must be "enrolled in secondary education for at least 80 days in the fall or spring semester preceding the date of the driver's license application or has been enrolled for at least 45 days, and is enrolled as of the date of the application, in a program to prepare persons to pass the high school equivalency exam" (Colasanti, 2007).

Why should Military Families know about sanctions?

Typically school districts have very stringent requirements in dealing with state sanctions. For example, in Texas, school districts are faced with mandatory reporting of student grades in order to be in compliance with "No Pass, No Play." Military Families need to understand what sanctions are within the state they reside.

School Start Dates

Opening Statement:

It is obvious from the simple chart below that start dates for schools can be determined by both the local district and the state.

As reported by the Council of Chief State School Officers in their 2009 report, 42 states report a policy that specifies a range of dates.

- Forty states included August dates.
- Twenty-four states' ranges began in August and ended in September.
- Seventeen listed the earliest date for school to begin.

The EMC-21 Study states start dates are noted below.

SAMPLE STATE SCHOOL YEAR 2008-09 START DATES

STATE	Majority Start Date for Fall 2008	Earliest Allowable
CA	Data was not collected by state	
CO	August 5 - September 8	
FL	August 18 - August 22	14 days before Labor Day: Exception when the district is academically high-performing
GA	July 11 - August 18	
KS	August 13 - August 21	
LA	August 7 - August 12	
NC	August 25	August 25
OK	August 11 - August 18	
TX	August 22 - August 26	Fourth Monday in August
VA	After Labor Day	Waiver for good cause to open before Labor Day
Total	**Seven states list a range of dates**	**Four states with policy**

(CCSSO, Key State Education Policies on PK-12: 2008, 2009)

What Military Families Should Know and Do

Families can find school start dates at **www.schoolquest.org**.

State Assessments and College Readiness

Opening Statement:

High Stakes State Testing are not good indicators for success in college or work place readiness. Many state tests set a lower grade level standard than is needed for college and work place readiness. These tests also focus on taught curriculum with an objective of satisfying the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

One area that concerned the EMC-21 Research Team is State Testing and NCLB legislative requirements attached to those tests. Since school year 2001-02, states have been required by NCLB to use student performance on state tests in English/language arts and mathematics as part of their state accountability system. States set their initial benchmark performance and then report their anticipated goals in each subject area as the state moved towards the mandated 100 percent success rate in 2013-14. These goals were part of their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) which also included graduation rate at the high school level and another quantifiable measure selected by the state, often the attendance rate or advanced performance on one of the state tests.

In a search for results that are comparable across state boundaries, researchers currently rely on the National Educational Assessment Progress (NAEP) performance, which routinely asses students in grades four, eight, and 12 in mathematics, reading, science, and writing on a state level. Although the arts, civics, economics, geography, and U.S. history tests are also administered on a periodic basis, they are reported on a national basis. With the emphasis today on college and career preparation, the results of other assessments can yield more information about readiness of this population for college work; however, caution must be taken in the interpretation of state results.

Passing State Testing Requirements May Not Indicate College Success

Indicators for successful college performance: One of the college entrance tests, the American College Test, or ACT, has determined specific benchmark performances which link to successful college work. Their definition of college readiness relates college course performance to test results. A student is ready for college work, if he has "approximately a 75 percent chance of earning a grade of C or higher or a 50 percent chance of earning a grade of B or higher in first-year college English Composition; College Algebra; History, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, or Economics; and Biology" (ACT, Inc. , 2010). National, state, and district yearly ACT reports now include the percentage of students in the current graduating class who have met the College Readiness Benchmarks in English, mathematics, reading, and science. Student reports also reflect the number of benchmarks the students has met.

ACT ASSESSMENT COLLEGE READINESS BENCHMARK SCORE

SUBJECT TEST	EXPLORE (administered at grades 8 and/or 9)	PLAN (administered at grade 10)	ACT (generally taken at grade 11 or 12)
English	13	15	18
Reading	15	17	21
Mathematics	17	19	22
Science	20	21	24

(ACT, Inc., 2010)

Reviewing the national report results on each test, the reported percent of 2010 graduates who met each benchmark was: 66 percent, English; 52 percent, Reading; 43 percent, Math; and 29 percent, Science as shown in the table below.

PERCENT OF THE CLASS OF 2010 WHO MET SPECIFIC ACT TEST BENCHMARKS

All Four	24%	Reading	52%
Science	29%	English	66%
Math	43%		

(ACT, Inc. , 2010)

Another way of reviewing the results provides a picture of the students who are prepared in all areas for college work.

"...of the 1.5 million 2010 high school graduates who took the ACT test, only 24 percent met all four College Readiness Benchmarks in English, Mathematics, Reading and Science – indicating that fewer than 1 in 4 graduates were academically ready for college coursework in all four subject areas without needing remediation" (ACT, Inc, 2011).

"A surprising 28 percent of all 2010 ACT-tested high school graduates met none of the four College Readiness Benchmarks, indicating that they will likely need some form of college remediation in multiple subjects." (ACT, Inc, 2011).

PERCENT OF 2010 GRADUATES READY FOR COLLEGE-ENTRY COURSEWORK BASED ON MEETING 0-4 ACT COLLEGE READINESS BENCHMARKS

College Readiness Benchmarks	Percent of 2010 Graduates
All Four	24%
Three	15%
Two	17%
One	15%
Zero	28%

ACT recently linked the reading and math subtests of the international test, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) which is written for 15-year-olds and administered every three years to 65 countries, to the grade ten ACT tenth-grade college and career readiness assessment PLAN. The study results found: "in both reading and mathematics, the performance standard of college and career readiness in the U.S. – as defined by the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks and as used to develop the Common

Core State Standards – is comparable to, and therefore competitive with, the performance of the highest-performing countries in the world" (ACT, Inc, 2011).

Those students who take the Scholastic Assessment Test, or SAT, assessments in preference to the ACT may view the ACT-SAT concordance table at http://www.act.org/aap/concordance/index.html to determine the corresponding score on the respective tests to judge their college readiness.

What the Military Family Should Know and Do

State testing is designed to assess academic efficiency of a state under NCLB. In many cases it is a poor indicator of college readiness. Both ACT and SAT have the capability to test college readiness and they also have tests for earlier grade levels with the "PLAN" (ACT) and PSAT (SAT). These tests cut across state boundaries and enable colleges to compare students as one college-bound group. These tests are a much better predictor for college readiness. States are moving to end-of-course exams which may be a better measure in one subject area. It is still imperative that students take either the ACT or SAT tests for accurate assessment on college readiness. College is expensive and a poorly prepared student will have to either take fewer courses or repeat courses costing the Military Family thousands of dollars.

Cautions and Trends with "High Stakes Testing"

Opening Statement:

As reported in the *Achieve, the American Diploma Project Network (ADP)* (2010), most "high-stakes" high school assessments measure knowledge and skills learned in middle and high school. These tests fail to assess advanced high school content needed for success in college and other postsecondary education opportunities. In 2005, only three states reported assessments capable of measuring college and career readiness with scores used by postsecondary institutions. In 2010, 14 states administered college- and career-ready assessments. Only eight of the 50 states require a national college admissions exam for graduation.

Adequate measure of states' college- and career-ready standards will provide postsecondary institutions with data to assist in placement determinations. Alignment between high school assessments and postsecondary and employer expectations clearly communicates and creates incentives for students, schools and districts. These assessment systems tied to college- and career-ready expectations can also assess whether students in earlier grades are on track and progressing toward college- and career-readiness.

Exams are based on states' curriculum standards and provide accountability systems to define and measure academic quality in education and to help public schools to achieve such quality. More states are revising their testing and graduation policies to deal with the obvious failure of graduation tests to ensure students are prepared for college-level work. A trend toward end-of-course exams continues to grow. Some states mandate that students pass these exams to earn a diploma; others say they will simply constitute a portion of a student's course grade.

Standardized exams are being overhauled. Forty-four states are working with university professors and testing experts to design a set of new assessments. They will be computer-based and will measure higher-order skills, including students' ability to read complex texts, synthesize information and do research projects. The new assessments are scheduled to be ready for the 2014-2015 school year. The tests are being redesigned to assess the common academic standards in English and math that nearly 40 states have adopted in recent months (Dillon, 2010).

	Administer Test to Measure College/Career Readiness (CCR)	State- or ADP-Developed Exams	Require National College Admissions Exam	Grade-Level Content Exams (criterion-referenced)	College/Career Readiness Tests and Postsecondary Use
CA[1]	Yes	Yes		Yes	California Standards Test (CST)/ Early Assessment Program (EAP)
CO[2]	Yes		Yes	Yes	ACT
FL[3]				Yes	End-of-Course (2010-2015) Postsecondary Readiness (PERT - 2010-2013)
GA[4]	Yes	Yes		Yes	Georgia High School Graduation Test (ELA) Georgia High School Graduation Test (Math 2011-2012)

	Administer Test to Measure College/Career Readiness (CCR)	State- or ADP-Developed Exams	Require National College Admissions Exam	Grade-Level Content Exams (criterion-referenced)	College/Career Readiness Tests and Postsecondary Use
KS[5]				Yes	
LA[6]	Yes		Yes	Yes	ACT/WorkKeys End-of-Course exams (four foundation areas 2012)
NC[7]	Under development			Yes	Computer Proficiency End-of-course (five areas)
OK[8]	Under development		Yes		End-of-instruction (four foundation areas)
TX[9]	Yes	Yes		Yes	12 End-of-Course exams (four foundation areas) (2011-2015)
VA[10]				Yes	17 Standard-of-Learning exams (four foundation areas)

What the Military Family Should Know and Do

State exams are designed to test the curriculum that the states teach. In the past, these exams have not been a good indicator of college- and career- readiness. States are now making an effort to correct this by several methods. One method is with end-of-course exams at the high school level. Parents should always have their high school students take the SAT or ACT exam. These exams will compare students against a national average and be a better indicator of college- and career- readiness.

American Diploma Project Network (ADP) (2010)

1   http://cde.ca.gov/ta/
2   www.cde.state.co.us
3   www.fldoe.org/BII/StudentPro/pdf/HSbrochure.pdf
4   public.doe.k12.ga.us
5   www.ksde.org
6   http://www.louisianaschools.net/testing/default.html
7   www.ncpublicschools.org
8   www.sde.state.ok.us
9   www.ritter.tea.state.tx.us

Dillon, S. (2010). "U.S. Asks Educators to Reinvent Student Tests, and How They Are Given"
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/03/education/03testing.html?_r=1

State Trends in Scheduling

Opening Statement:

There are just 365 days in a year and 24 hours in a day, so there are only so many of those hours that can be dedicated to formal learning. Can the assumption be made that students attend school from Kindergarten through grade 12 for 180 days a year and for at least 6 hours each day?

To discover this answer, first look at compulsory attendance policies and then attendance policies in general.

What are the ages as set forth in compulsory attendance policies statewide and specifically?

Each state sets its minimum and maximum ages for attendance in public schools, their compulsory attendance ages. Of interest to this study is the maximum age of attendance: age 16, 19 states; age 17, 11 states; age 18, 20 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. States may also include in their policies conditions under which students can be exempted from their policy including parental/guardian permission, employment, alternative learning plans, or physical or mental conditions that make attendance not appropriate.

Policies in place in a sample of states with substantial military presence demonstrate this variance in policies. Many of these policies have extended these ages in the past few years as part of state efforts to increase graduation rates. Definitely not all of these students have to attend Kindergarten when the compulsory attendance age begins at seven in three of these ten states alone.

A SAMPLING OF STATES' COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

State	Ages	State	Ages
CA	6-18	LA	7-18
CO	6-17	NC	7-16
FL	6-16	OK	5-18
GA	6-16	TX	6-18
KS	7-18	VA	5-18

(Rush, Melodye, 2010)

Do states have any policies that encourage or motivate students to stay in school beyond the compulsory attendance age?

Yes, the most common sanction to keep students in school is to require either their attendance in school, good behavior, or adequate school performance to obtain a driver's license. In 2007, 17 states linked attendance to a driver's license (GA, OK, and TX). North Carolina also linked this to satisfactory progress in school while Kansas links to student behavior. According to a more recent article, 27 states now have sanctions in place (Zehr, 2011).

Additionally, as of 2007, 16 states had "No Pass, No Play" policies which required a student to maintain good academic standing and/or regular attendance to participate in athletic and other school extracurricular activities. For example:

- California: Must maintain satisfactory educational progress.
- Florida: GPA must be above 2.0 and conduct satisfactory.
- Louisiana: Pass at least five subjects and earn a 1.5 GPA each semester.
- North Carolina: Must pass at least 75 percent of courses each semester and meet promotion standards.
- Texas: Maintain a 70 percent in all non-honors or advanced classes.

How many days do students attend school?

School calendar policies generally contain 180 school days (30 states) with eleven states requiring 160-179 days and two requiring more than 180. Another eight state policies are based on a set hours of attendance instead. Thirty-six states permit school districts to set their own school calendar and another thirteen have either start and/or finish parameters within which to set their calendar (Colansanti, Michael, 2007) (Zaleski, Ashley and Colasanti, Micahel, 2008).

Are calendars for schools similar?

A study of school district instructional calendars reveals no common start date, with school beginning as early as August 9 and as late as September 7. Most districts have the same time off for Thanksgiving and close to the same Christmas or winter break, however, what is important to note are the three districts that do not complete the first semester until after Christmas: Cumberland County Schools, January 21; Killeen ISD, January 14; and Vernon Parish, January 7.

Spring break in six of the districts are in March, four in the week of March 14 and the remainder the week of March 21. The other three districts take their spring break in April. Finally, the end dates vary from May 20 in Muscogee County to June 10 in Cumberland County.

SCHOOL CALENDARS FOR THE 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR

State	School District	Start Date	Grading Period	End of First Semester	Fall Break	Winter Break	Classes Resume	Spring Break	End Date
CO	Fountain Fort Carson District 8	08.12.10	Nine Weeks	12.17.10	11.22.10-11.26.10	12.20.10-01.04.11	01.05.11	03.21.11-03.25.11	05.27.11
GA	Muscogee County[1]	08.09.10	Nine Weeks	12.17.10	11.22.10-11.26.10	12.20.10-01.04.11	01.05.11	04.04.11-04.08.11	05.20.11
KS	Leavenworth Unified SD 453	09.07.10	Nine Weeks	12.22.10	11.24.10-11.26.10	12.23.10-01.03.11	01.04.11	03.14.11-03.18.11	06.03.11
KS	Geary County Unified 475	08.16.10	Six or Nine Weeks	12.21.10	11.24.10-11.26.10	12.22.10-12.31.10	01.03.11	03.21.11-03.25.11	05.23.11
LA	Vernon Parish Schools	08.11.10	Six or Nine Weeks	01.07.11	11.22.10-11.26.10	12.20.10-01.03.11	01.04.11	04.22.11-04.29.11	05.27.11

State	School District	Start Date	Grading Period	End of First Semester	Fall Break	Winter Break	Classes Resume	Spring Break	End Date
NC	Cumberland County Schools[2]	08.25.10 Weeks	Nine	01.21.11	11.22.10-11.26.10	12.20.10-01.03.11	01.04.11	04.25.11-04.29.11	06.10.11
OK	Lawton Public Schools	08.20.10	Nine Weeks	12.17.10	11.22.10-11.26.10	12.20.10-12.31.10	01.03.11	03.14.11-03.18.11	05.26.11
TX	El Paso ISD	08.23.10	Nine Weeks	12.17.10	11.22.10-11.26.10	12.20.10-01.03.11	01.04.11	03.14.11-03.18.11	06.03.11
TX	Killeen ISD	08.23.10	Nine Weeks	01.14.11	11.22.10-11.26.10	12.20.10-12.31.10	01.03.11	03.14.11-03.18.11	06.02.11

1 Year-Round: Georgetown and Rigdon Road Elementary begin 7.15.10 and end 06.08.11.

2 Year-Round begins 07.14.10 and ends 06.03.11; Cross Creek Early College, Howard Health and Life Science, and Fuller Performance begin 08.05.10 and end 05.24.11.

Information downloaded from the district websites on 11.15.10.

What is the definition of an instructional day?

The instructional day is defined by the state. A recent Southern Regional Education Board report found that the average minimum length of an instructional day is six hours for grades one through 12 but this number can actually vary from 5 to 7, depending on the definition and other activities that can actually be included in that day. States included in the study reported the following: 5 hours - GA; 5.5 hours – NC; 6 hours – LA and OK; and 7 hours – TX.

State regulations, however, permit other activities to be counted or not counted as part of the instructional days. For example, Oklahoma can use up to five days a year for professional development; Texas includes recess and "intermissions" in its count; Louisiana excludes recess; and, Oklahoma and Texas use instructional time to schedule parent-teacher conferences.

Has there been a movement to expand the time spent in schools?

Yes, there has been a movement to expand either the length of the school day or the number of school days by a meaningful amount of time as a means of improving student learning. A 2009 report by the National Center on Time and Learning reviewed school policies relative to time and found that only Massachusetts had an expanded time policy. While establishing their new expanded schools database of over 650 schools, the center found these schools are mostly charter schools (74 percent) that serve a heavy minority (71 percent) and poorer student body (42 percent). Most often they elect to extend the length of the school day rather than add on days to the school calendar.

Findings from the 226 secondary schools in the database were:

- the length of the school day in 21.2 percent of the schools was longer than 500 minutes;
- another 20.8 percent has a school day of 451-500 minutes long; and
- the average number of days in the school calendar exceed 191 in 5.8 percent of the schools while 25.2 percent met for 181-190 days.

What schedule do year-round schools actually follow?

Several configurations classified by their states are listed as year-round schools depending on the length of time in and out of school. Some offered a single-track with all students attending at the same time, while others divide the school population into several tracks that stagger their attendance schedule so that all students are not in school at the same time thus providing facilities use for a larger total school population. The most common schedules for days in attendance are: 45 on and 15 off; 60 on and 15 off; 60 on and 20 off; and 90 on and 30 off. More popular in the late 1990's, when twenty-two states had adopted year-round policies, the majority of the EMC-21 Study states had policies in effect at that time (CA, CO, FL, LA, NC, OK, and TX).

In 2008, there were 17 states with year-round school policies but 30 states had school districts operating year-round schools because some states permit local districts to make these decisions locally. At that time, all EMC-21 Study states, except Kansas, had year-round schools operating in the state even though only five (CA, FL, NC, TX, and VA) had state policies.

YEAR-ROUND SCHOOL POLICIES FROM STATES WITH A HIGH MILITARY PRESENCE (2008)

State	State Policy	Districts	Notes
CA	Yes	130	
CO	No	18	
FL	Yes	4	Florida defines year-round schools as at least 180 days of instruction.
GA	No	5	
KS	No		Kansas year-round schools operate under local policy. Alternative calendars are approved by the Commissioner of Education.
LA	No	3	
NC	Yes	19	Twelve are charter schools.
OK	No	4	Defined as at least ten months of four weeks during which instruction is offered not less than 180 days.
TX	Yes	17	Year-round schools operated during the greater part of ten months and up to 12 months of the year.
VA	Yes	7	

Two states have defined year-round school years by the number of instructional days: Florida defines year-round schools as at least 180 days of instruction, and Oklahoma has defined year-round schools as those operating at least ten months of four weeks during which instruction is offered not less than 180 days.

Texas schools operate during ten to 12 months of the year. Finally, the Kansas Commission of Education approves year-round calendars (National Center for Education Statistics).

Do any of the EMC-21 Study districts operate year-round schools?

Most schools that follow a year-round schedule are elementary schools, thus avoiding credit issues due to transition. Some of the schools in study districts that do operate round year schools are: Vista Ridge High School in Falcon 49 (Colorado Springs); Cross Creek Early College, Howard Health and Life Science and Fuller Performance (Fayetteville); and Georgetown Elementary and Rigdon Road Elementary (Muscogee County School District).

Have any of the EMC-21 Study states considered a four-day schedule?

Four-day school week schedules were first adopted during the 1970's because of the energy crisis. Economics may make the four-day schedule more promising in the future, especially considering the promise of online instruction and other technological advances.

According to an Education Commission of the States database, in 2009 there were 16 states that had school districts policies which permitted a four-day schedule including four of the EMC-21 Study states: CO, GA, KS, and LA (Ryan, 2009). Generally, states specify the minimum number of hours that schools must be in session. A 2010 National Conference of State Legislators report found 19 states with school districts operating on a four-day schedule.

No schools with four-day schedules were found in the EMC-21 Study school districts.

What type of schedule do high school students follow in the EMC-21 Study states?

Daily high school student schedules vary in the study states from a traditional schedule of six or seven class periods a day to some form of block scheduling. Students may enroll in a 4X4 (accelerated) block, scheduling courses in which they take four classes each day for approximately 90 minutes and complete the courses in one semester. The student then enrolls in another four classes the second semester. Under the alternate AB schedule, students meet four classes daily but they are different courses, four on "A" day and another four on the alternating "B" day. Often schools will color code the days and refer to the days as Blue or White instead of A or B.

There are also combinations of the two formats in which the length of classes can vary. Under these schedules, athletics, band, or choir might meet every day but other courses may follow the block schedule. Other areas for variation might include an enhanced period for labs or additional math preparation.

In 2003-04, 34.5 percent of public schools were using some type of block scheduling, 44.7 percent of them at the secondary level (National Center for Education Statistics). A review of several of the EMC-21 Study school districts found that Fountain-Fort Carson High School, Lawton MacArthur High School, and the Killeen High School schedule seven periods each day. Junction City High School follows an A/B Block Schedule with a seminar schedule for freshmen each day and a fourth period class on one day matched with seminar on the other day for the Career Academy campus schedule. Schools with a 4X4 block schedule include Cumberland County and Muscogee County Public Schools.

Why is the issue of time so important to Military Families?

Time is finite. School district personnel know this. Our Military Families know this.

There are many practical considerations for scheduling that are considered by school districts in making decisions involving time: time in school, in a semester, in a quarter, in a class, and in a planning period. Each affects the family.

The major "time" issue for transitioning Military Families whether it is the first of the year, the end of the year, or any time in between is, "You can't attend classes if you aren't enrolled to attend them." Moving into a school district the first of September and learning that school started the middle of August could mean missing two weeks of school. The same thing can occur at the end of the school year when a forced early May withdrawal means incomplete work which can result in incomplete credits.

For those Families who move during the school year, especially if the move is from one type of scheduling system to another, this is more complicated. A mid-December move before the end of the semester without completing final exams and enrolling in a district that begins the new semester the first school day in January could not only mean losing out on two weeks of school but could endanger credit completion.

The concern increases from just completing courses to next steps if the move is from a 4X4 to a traditional schedule or even the A/B schedule with students who are halfway through their courses. On the other hand, the student moving from the A/B or traditional schedule to a 4X4 schedule will transfer from the middle of year-long courses into a school where students are beginning all new courses!

Students taking dual or concurrent enrollment classes also must consider the issue of time. Whether the courses are offered on- campus, off-campus, or online, if the family moves during the school year, can the student complete the course? If the district or state had funded his course, what happens when the student leaves the district? How does he complete the course? Similarly, the student taking a credit recovery courses through the school or a special online experience also needs to know if and how he can complete the course? Moving from a state that accepts proficiency-based credit to one that requires seat time may negate the opportunity for credit recovery.

Families can reduce these problems by working through counselors/registrars to complete courses prior to a move or making arrangements to complete the course at the receiving school. Parents and students need to begin their inquiry early to facilitate the move. It may mean doing additional work early and even taking exams early if the sending school will permit this action. If seat time is required, it may mean coordinating with the receiving school to reach a solution. This conversation with the schools needs to begin prior to the anticipated move and is not an easy solution. It requires additional effort on the part of students and teachers to complete assignments and required assessments, if they can be scheduled.

State Data Analysis Trend

Opening Statement:

State data systems are a fundamental element to understanding if the curriculum is being taught, if teachers are performing on standard, and understanding if students are college and career ready. Since NCLB, some states have made great strides to improve their student data systems, while others have had only minimal gains.

Another of the side effects of the No Child Left Behind legislation has been the need to create or update state student-teacher longitudinal data systems to incorporate more than grades K-12 information. This became even more important as states have elected to include growth in individual student achievement into their accountability systems as well potentially consider student growth in awarding teacher bonuses.

In 2005, ten organizations founded the national Data Quality Campaign (DQC) to improve the collection of education data that would enhance potential state use. The campaign first listed ten essential elements that states needed to include if they were to build these effective data systems. The 2010 state analysis found that 24 states now have all ten elements in place and the remaining states intend to have them implemented by September 2011 (Data for Action 2010: DQC's State Analysis , 2011).

Now the campaign has turned to the optimum use of this collected data to "ensure key stakeholders use the data effectively" through their identified ten state actions (The next step: Using longitudinal data systems to improve student success, 2009).

First, this chart reviews the current status of the data quality elements in ten states that have substantial Military presence (2010):

DATA QUALITY CONTROL ELEMENTS THAT WERE MET IN 2010

Data Quality Campaign Element	CA	CO	FL	GA	KS	LA	NC	OK	TX	VA	Total States Met Elements
1. A unique statewide student identifier that connects student data across key databases across years.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	10
2. Student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation information	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	10
3. The ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	10
4. Information on untested students and the reasons they were not tested	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	10
5. A teacher identified system with the ability to match teachers to students	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	7
6. Student-level transcript Information, including information on courses completed and grades earned	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N		N	7

Data Quality Campaign Element	CA	CO	FL	GA	KS	LA	NC	OK	TX	VA	Total States Met Elements
7. Student-level college readiness test scores	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	10
8. Student-level graduation and dropout data	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	10
9. The ability to match individual students' test records between the K-12 and higher	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	9
10. A state data audit system assessing data quality, validity and reliability	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	10
Number Met	**9**	**8**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**9**	**9**	**8**	

Nationwide, how far do states have to go to put all ten elements in place? For those same elements not in place by the study states, the state analysis shows:

- Element 5: 17 states cannot link teacher to students;
- Element 6: 15 states do not collect course completion information; and,
- Element 9: 11 states do not link K-12 and higher education (Data for Action 2010: DQC's State Analysis, 2011).

Next, this chart focuses on the recommended DQC Actions as of this same state report:

Data Quality Campaign Element	CA	CO	FL	GA	KS	LA	NC	OK	TX	VA	Total States Met Actions
1. Link state K-12 data systems with early learning, postsecondary education, workforce, social services, and other critical state agency data systems.	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	4
2. Create stable, sustained support for robust state longitudinal data systems.	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	6
3. Develop governance structures to guide data collection, sharing, and use.	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	6
4. Build state data repositories (i.e. data warehouses) that integrate student, staff, financial, and facility data.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	8
5. Implement systems to provide all stakeholders timely access to the information they need while protecting student privacy.	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	2

Data Quality Campaign Element	CA	CO	FL	GA	KS	LA	NC	OK	TX	VA	Total States Met Elements
6. Create progress reports with individual student data that provide information educators, parents, and students can use to improve student performance.	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	5
7. Create reports that include longitudinal statistics on school systems and groups of students to guide school-, district-, and state-level improvement efforts.	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	8
8. Develop a purposeful research agenda and collaborate with universities, researchers, and intermediary groups to explore the data for useful information.	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	7
9. Implement policies, practices, including professional development and credentialing, to ensure that educators know how to access, analyze, and use data appropriately.	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	1
10. Promote strategies to raise awareness of available data and ensure that all key stakeholders, including state policymakers, know how to access, analyze, and use the information.	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	4
Total Actions Taken By Each State	**2**	**6**	**7**	**7**	**6**	**2**	**5**	**2**	**8**	**6**	

A quick summary of the state status on the states' actions note that no state has taken all of the ten state actions. Only 13 states have implemented six or more, four of which are EMC-21 Study states.

Why do states need to take these actions?

When they are in place, state policy makers will be able to answer questions like those listed below. For example, all of the study states can now answer what percentage of students graduate under the 2008 federal regulations cohort graduation rate. Only five of the EMC-21 Study states can, however, determine which teachers consistently achieve the most individual student growth in the classroom.

Political Questions	CA	CO	FL	GA	KS	LA	NC	OK	TX	VA	Total States Met Actions
1. What percentage of students graduates, according to the four-year cohort graduation rate required by the 2008 federal regulations?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	10
2. What percentage of students requires remediation in post-secondary instituions?	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	9
3. What teachers consistently the most individual student growth in their classrooms?	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	7
4. Which professional development programs have the greatest impact on the effectiveness of teachers as measured by student preformance?	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	6
State Can Answer These Questions	**4**	**3**	**2**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**3**	**3**	**2**	2

The DQC identified five priorities to ensure these databases are used to make a difference for education programs nationally once the ten essential elements are implemented in all states (Priority 1). They include Action 1, linking the school database information with early childhood, postsecondary and workforce data; Action 3, providing student level information to teachers, students, and parents; Action 4, sharing teacher /student impact information with their institutions of higher education; and finally, enacting state certification and licensure policies for new educators to develop the necessary skills to analyze and use student data appropriately.

What the Military Family Should Know and Do

Living in a state that does not have a robust data system can create difficulty in understanding at what level a student is performing and where she ranks with their peers (outside the state). It can also create difficulty in understanding if a child is ready for college. When a child is in high school, striving to take national tests like the SAT and ACT or their pretests is a good idea. If a child is in fourth or eighth grade consider having the child take the NAEP test (if available). This exam judges proficiency levels at a national level.

U.S. Army

EDUCATION OF THE MILITARY CHILD IN THE 21ST CENTURY

2012