STUDENT CENTERED OUTREACH
Tools, technology and strategies to support military-connected children
VISION STATEMENT
Every military-connected child is college, workforce, and life-ready.

MISSION STATEMENT
To ensure inclusive, quality educational opportunities for all military-connected children affected by mobility, transition, deployments and family separation.

GOALS
1. Military-connected children’s academic, social and emotional needs are recognized, supported and appropriate responses provided.
2. Parents, and other supporting adults, are empowered with the knowledge to ensure military-connected children are college, workforce and life-ready.
3. A strong community of partners is committed to support an environment where military-connected children thrive.

ACHIEVEMENTS
Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) is a GuideStar Platinum Participant
The Independent Charities Seal of Excellence

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As chairman of the board, I continue to be amazed at the support that MCEC receives each year from our donors and corporate sponsors as well as the extended community of support including members of the military, educators, military family members and others we count as friends. The impact of this support as well as the yeoman’s work done by the MCEC staff was showcased at last July’s 20th National Training Seminar (NTS) in Washington.

This year’s NTS was one of the largest educational conferences presented by MCEC with 892 attendees from 43 states, DC, and US Virgin Islands as well as 7 international locations. We extended our impact through live streaming with 555 virtual attendees and social media engagement reaching over 30 million on Facebook and Twitter. Working together, we are raising awareness of the challenges military and veteran-connected children face to broader audiences in new communities outside the military family.

The theme of this year’s NTS, “Strong Roots, Sustainable Futures” is very meaningful to me on a personal level. As the father of two children who grew up and moved around like most military-connected kids, and as a leader of airmen with families who did the same, I can tell you that military-connected kids face challenges far exceeding those faced by their counterparts. Yet those same challenges provide them a wealth of experiences and opportunities that create strengths that ultimately prepare them with college, career and life readiness skills. These challenges form the roots to succeed; strong roots.

Some of the topics explored at the NTS are reviewed in this issue of On the Move including computer science education in advanced placement, personalized education and a discussion of the impact of kids and the media. Thank you for another successful NTS and for the work you do all year to continue to build sustainable futures for our children.

Sincerely,

William M. Fraser III
General, USAF (Ret)
Chairman, Military Child Education Coalition

Please see our 2018 National Training Seminar Highlights by visiting MilitaryChild.org/highlights
Dear Friends,

In his closing session at this year’s National Training Seminar (NTS), Jim Shelton (p.11) issued a challenge to us all to “meet our children where they are.” He did not mean just academically, but as the whole student; understand them as individuals and help them feel empowered. For military-connected kids experiencing transition after transition, this may seem like an impossible if not impractical challenge. But as an organization, we are learning and growing together. As we look back and celebrate the past 20 years, we are inspired and enthusiastic about the dynamic future and new possibilities to meet the high bar that Jim articulated.

This issue of On the Move features just some of the tools and strategies to personalize and support our children. We are living in a global community and as we highlight in this issue, military-connected children are uniquely prepared to meet the challenges it brings. Their experience with change can be a positive force. General Stephen Wilson and Nancy Wilson talked about some of the educational benefits of sharing the experiences gained through relocation to new communities (p.17).

The 2018 NTS sessions that involved students were, once again, remarkable. After the National Geographic field trip experienced by over 100 campus teams and leaders attending the NTS, three student leaders had the opportunity to ask NatGeo CEO, Gary Knell, further questions about commitment to our environment. Six of our S2S students joined in an inspiring book discussion with General Dunford and Ellyn Dunford about leadership, service, and civic responsibility.

This year’s NTS was yet another example and reminder that as a coalition, a learning community, we take seriously the array of opportunities to grow in understanding, make connections, and to exchange ideas, tactics and resources on behalf of our students. Working together I believe, we will be able to “meet our children where they are.”

With this goal in mind, my personal call to action to you is to engage with us and allow us to engage with you. Participate in our various initiatives, follow us on Twitter, like us on Facebook, subscribe to our podcasts, watch our webinars, and visit our website at MilitaryChild.org.

As always...for the sake of the child,

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary M. Keller
President and CEO, Military Child Education Coalition
EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)  
Programs and Requirements

WRITTEN BY ALYSON KLEIN

The Every Student Succeeds Act calls for states to continue testing students annually, and to look out for vulnerable groups of students. But it includes some new features aimed at providing local leaders more flexibility on testing, spending, school improvement, and more. Here is a look at some of the most important new programs and policy twists in ESSA.

Title IV
ESSA scrapped many smaller programs—aimed at things like elementary and secondary school counseling and Advanced Placement course fees—in favor of a new, flexible $1.6 billion fund that districts can use for health, safety, arts education, college- and career-readiness, and more. Districts can also transfer the funding to Title II, the main federal teacher-quality program. But this school year, Congress only provided a quarter of the funding for this program in its most recent spending bill. Some school districts received only $10,000 and are using the money to make up for reductions in Title II, not to create new programs. Congress, though, recently upped the program’s budget to $1.1 billion, which could help pay for some new initiatives.

Weighted Student Funding
ESSA allows up to 50 districts to participate in a “weighted student funding pilot,” meaning that they can combine federal, state, and local dollars. The move is intended to help districts ensure that students from high-needs populations, such as English-language learners and students in special education, get their fair share of funding. Four districts and Puerto Rico applied to join the program in the 2018-19 school year.

Innovative Assessment Pilot
ESSA allows up to seven states to try out new forms of testing in select districts, with the goal of eventually using the new tests statewide. The deadline to apply for the pilot was April 2. Before that deadline, four states—Arizona, Hawaii, Louisiana, and New Hampshire—expressed formal interest in the opportunity.

Title I Set-Aside for School Improvement
States must set aside 7 percent of their Title I funding to improve the lowest-performing schools. Ninety-five percent of that money must be distributed to districts, either through a formula or using a competition. Schools that receive these funds must choose a school improvement strategy that has at least a “promising” level of evidence to back it up. At least 14 states will distribute the money competitively, according to an analysis from Results for America’s Evidence in Education Lab, a nonprofit research organization.
Title I Set-Aside for Direct Student Services
ESSA allows states to set aside up to 3 percent of their Title I money for so-called direct-student services, including course choice, tutoring, and dual enrollment. Only two states—Louisiana and New Mexico—are taking advantage of this opportunity.

Indicators
ESSA requires states to look beyond test scores in rating schools by choosing at least one indicator of school quality or student success. At least 33 states picked chronic absenteeism as their additional indicator, and another 35 choose college- and career-readiness. Other choices included discipline data, science, school climate, and even physical education.

Low-Performing Schools
Comprehensive Support and Improvement
This category includes the bottom 5 percent of Title I schools in the state, plus schools where fewer than two-thirds of students graduate. The district must come up with a plan to improve these schools, monitored by the state. If the school fails to improve, the state must step in with a more rigorous plan.

Targeted Support and Improvement
This category includes schools where particular subgroups of students are consistently underperforming, a term every state defines differently. Schools must come up with a plan to fix the problem, monitored by the district. If the subgroup fails to improve, the district can step in. Additional Targeted Support: These are schools where any subgroup of students, on its own, is doing as poorly as the students in the bottom 5 percent of schools. Schools must develop a plan to fix the problem, monitored by the district. The plan must include a resource review of the school to make sure these students are getting their fair share of resources. If subgroup performance at these schools continues to lag, they may end up being identified for comprehensive support and improvement.

Deadlines
States begin identifying schools for comprehensive support and improvement and additional targeted support in the 2018-19 school year. And states could begin flagging schools for targeted support in the 2019-20 school year.

For more on ESSA and military-connected kids, listen to our podcast:

Military Student Identifier with Dr. Dave Splitek
MilitaryChild.PodBean.com

Reprinted with permission from Education Week Volume 37, Issue 25
This report provides a comprehensive picture of parents' media use, attitudes toward their tweens and teens' media use, and a look into the ways that parents mediate, monitor, and manage media. The report is based on a nationally representative survey of 1,786 parents of children ages 8 to 18 living in the United States that was conducted from July 8, 2016, to July 25, 2016.

### Top Parental Concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology addiction</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much time online</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oversharing personal info</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to pornography</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Talking About Media

Percent of parents who discuss content with their children “always” or “most of the time,” by media type:

- Television: 44%
- Social media: 42%
- Video games: 34%

Parents of tweens are more likely than parents of teens to discuss the media their children use.

### Time Spent

Nine hours and 22 minutes is the average time parents spend with screen media daily, including for personal and work use. 7:43 of that time is devoted to personal screen media.

### Monitoring

- 85% of parents say that monitoring their children’s media use is important for their children’s safety.

### Personal Privacy

- 41% of parents check the content of their children’s devices and social media accounts “always” or “most of the time.”

### Role Models

- 78% of all parents believe they are good media and technology role models for their children.

### Technology and Education

- 94% of parents think technology positively supports their children with schoolwork and education.

### Social Media Perceptions

- 50% believe that social media hurts physical activity.
- 34% believe that social media hurts face-to-face communication.
- 44% believe that social media helps their children’s relationships with friends.

### Family Rules

- 78% do not allow mobile devices during family meals.
- 34% do not allow mobile devices when guests are visiting.
- 9% do not allow car passengers to use mobile devices.

### PLUGGED-IN PARENTS: ATTITUDES, BEHAVIORS, AND ROLE MODELS

- 9:22
- 78% of parents believe they are good media and technology role models for their children.
Social media has become a powerful and sometimes confusing force all parents and educators deal with every day. For many there is a generational disadvantage; they may not have grown up in the digital culture and feel the equivalent of a language barrier in attempting to communicate with students and even their own children. While these young “digital natives” are empowered by social media, video gaming and other digital technologies, the basics of teaching and parenting have not changed. Parents and educators are still charged with teaching and modeling positive behaviors and values to nurture the next generations. Those guiding principles help to dispel some of the mystery of social media and promote its healthy use.

ADVICE AND REASSURANCE FROM OUR PANEL OF EXPERTS AT THIS YEAR’S NATIONAL TRAINING SEMINAR:

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAY B. SILVERIA, Superintendent, US Air Force Academy

Our graduating lieutenants are taking on the 21st century battlefield, they think in networked ways and that is clearly an advantage in the digital age. I believe our challenge as educators and parents is to try to channel the positive side.

We should not resist, but channel capability; think about what skills we will need in the next decade.

Get in there as leaders and educators and learn the language. You don’t know what you don’t know. How are they connected? Keep in mind, if it’s an app, they have more likely moved on!

YALDA T. UHLS, PhD, Senior Advisor, Common Sense Media Author, Media Moms & Digital Dads: A Fact-Not-Fear Approach to Parenting in the Digital Age

What surprises parents, educators, caregivers is the positive impact of social media and video games. Including building moral courage. Video games can enhance STEM teaching and enhance special education curriculum.

Set up a media environment. Develop a family media agreement that can be renewed annually. Many of the issues you may not know, but talk to your child.

Always remember, your children are copying you.

Don’t just say no.

Think about content; reinforce positive channels.

MELISSA COHEN, Director, Personnel Studies and Oversight Office, United States Marine Corps

Don’t be afraid of social media, young adults are expected to be fluent in the need to speak it. But consider its impact how does it affect other communication and interactions?

Values and positive interactions are still important in any “connected” environment.

We need to coach our children in taking responsibility for their digital footprint. Posts are permanent these days and they can have an impact on future academic careers and even job opportunities.
TIP FROM AUNT PEGGIE:

“Be Prepared!”

GRADUATION PLANS VARY BY STATE AND IT’S IMPORTANT TO BE PREPARED TO AVOID ANY SETBACKS!

The chart on the right helps to breakdown the number of graduation plans in the 25 states with the largest presence of military-connected students. Planning ahead and understanding what plans will align with your student’s academic plan will help your family stay prepared.

If you have questions about graduation plans or how to keep your student set-up for success before your next PCS, utilize MCEC’s Ask Aunt Peggie platform. Aunt Peggy is back and ready to answer all questions parent and student related! Visit MilitaryChild.org/contact to get answers!
GRADUATION PLANS

ALABAMA [Default CCR]
ARIZONA [Default CCR]
COLORADO
GEORGIA [Mandatory CCR]
ILLINOIS
KANSAS
KENTUCKY [Mandatory CCR*]
MISSOURI
NEW JERSEY
WASHINGTON [Default CCR]
WASHINGTON DC [Mandatory CCR]

CALIFORNIA
LOUISIANA
MARYLAND
OKLAHOMA
SOUTH CAROLINA
VIRGINIA

ALASKA
FLORIDA

HAWAII
MISSISSIPPI
OHIO

NORTH CAROLINA
TEXAS
NEW YORK

*CCR is College and Career Readiness

Source:
Achieve Data Explorer | HighSchool.Achieve.org
STUDENT CENTERED LEARNING
In a call to action, Jim Shelton wrapped up the Military Child Education Coalition 2018 National Training Seminar by advocating for all students. “We need you to push, to ask questions of schools to create the kind of environment students need to succeed. How will my child, or any child, feel like they belong?” As the previous Head of Education for the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and former Deputy Secretary of Education for the Obama Administration, Shelton asked the audience of educators, administrators and other professionals to look at the challenges facing education with an entrepreneurial spirit. He challenged the group to think about what matters most to the individual student, believing that nothing is more important than to feel “known, understood and loved.” A sense of belonging in each learning environment will lead to a feeling of empowerment and the ability to excel.

According to Mr. Shelton, “Identity” is critical to helping students achieve their full potential. Creating a sense of belonging and self-confidence can be especially difficult for children who change schools frequently. He believes students should not have to start over in each new setting. “They should carry who they are with them,” he says. This sounds like a tall order for schools and teachers already limited by time, resources and workload.

The solutions may come with fresh perspective and insights from other professional services. “In medicine, a physician has a comprehensive record for a new patient. We can ask our educators to have more of a holistic understanding of our students. New tools and technologies give teachers the ability to meet kids where they are. We have precision medicine, why not precision learning?” Shelton asks.

The concept of “precision learning” or individualized instruction is not a new concept. In fact, Mr. Shelton points out that it is the basis of the Montessori Method as well as Piaget’s developmental theory of learning which are both over one hundred years old. The challenge is to bring the student-centered approach to an institutional system level to every student. Make that far-reaching paradigm change a priority is Mr. Shelton’s call to action. “Creating a learning environment based upon helping students belong should be at the top of the agenda and a priority for each student.” Shelton believes parents and the education community are up to the challenge. “The power in this country has always been in the people,” he says “and I am betting, you will see an opportunity every day to create a better environment.”

“WE NEED YOU TO PUSH, TO ASK QUESTIONS OF SCHOOLS TO CREATE THE KIND ENVIRONMENT STUDENTS NEED TO SUCCEED. HOW WILL MY CHILD, OR ANY CHILD, FEEL LIKE THEY BELONG?”

To watch the full session with Jim Shelton, visit MilitaryChild.org/highlights.
You would think we would know more by now about how military parents and their children attempt to keep their relationships strong during deployments and whether it matters but we do not. In a previous analysis featured in On the Move (Friedman, Sigelman, Rohrbeck, & del Rio-Gonzalez, 2017), our team reported on parent-adolescent communication during deployment. We found that high quality communication (i.e., communication that is warm and supportive), as reported by both the teens and their at-home parents, was associated with greater overall well-being and fewer internalizing problems, whereas negatively controlling communication was associated with poorer well-being, at least as judged by the adolescent.

In a newly published analysis, we extended our scope, focusing on associations between communication with a deployed parent and the adjustment of children and adolescents ranging in age from 4 to 18. Data came from surveys completed by 180 at-home parents/caregivers (95% mothers). We measured communication quantity (frequency of communication per week added across 10 modes of communication) and communication quality (the deployed parent’s warm and supportive behavior, as opposed to negative and conflictual behavior, during communications and the child’s positive as opposed to negative emotions immediately after communicating—as perceived by the at-home parent). We used these measures, along with two family functioning measures (the at-home caregiver’s perceived stress and marital satisfaction), to predict the child’s overall well-being and behavior problems.

Our analyses showed remarkable similarities in both quantity and quality of communication for different age groups and for boys and girls, despite offsetting age differences in a few modes of communication (e.g., more sending of photos and videos for young children, but more emailing and Facebook for older teens). Deployed parent and child communicated an average of about once a day—most often in highly supportive and emotionally positive ways.

Our analyses also showed that quality of communication—the parent’s supportiveness and the child’s positive emotions after communicating—accounted for family differences in children’s problem behavior and health-related well-being over and above differences accounted for by the caregiver’s perceived stress and marital satisfaction—two proven predictors of children’s adjustment during deployments. Frequency of communication, whether it was through synchronous means such as phone and video chat or otherwise, was generally not important. There was, though, one intriguing finding showing that positive emotion after communicating predicted low levels of problem behavior when communication was frequent but not when it was infrequent. The caregiver’s perception of the deployed parent’s supportiveness was associated with high well-being and low problem behavior regardless of how often parent and child communicated and regardless of marital
satisfaction and caregiver stress. Further analyses showed that high quality communication was positively associated with good child adjustment in both well-functioning and less well-functioning families, not just in high-risk families with a stressed at-home parent or a shaky marriage.

We hope that our findings will be replicated by other studies involving families with deployed parents of more varied ranks and backgrounds. Likewise, we would like to see our findings replicated by studies that collect information about the hypothesized predictors in advance of collecting information about children’s outcomes and in which some of the data regarding communication and parent and child functioning are objective (e.g., actual communications; measures of physiological stress).

Deployed parents, communicate by all means, not only with your partner, but also with your children; and at-home partners, help enable and support this communication. It’s about giving children the benefit of your support during a potentially difficult time.

If possible, carve out some communication time for each child. In our study, 77% of the child’s communications were with others present, most often the at-home parent and sometimes siblings. Children may especially value a one-on-one talk now and then.

If frequent communication is impossible, don’t worry. Quality is more important than quantity when it comes to parent-child communication—in both military and civilian families, in both families living together and families living apart.

Engaging in high-quality communication boils down to conveying interest, concern, and affection rather than being critical, argumentative, or dismissive.

“We see you as artists, and today we are here to recognize you and how you have touched all of these lives,” said Karen Pence, Second Lady of the United States, addressing this year’s Military Child Education Coalition Call for the Arts winners at the National Training Seminar in Washington. She served as the Distinguished Presenter, personally congratulating the 2018 winners, Mary Elizabeth, Hannah and LaJoyce.

As a former art teacher, Mrs. Pence is also an award winning watercolorist. Sharing her own story, she acknowledged the positive impact that art has had in her life and in building self-confidence.

Although Mrs. Pence was born on an Air Force base in Kansas, her father retired from service before she had to face the frequent relocations that come with being part of active service. Although she did not personally experience multiple moves as a child, she does recall how it felt to be the new kid when she moved in the seventh grade. “Suddenly I went from being popular and wearing ‘cool socks’ to wearing the ‘wrong socks’ at my new school. I understand the pain many military children experience moving 6-9 times through their K-12 school years,” she said. As the mother of a Marine, Mrs. Pence feels very connected to the challenges all military families face and is using her platform as Second Lady to bring awareness to some of these issues.

Mrs. Pence is also championing the role art therapy can play for military and non-military children and families. She sees a natural connection between the two areas in her advocacy work. As a science-based, mental health practice, she is anxious to use her position and her insights to raise the visibility of art therapy. Observing programs all over the world, she has witnessed children undergoing cancer treatments, military-connected children dealing with transitions, and veterans and their families dealing with post-traumatic stress all benefiting from art therapy. Mrs. Pence believes it has the power to heal. “Art therapy is saving lives,” she said. She stresses the distinction between the scientific, clinical practice and what many people may think of as “arts and crafts.” Utilized in treatment by a trained practitioner, art therapy can help patients unlock hidden emotions and express feelings. In a school setting, art therapy may enhance a student’s holistic educational experience.

Last year, Mrs. Pence launched, “Healing with the HeArt,” with the goals of raising awareness of the profession of art therapy, helping people understand it as a treatment option for many conditions, and encouraging young people to consider it as a career choice. She calls upon the education and military communities to join her as she advocates for the study and practice of art therapy.
Find out more about Karen Pence, Second Lady of the United States, at WhiteHouse.gov

Watch the video

Visit MilitaryChild.org/highlights to see a full video of the award ceremony.

Winners pictured with Mrs. Pence (Left to Right) Hannah, Karen Pence, LaJoyce, Mary Elizabeth

THE CALL FOR THE ARTS

Visual arts and writing allow military children to communicate pride in their parents, celebrate their military-connected lives and acknowledge their grief and worry through art.

Watch a special video from Mrs. Pence, to hear more about submitting art for the annual Call for the Arts. The video is featured on our website at MilitaryChild.org/programs.

SUBMISSIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY JANUARY 31.
“Sustainable futures” are built by preparing students with the right skill sets to enter the global workplace. Today, we understand how important computer science education is and will continue to be in the future. Meeting the “cyber demand” will be critical to ensure our country stays competitive and our students successful in an increasingly global environment. New opportunities are shaping the future, it is estimated there will be more than nine million STEM jobs opening in the next decade.

Trevor Packer, Senior Vice President of Advanced Placement (AP) and Instruction for The College Board, introduced a new AP Computer Science Principles course that takes a fresh look at computer instruction and promises to deliver a higher level of engagement and success to a more diverse population of AP students.

In a presentation at the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) National Training Seminar, Mr. Packer began with a history lesson of STEM education internationally. He referenced a 1995 study conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), comparing performances of calculus students from 16 countries internationally. “1995 was not a great year for American education”, he said. Students from the United States ranked 15th out of the 16 countries evaluated in the study. The TIMSS report provided a wake-up call to our educational system. Over the next twenty years changes were made. STEM programs had a new focus in school districts nationally. Educators offered advanced courses on site as well as collaborated with local colleges to give selected students more in-depth STEM preparation. In 2018 American students again participated in a TIMSS comparison study of advanced performance in a calculus class. This time, the news was good. The average international median score of the groups participating was 14% at the advanced level. One group of American students tested achieved 25%.

The relevance of this study, according to Mr. Packer, is that the group tested was very similar to the profiles of military-connected students participating in Advanced Placement courses. They are from diverse backgrounds, often experiencing changes in their educational environments. With the advantage of advanced placement classes this group often performed better than their counterparts in a less mobile, more affluent sample.

MCEC has championed the vision of making AP credits portable, transcending state lines to meet the needs of military-connected children. This has had a positive impact on student diversity for all schools. “AP courses are not just for elite suburban schools anymore and I believe your organization should be thanked for that,” said Mr. Packer.

FOR THE FULL PRESENTATION AND VIDEO ABOUT THE COLLEGE BOARD’S AP COURSES IN COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION, VISIT MilitaryChild.org/highlights
A NEW LOOK AT COMPUTER SCIENCE - AP

The College Board already offers 37 courses in coding and computer science, but even in this competitive cyber-focused learning environment, student enrollment was not robust. As Packer says, “students were just not signing up for the courses.” There was a need to reimagine computer education based upon practical applications and life experiences. Students needed to be challenged in different ways in order to fully engage in the course work. The result is what Packer describes as a “non-traditional” AP course based upon projects throughout the year. Students are finding more relevance in this project-based learning. This AP program in computer science education has expanded the audience dramatically, increasing by 72,000 students in the first year alone. It has also broadened appeal to a more diverse audience, doubling not only participation from female students but ethnically as well. Mr. Packer attributes this to understanding the challenges students face in “real life” and creating educational programing that connects to their future.

Teachers trained in computer science education are essential to bringing our students into the cyber world and workplace. Some schools have not had the resources to keep up with the demand. The National Integrated Cyber Education Research Center (NICERC) is offering solutions through grant-funded programming free to educators. NICERC provides professional development, curriculum design, and other programming to prepare a cyber-ready workforce. Their vision is to make sure teachers have all the resources they need to prepare K-12 students with computer science education to ready them for AP level classes.

Students enter the Cyber Interstate through a hands on approach. NICERC curriculum provides training in multiple languages and platforms through their K-12 years.
TECHNOLOGY AND SHARING TRANSITIONS
General Stephen W. Wilson and Nancy Wilson discuss the educational challenges and opportunities for military-connected children to stay competitive in the emerging technology driven culture as they face frequent relocations in very different communities.

It is no secret advancing technologies have disrupted our educational system. The urgent question is, how do we keep students competitive globally? China, for example, will graduate eight times as many STEM students as the United States. How do we prepare our students for the changing workplace? These are the challenges faced by our educational system on an ongoing basis.

“We are in a period of massive disruption, politically, economically, and many other ways,” said General Wilson at the 2018 Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) National Training Seminar. He describes the intensifying competition that will impact all graduates as they enter the workforce. “Make no mistake about it. We are in competition with other nations.”

He believes the key to success will be in an educational system fully engaged with the next generations of our workforce. “We need an educational system that will challenge our students,” he added.

General Wilson believes that the United States educational system will give our students an edge with its encouragement of diversity and multidisciplinary studies which brings a more global world view. That may not be enough. “We have to focus and understand our competition. The world is changing rapidly as technologies accelerate,” General Wilson warns against becoming complacent. “We have been in a David and Goliath scenario lately and we need to be more like David,” he said. Nancy Wilson has confidence in students to embrace the changing world. “Kids are fierce at technology. Harness their potential!” she says.

As military families face transitions, utilizing technologies to promote innovation and engagement within communities may provide an advantage to our military-connected students. Having different transition experiences fosters a natural exchange of ideas. Sharing stories of success and personal insights may go a long way to benefit the greater educational community. As Nancy Wilson says, “We are always taking the story of communities and making things happen. We tell our new friends, you too, can make this happen in your area.” She suggests, “Start with an audacious plan, and don’t be afraid to share it with potential community partners.” Local universities and civic leaders are often looking for ways to support new programs. For example, a local college or university may help by showing kids STEM possibilities. “They often may not think it is as big an ask as you may think,” she says.

New and emerging technologies combined with innovation, an open exchange of ideas, community collaboration and the support of the local military base hold the key to preparing kids for the future. General Stephen Wilson and Nancy Wilson are excited about the potential of “making things happen” by sharing insights from our global experience as a military family.

Visit our website to watch the full video of General and Nancy Wilson’s Session at the 2018 National Training Seminar
MilitaryChild.org/highlights

General Stephen W. “Seve” Wilson,
Vice Chief of Staff, US Air Force
Nancy Wilson
Career and technical education has risen on the educational radar in the past decade, transforming itself from a college alternative into a new kind of college pathway.

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION?
Career and technical education—commonly known as career-tech ed or CTE—describes classes that are designed to prepare students for work.

HOW IS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DIFFERENT FROM VOCATIONAL EDUCATION?
In some ways, it’s not that different. In many high schools, you can still find the same voc-ed classes that existed half a century ago. They prepare students for jobs that don’t typically require college degrees, such as child care, welding, cosmetology, or plumbing.

But in important ways, CTE is very different than your grandfather’s voc ed.

Many programs now focus on areas typically associated with associate or bachelor’s degrees, such as engineering or business.

Because career-tech-ed classes of all kinds are increasingly seen as roads to additional study after high school, they are meant to be more academically rigorous than those of a previous generation.

HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE REALLY OPTING FOR CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS?
A lot. About 8.3 million high school students—nearly half the U.S. high school population—were enrolled in one or more CTE courses in 2016-17, according to the most recent data collected for the just-reauthorized Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, the main federal law that provides funding for CTE programs. That’s up from 7.6 million in 2007-08.

Nearly half of the students in CTE classes are CTE “concentrators,” which typically means that they take two or more related courses in a particular career area.

WHY IS CTE BECOMING MORE FOCUSED ON POSTSECONDARY DEGREES? I THOUGHT THE WHOLE POINT OF CTE WAS TO LET STUDENTS CHOOSE TO SKIP COLLEGE AND GO RIGHT TO WORK.
Two big forces were central in bringing about that shift: New labor-market realities and a troubling past. Let’s take the second one first.

The “tracking” we talked about earlier—where educators classified some students as “not college material” and placed them in voc ed classes—limited students’ earnings and social mobility. Equity activists pressed for change, leading to a “college for all” movement that urged all students to attend four-year institutions.
Important changes in the labor market support the need for college, too. A shifting—and increasingly automated—economy offers few jobs for those without some kind of postsecondary training or degree.

Within the last decade, however, low college-completion rates led to a rethinking of the “college for all” movement. With only about half of college students actually completing bachelor’s degrees, policymakers began calling for a richer set of options for students who didn’t want to go the four-year-college route.

Recognizing these trends, career and technical education reshaped itself as a new kind of pathway: one that includes some form of postsecondary training. That could mean earning certification or credentials in good-paying fields like cybersecurity or robotics, or it could mean getting an associate or bachelor’s degree.

The revamping of CTE means new designs for high school programs, too. The best programs aim to keep the doors to college open by requiring rigorous college-prep classes for CTE students, while also providing them with hands-on learning that lets them apply academics to real-world problems, like designing underwater exploration devices in a marine biology program.

IF CAREER-AND-TECHNICAL-EDUCATION STUDENTS STOP WITH ONLY A CERTIFICATION OR ASSOCIATE DEGREE, CAN THEY EARN AS MUCH MONEY AS THEY COULD WITH A BACHELOR’S DEGREE?

Yes. But there’s an important caveat here: It depends on the student’s field of study. In some kinds of jobs, earnings are limited without a four-year degree. But in others, students with only a certification or two-year degree can expect to earn as much or more than those with bachelor’s degrees.

Medical technicians, for instance, can anticipate lifetime earnings of $2.2 million with only a two-year degree, according to a recent study, while elementary and middle-school teachers with bachelor’s degrees have average lifetime earnings of $1.7 million.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MILITARY KIDS

WHAT ABOUT MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS? SHOULD THEY ENROLL IN CTE PROGRAMS?

CTE courses and programs are an excellent choice for military kids, especially those who have an interest in a particular career field. Career exploration courses are found in almost every middle and secondary school setting, and CTE programs (concentrations) are available in most school districts.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MILITARY KIDS MOVE?

These are points to consider, especially if there’s a move during junior or senior years.

1. Individual courses classified as Career & Tech (CTE) will transfer just as other classes. Credit will be given at a new school if there is an equivalent course. It may be considered an elective.
2. When enrolling in a CTE program (concentration), there is the possibility that a student’s new district won’t have the same program as the sending district. It’s important to research availability prior to a move and to work with both the sending and receiving districts to determine how the student can access the same or similar program. Remember that some programs earn students post-secondary credit, so it’s important to check into the transferability of those credits.
3. This is especially critical if the student is in an industry-credentialed program. There may be agency, union or state regulations that must be met. It’s important that the student be proactive in contacting the credentialing organization for advice.
4. Many schools or school districts have specialized CTE counselors who can offer support for transferring students.
5. It’s important to clearly document what has already been completed, to include coursework, skills tests, work-study, internships, etc. If not already a part of the CTE program, create a portfolio that includes all of the above plus recommendations, awards and references.
6. Two professional organizations can serve as resources for students and parents:
   a. The Association for Career & Technical Education acteonline.org
   b. National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium careertech.org/CTE

Written by Joan Barrett, MCEC Program Manager, Grants & Convenings
Can character be developed? We absolutely think so, and there are strategies that parents, teachers, and others may devise to optimize character development in children of all ages. Years of research show there are three key components of character development.

THREE KEY COMPONENTS OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT
(1) Positive and Sustained Mentoring
(2) Skill-Building Curricula
(3) Opportunities to Lead Others

How might this play out in the school setting? Teachers, coaches, and administrators can systematically devise strategies to address each component. Positive and sustained mentoring requires a bond of trust between students and mentors. Trust itself is founded on what psychologists call the “3 Cs” – COMPETENCE, CHARACTER, AND CARING. Anyone who leads students must possess these traits, and those who do will become someone that students naturally seek out as a mentor. Mentor relationships frequently appear spontaneously when a student and a potential mentor recognize a common bond. In some cases, mentors may be assigned to help kids with problematic adjustment. At West Point, cadets who get into trouble by violating the honor code or the code of conduct may be entered into a formal mentoring plan. In this remedial plan, the cadet chooses a mentor, and then works systematically with him or her for six months or more to learn and internalize core character competencies. This program could easily be adapted to a school context, providing students a formal way to improve their character.

The second step, skill-building curricula, may also be implemented in schools. The nature of such curricula may vary with the age of children (elementary, middle, or high school), but children may first be formally taught what is meant by character. They may be given exercises to explore their own character, and to identify both strengths and weaknesses. This would probably work best if it is more than simply a classroom exercise. Athletic programs and school clubs and extracurricular activities, along with academic programs, may work together to systematically define, develop, and reinforce positive character.

“SOMETIMES THE STUDENT WHO WILL BENEFIT THE MOST FROM BEING IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE IS NOT THE ONE WHO SEEMS TO BE THE OBVIOUS CHOICE.”

The third strategy of character development - opportunities to lead - should be abundant in school settings. Sports teams, clubs, student government, class projects - all provide the chance for children to learn that positive character is a fundamental and necessary component of effective
leadership. Coaches, teachers, and administrators who oversee these activities can provide feedback and direction to student leaders (i.e., mentor them) to help them get the most out of these opportunities. Sometimes the student who will benefit the most from being in a leadership role is not the one who seems to be the obvious choice. Coaches, teachers, and administrators should think about who would benefit the most from being given a leadership role and, where possible, should plan to rotate leadership roles in order to provide more students with this opportunity.

Finally, it is important to note that these three strategies should not occur independently. An effective character development program will synchronize and coordinate all three components. That is to say, a school should have a system designed to encourage and promote character growth. I believe that such a character development system should receive just as much attention as the academic or athletic curriculum. A student can finish number one in his or her class academically, or be the best athlete, but if they lack positive character they will be doomed to failure. Thus, it behooves educators to take character development seriously, and to seek out best practices they can implement to optimize positive character development among their students. This is too important to leave to chance.

Visit our website for more from Dr. Matthews
MilitaryChild.org/highlights

Dr. Michael D. Matthews, Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership, U.S. Military Academy and MCEC Science Advisory Board member

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RAISING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

Last spring, I announced my “retirement” after 35 years as both an aerospace & defense executive and a journalist. It’s been a wonderful ride, with amazing people and stories every step of the way. One of the more personally gratifying experiences occurred this summer. Teamed with the folks from the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) and National Geographic, SAIC opened the eyes of 115 U.S. high school student leaders at an event marking MCEC’s 20th anniversary. Our objective was to open their apertures and initiate what we hope will be a lifelong journey of actively engaging, exploring and contributing to make the world a better place.

If the students’ engagement was any indication, we think we made a good first step in achieving our objective.

Fellow MCEC advisor and NatGeo Partners CEO Gary Knell put it best when he said the kids — many of whom hail from military families — “have had the benefit of moving around (a lot). They are ambassadors for geography. That’s the great advantage over other kids. They can’t learn it all in classrooms. They can make a real difference.” These MCEC students represent the creme de la creme at many of their schools. They’re politically astute, engaged and more globally aware than many others their age. The experiences MCEC provides for these student leaders — from meeting and discussing books with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, weeklong courses at West Point and the Air Force Academy, meeting with the NASA Administrator and other federal agency execs, global thought leaders from academia, medicine, and top industry executives and elected officials — is unsurpassed.

Teamed with SAIC and NatGeo, MCEC provided a particularly unique experience into the world of exploration for this year’s student cohort in Washington, DC for their annual conference. They spent half a day listening and meeting with explorers, scientists, photographers, and digital storytellers from NASA’s Ocean Health program, scientists and photographers living in the Serengeti, to NatGeo’s “Planet or Plastics” initiative. And this was no academic exercise: the students’ eyes were opened to the possibilities where they can start making a difference. Right now. To make a difference — and leverage the social savants of the “Centennial” generation in telling that story — is powerful and infectious. And when the kids heard that NatGeo has one of the largest Instagram brands in the world with 91.4 million followers, they picked up their phones and started following a “new brand” for many of them, but an icon that many of their grandparents and parents grew up with laying on their coffee tables at home as kids.

I believe it truly does take a village to raise the next generation. By forging unique partnerships through organizations like MCEC, and bringing global industry leaders together with military-connected students, we can make a difference by uniting with the next generation of leaders. And now that I’m on the cusp of figuring out the next phase of my life, I’m counting on it.

Lucy Fitch
Former Senior Vice President and Chief Communications Officer for SAIC
How does the MCEC Frances Hesselbein Student Leadership Program make a difference in your life?

It’s life changing in a way that is hard to explain, but I would put it like this...

Going to the [Frances Hesselbein Student Leadership] Conference is almost like a week-long therapy session in the sense that you are forced to evaluate and reflect on who you are. It is a week of examining your strengths, and weaknesses, under a microscope. It can be hard. For example, I had to confront the fact that when I am listening to people, sometimes I am not actively listening. Instead, I am already thinking about what I am going to say. That being said, since recognizing it, which is the first step, I have gotten so much better.

The conference also introduces you to incredible people. The lectures that you get to listen to are not about leadership in theory, but in practice. People like General Austin are telling you that you should never sacrifice your morals, because they have been in situations where it would have been easier to compromise their morals, but they didn’t. Also, during the conference you are hanging out with amazing people, whether they are peers from across the globe or inspiring adults. Everyone at the conference provides a unique perspective, because we are all coming from somewhere different. When you put all these people together for a week of rigorous improvement, you all bond quickly. The week is so intensive that afterward you find yourself changed, but you cannot identify the moment that you transformed. It is life changing, but that change didn’t come easily.

Change takes hard work, but afterwards you feel incredible.

Sawyer G.
Sophomore | S2S, Stuttgart HS
The MCEC Pete Taylor Partnership of Excellence award annually recognizes collaboration between school districts and military installations that makes a difference in local communities. The award was created to celebrate initiatives and projects that demonstrate General Taylor’s belief, “goodness happens at the local level.” This year’s winners were announced at the MCEC 2018 National Training Seminar in Washington.

Congratulations to this year’s winners (Pictured clockwise from Top)

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP – K-12
Restorative Practices Coalition, Colorado

EXEMPLARY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP – K-12
Bay Area Education Alliance, Florida

RECOGNIZED COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP – K-12
Collaboration Breeds Success, Kansas

RECOGNIZED COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP – K-12
MacDill Council for Educational Excellence, Florida

OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL PROJECT/INITIATIVE PARTNERSHIP – K-12
Mission P3PT, Alabama/Texas

EXEMPLARY INDIVIDUAL PROJECT/INITIATIVE PARTNERSHIP – K-12
NAS Oceana Air Show Outdoor STEM Laboratory Field Trip, Virginia

Visit MilitaryChild.org under Programs tab to apply!
Stories bring connections, opening conversations between strangers, establishing trust based upon familiar experiences. They are also a way of exchanging information on topics of mutual interest. Story telling is central to “For the Sake of the Child”, a new podcast series piloted by the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) Parent to Parent program. Podcast producer, Tara Gleason, believes, “there is nothing better than listening to someone’s story for building trust and connection” and has been developing the series with topics relevant to military families with children ranging from birth to college-aged. The weekly podcasts will be “conversations” with service members, professionals, parents and military kids about topics that matter to military families. MCEC President and CEO, Mary Keller dubbed the series, “a virtual cup of coffee.”

Starting conversations comes easily to Tara as the series producer and member of the podcast interview team. She draws from her own experiences as an elementary school teacher, an active-duty military spouse and mother of three- aged ten, eight, and six. She has been married since 2003 to LTC Jason Gleason an engineer in the US Army. During the past fifteen years, her family has relocated eight times, experienced seven different schools and lived both on post and in local communities through different assignments. The social, emotional and logistical challenges of separation, changing schools and joining new communities for military children are just some of the topics Tara and the podcast team explore. As she says, “our target audience is military-connected parents, not only active duty of all branches, but reserve and Guard. We all share common experiences and we see these podcasts as a chance to use those connections to gain new insights while being entertaining.”

“For the Sake of the Child” began a weekly broadcast schedule in September. Upcoming interviews will feature Sesame Street, Zero to Three, the US Department of Education, author Dr. Anne Fishel, and Dr.Kenneth Ginsburg, just to name a few. Planned topics include early learning, college preparation, post-9/11 GI bill, school choice, impact aid, the Interstate Compact, kids and media, and social and emotional issues such as resilience, grief, and character development. Other members of the podcast team are professional educators, curriculum developers and researchers, all parents and military spouses, sharing common experiences with listeners and bringing different points of view about military life.

The goal is to continue to build the library of topics as a resource to military parents. The podcast series is also an opportunity to expand the MCEC community. “It is our hope that we can reach our military families who might not be able to attend one of our online or in-person trainings, but might engage with us through a podcast,” Tara said.

Are you a listener to our series? Is there a topic you would like to hear about? Let Tara and the Podcast Team know!

Contact Tara Gleason 254-953-1923 x1134 Tara.Gleason@MilitaryChild.org
“For the Sake of the Child” grew out of the PARENT TO PARENT WEBINAR SERIES which has offered tools and trainings for topics related to military-connected students for parents and educators. The Parent to Parent webinar team includes military-connected parents with professional training and decades of real-life experiences. MCEC provides free web-based trainings in a webinar format for military parents on educational topics starting from birth to college preparation. They share live interactive parent workshops on all kinds of topics such as the College Application Process, Transitions, Homework, Test Taking, Financing Post-Secondary Education and Kindergarten Readiness. Each live webinar has presenters available to answer participant questions or concerns and includes activities, polls, discussions and videos to engage the audience.

There are pre-recorded webinars on our website at MilitaryChild.org that can be downloaded by anyone for free at any time.
PEEP and the Big Wide World is an Emmy Award-winning series that teaches STEM to an early childhood audience now has an all-new series of free digital apps in English and Spanish. PEEP Family Science was designed for parents and their children, especially those served by home visiting programs. Each science unit (shadows, ramps, colors, and sounds) comes in its own app, downloadable in either English or Spanish from the Google Play or Apple App Store. Once downloaded, the apps can be used offline, without Wi-Fi or a data plan. PEEP Family Science also offers extensive print and video supports for educators who work directly with families, all of which can be accessed on PEEP’s website.

**PEEP Makes it Easy and Fun for Families to Do Science Together at Home!** Featuring characters children love, the apps combine animated stories from the TV show with playful, hands-on science activities. Each app also features parent videos that model how to engage children in the activities, so parents can connect with their child’s learning every step of the way.

**STRENGTHENING SCHOOL READINESS**
Aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards and Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, PEEP Family Science teaches preschool science concepts and skills that include making observations and comparisons, testing and problem solving, and communicating and sharing ideas. These skills strengthen literacy and critical thinking, and develop initiative, curiosity, attention, and perseverance — just what young children need to thrive in school. PEEP Family Science is flexible and can be adapted to the needs of a variety of programs that support young families’ learning.

**RESEARCH**
Research shows media can enhance children’s learning—especially when used with an adult and as a springboard for hands-on exploration. The PEEP Family Science apps help families use educational technology at home in positive ways early in their children’s learning.

PEEP Family Science was developed by WGBH, Boston’s public media station, and researchers from the Education Development Center (EDC). It was tested over a period of two years with nearly 200 diverse families from two long-established home visiting programs, HIPPY USA (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) and AVANCE. Testing took place in Texas and Arkansas.
To understand families’ experiences using PEEP Family Science, researchers worked with 168 low-income English- and Spanish-speaking families and 18 educators enrolled in home visiting organizations. Study findings suggest that the vast majority of families indicated that their children enjoyed using PEEP Family Science and that the experience helped their children learn science and helped parents to support their children’s science explorations.

- On a survey probing families’ experiences, over 90% of respondents reported that their child enjoyed PEEP Family Science and over 95% agreed that it helped their child learn about important science topics.

- Virtually all (over 95%) of surveyed families agreed that PEEP helped them ask their child questions about science and gave them strategies to help their child learn science. Moreover, parents were more confident in their abilities to help their children learn science after using PEEP (38% of PEEP parents strongly agreed that they know enough to help their children learn science, compared to 26% of comparison parents).

- Researchers also found that parents and children who used PEEP Family Science were engaging in the kinds of science activities and practices that can help young children learn. Based on observations of a subset of families, parents who used PEEP with their children were actively exploring important science content related to physical science, such as ramps, colors and sounds and science practices such as asking questions and carrying out investigations.

- These parents were also able to use the PEEP Family Science parent strategies to support their children’s science learning, such as talking about science ideas, exploring science together in a manner that allows the child to take the lead and encouraging their children’s interests and engagement in science over time.

Results from the study suggest that media-based interventions that are accessible, use media to engage parents and children, and provide modeling and step-by-step scaffolding for parents and educators have the potential to engage diverse families in science and help them to effectively explore science together. That parents responded positively and reported using PEEP Family Science with ease suggests that this kind of intervention holds promise in overcoming typical barriers families with young children face in doing science at home, such as lack of confidence and perceptions that science is too complicated and requires specialized knowledge. More broadly, our findings suggest that parents and educators also need help understanding how to use media together in a way that can support young children’s learning.

Download PEEP and the BIG WIDE WORLD for free on your App Store!
FT. BENNING IS AT THE CENTER OF A TWO-STATE AREA COMPRISED OF COLUMBUS AND FT. BENNING, GEORGIA, AND PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA. KNOWN AS THE “TRI-CITY” THE REGION INCLUDES BOTH URBAN AND RURAL COMMUNITIES AND IS HOME TO ONE OF THE NATION’S LARGEST MILITARY BASES. THE CHALLENGES FOR MILITARY-CONNECTED CHILDREN ARE AS VARIED AS THE REGION ITSELF. Working with school systems, education agencies, youth services and community groups and other resources to facilitate their transitions is the Military Student Transition Consultant and Affiliate (MSTC/A) team of Likitca Miller, Julie Yerkes and Marcia Farrar. The team shares their unique personal insights and expertise to serve students K-12 in the area. Their impact, according to data from the 2017-2018 school year, indicates a combined reach of 1,692 students, parents and staff.

“We truly rely on each other for information and understanding the resources available to us,” says Marcia Farrar, MSTSTA, Community Education and Teacher Certification Assistant, Phenix City, AL. While each member of the MSTC/A team works with students in a different school district and location, they share a common goal, helping military children and their families experience an easier transition. The MSTC/A representative connects with new students within two weeks of their arrival. “We want the students to feel secure and have a sense of belonging,” Marcia added. Implementing a full circle of care, they utilize programs and services offered by MCEC through the school districts including Student to Student (S2S) for elementary and secondary school, and online resources such as Tutor.com.

The MSTC/A Tri-City team draws upon personal experiences to work with students. Likitca Miller joined the group in 2017 after spending part of her professional career in corporate life. She is the MSTC representative for the Russell County School District, a rural part of the area located on the Alabama side of the Fort Benning Gates. Over half of the student population comes from military families. “I saw the need and the ‘awesome’ opportunity to make a difference with this role...,” Likitca said. Among some of the challenges she sees in this part of the community for military-connected children is the lack of extracurricular activities. “This can be a major problem for some children that were used to a variety of options for activities. We try to serve the holistic needs of children and look for ways to fill in the gaps,” she said. Special activities such as a “living wax museum” give students a chance to become figures in military history from all walks of life and learn the details that made them heroes. Likitca brings her own experiences as the daughter of a United States Army Vietnam War veteran.

Julie Yerkes is the MSTC representative for the Muscogee County School District covering the Ft. Benning, GA, area, which includes five elementary schools, two middle schools and three high schools. Working across all age groups in the diverse school districts, like other members of the Tri-Community MSTC, Julie sees a sustaining need to support individual students through their educational experiences. The focus of the Muscogee County program, titled Easing Transitions and Fostering Resiliency Among Military Dependents, focuses on the transition and social/emotional needs of the military students in these schools. As the MSTC, part of Julie’s role includes: meeting with all new military students, meeting regularly in friendship groups with
elementary age students, and providing support to students who have deployed parents. This year, she will be providing increased support to middle and high school students who are struggling academically. “A large impact of the program thus far has been the increased awareness in our schools about who their military students are, as well as their unique needs.” Julie relates on a personal level and identifies with these students and their families. Her military family moved to the Ft. Benning/Columbus area 11 years ago. At the time, their son (3rd grade) and daughter (1st grade) had already moved 5 and 4 times. She remembers the transition concerns that her family had during this time for them, both socially and academically.

Members of the Tri-City Team are proud of the proven, positive impact of their work through the MSTC/A Program. It manifests itself in a more well-rounded student. Students have a greater sense of belonging; they have more self-confidence and a higher degree of success in school. Program benefits of MSTC/A are reciprocal, the MSTC/A group agrees, “We are able to serve our military-connected students and families as they serve our country.”

“Students have a greater sense of belonging; they have more self-confidence and a higher degree of success in school. There is a positive impact on us as well because we are able to serve them as they serve our country.”

**CONNECTING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

**Volunteer Efforts in the Wake and Aftermath of Hurricane Florence**

Cumberland County, NC MSTCs decided to give their time and effort working within their community while school doors were closed due to flooding. The MSTCs volunteered in many locations. They assisted with debris removal both locally and out of town. One MSTC coordinated the resupply of a nursing home that was housed in one of her schools. They also served breakfast and sorted donations at a shelter and assisted in running their “check-out” store, amongst many other clean-up efforts.

MCEC is so proud of Mark and Krysten Patton, Carlos Swan and Rosella Major-Williams for being a crucial part of their community during a difficult time.
Learning Together through VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES

Professional Learning Communities have evolved through the years. As educators seek new ways to collaborate and innovate their teaching; virtual learning communities have become common in the K-12 educational setting. Groups of educators from across the globe can join together to exchange ideas and strategies with other professionals. The most challenging aspect of virtual learning communities for educators is identifying those platforms that are user-friendly and those that provide research-informed information. In response, Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) Professional Development has started a new group on Facebook in the form of an open Professional Learning Community. This group is intended not only to continue the conversation with participants after they attend trainings, but also to attract potential participants through engaging topics and discussions by the team of moderators: Amanda Hulsey and Brandy Chalmers.
Anyone can join the group to learn more about MCEC Professional Development offerings and find relevant articles while collaborating with educators and other professionals who are serving military-connected students. To join the group, simply log on to Facebook.com and search for “MCEC Professional Development Community.” From there, members are able to interact with the community, contribute to the page with articles and insightful comments, and view a listing of upcoming events.

MCEC Professional Development is the organization’s longest-running initiative, with curriculum grounded in research and heavily vetted by an all-volunteer Science Advisory Board. The Professional Development team at MCEC is led by an educator who is also a military spouse and surrounded by a cadre of trainers with backgrounds varying from education to social work and mental health. This team of trainers has over 300 years of collective experience in education, supporting educators and professionals with relevant and timely professional development offerings.

To complement the traditional face-to-face trainings, MCEC also has an immense collection of virtual learning opportunities to enhance any level of support from the classroom teacher to the mental health professional working with military children.

**COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS**: A series of eight TedEd lessons focused on the unique aspects of military and veteran-connected children and their quest to be college and career ready by the time they graduate from high school:

- A Spectrum of Things to Consider About Military Kids
- Motivating Military Children to be College, Career & Life Ready
- Getting Highly Mobile Military Kids Ready for the World
- Producing College and Career Ready Students: Understanding the Challenges
- Producing College and Career Ready Students: Ensuring Military Kids are College Ready
- Producing College and Career Ready Students: Career & Technical Education
- Higher Education Initiatives for Military Kids
- Getting Military Kids with Exceptional Needs Ready for the World

**SUPPORTING VETERANS’ CHILDREN THROUGH TRANSITIONS™**: When parents make the transition from a military career to a civilian life - whether that change is planned or sudden - there are often unique challenges for their children. This is particularly true if service-related injuries are involved. These virtual learning companion videos feature:

- Supporting Veterans’ Children through Transitions™: Awareness – of the issues involved in the transition from service member to veteran.
- Supporting Veterans’ Children through Transitions™: Understanding – of the challenges for the veterans’ children and families.

These are just a few examples of virtual learning opportunities available through the MCEC website. Although live professional development is vital to providing experiential learning experiences, MCEC will continue to provide virtual learning opportunities for those who wish to continue the conversation in gaining new knowledge and insights to help them continue the support for military-connected students in their schools and communities.
While all military families experience some level of disruption during their permanent change of station (PCS) moves, those whose children have exceptional needs are most acutely affected. They frequently find spotty communication, incomplete information and inconsistencies in services that are provided from one duty station to the next, causing unnecessary gaps in medical support and school placement. Concise information and shared dialogue among parents and other stakeholders about diagnosed conditions can help ease this transitional stress and allow parents to effectively advocate for their children.

During the 2017 MCEC National Training Seminar (NTS), special needs experts and practitioners, along with military parents, gathered to develop a framework to encourage military families to share information and become empowered to act on behalf of their children with one commonly occurring condition, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These stakeholders co-created a set of infographics that provide concise information about ADHD and a Dialogue Guide that assists families at the local level to build sensitivity, understanding and support through shared conversation.

THE INFOGRAPHICS AND THE DIALOGUE GUIDE
Two infographics were developed. The first, ADHD Things to Remember, is a broad informational overview that captures the significant points made by a panel of experts at the 2017 NTS. The second, ADHD Challenges, is the result of interaction among a range of stakeholders to create detailed points that can be used to guide informed conversation in a local installation or school setting. This conversation is structured as a Dialogue Guide, a communication tool that shares information but avoids debate and discussion. During this loosely structured dialogue, the stakeholder participants endeavor to learn what others know and what they believe. More importantly, they work to create understanding that helps people act together on an issue. Through dialogue, the participants help the group identify leverage points, propose actionable strategies, and identify key allies. They identify predictable problems, discuss how they might be perceived, and how they may be better prepared to act. Dialogue helps people imagine that they’re in it together, increasing capacity and effectiveness.
ADHD and Military-Connected Students

ADHD is a challenge for every child and family impacted by the condition. Because military connected students often move 6-8 times during their school years, these students face a special challenge.

Identification

Facts about ADHD

- ADHD is a neuro-behavioral condition. It has both neurological and behavioral aspects.
- ADHD is treatable.
- ADHD usually appears before the age of 12.
- There are three types of ADHD:
  - Hyperactive
  - Inattentive
  - Combined
- 11.3% of the population meet the criteria for ADHD.
- Boys are twice as likely to be identified with ADHD as girls.
- 54% of children and youth with ADHD are also identified as having Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD).

After Identification

Home-School Communication is critical.

- Train parents and teachers together to build common knowledge.
- Consider educational needs together:
  - Learn about supports available through a 504 Plan.
  - Learn when special education may be appropriate.
- Consider medication issues together.
  - When deciding to use medication, start at the lowest dose and increase until symptoms decrease or side effects occur.
  - Work as a team to manage medication and determine the optimal dose.

Living Well with ADHD

Treatment demands a team approach.

- Work together as a team to assess responsiveness to medication and behavior change over time.
- Communicate important information to all caregivers in the school and community.
- Build school connections.
- Monitor:
  - Health
  - Grades
  - Interaction with friends
  - Include what the child likes and is good at in the treatment plan.

This infographic was developed by families and practitioners following an expert informational panel at the MCEC National Training Seminar (NTS), August, 2017.

Download the rest of this valuable information at MilitaryChild.org/adhd for a dialogue guide and more.

A collaboration between The National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI), National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) and Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)
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