



Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

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On Dec. 10, 2015, President Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – Public Law 114-95. ESSA reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students. Under ESSA, responsibility for making key decisions about education policy is shifting back to the states from the federal government.



Among the provisions in the new law is the creation — for the first time ever on a national scale — of a military student identifier (MSI). ESSA requires states to better track and report how homeless students, students in foster care, and military-connected students are doing in school. The MSI data should appear in the State report cards as mandated by the law.

The advantages of gathering school-level MSI data are similar to gathering information about other sub-groups of students. Schools have a more accurate picture of their student population and can shape programs, activities, course offerings, daily schedules, extra-curricular programs, and more to meet the needs of their particular student population. Resources including

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) sees real advantages in having schools and school districts use aggregated MSI information to better understand and serve their student populations. MCEC is hopeful that this will provide more useful programs for students of active duty parents as well as for students of parents serving in the Reserves and National Guard who are more widely dispersed within states and, in many cases, are invisible as military children in their schools and communities. Schools have a hard time creating great programs for their students if they don't know anything about them. Here's an opportunity to bring military students into clear focus and help them thrive.

Today, as ESSA is being prepared for implementation

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programs along with staff and budget allocation can all be adjusted to meet the needs of the student body and achieve the goals and objectives set for the school.

Military-connected students attend many different schools in different states and sometimes different countries. Their transcripts and experiences differ from students who stay in the same community during their K-12 years. Knowing that a school has a significant military population helps the school staff plan accordingly and making appropriate adjustments.

School staff regularly look for patterns, advantages, and challenges that are presented by the student groups they serve. Aggregated or summarized information is needed and used for planning program design and program offerings. Personally identifiable information is not reported.



(in the 2017-18 school year) by the Department of Education, there are 19 states with some form of military student identifier. Although the MSI varies somewhat by state, most include the children of active duty, National Guard and Reserve service members. However, at present, ESSA specifies students with “a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces... on active duty.” The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) strongly advocated for the inclusion of students whose parents serve in the National

Guard or Reserves as part of the ESSA reporting on military-connected students and will continue to do so. Service members with children should contact their congressional representatives to push for the inclusion of all military-connected students in the military student identifier provision of ESSA.

See more →



The Military Student Identifier

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Say What?

MCEC has advocated for the inclusion of the **Military Student Identifier** (MSI) in public school data reporting systems since the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Connected Children was created and seven states added the legislation to their state laws in 2010. Now in 2016, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have adopted Compact legislation, and the DoDEA schools have indicated that they will adhere to Compact principles as well.

In the years since the Compact began to operate, the DoD state liaison office has kept track of which states have initiated a military student identifier and they report that 17 states are now on board:

www.usa4militaryfamilies.dod.mil/MOS/f?p=USA4:ISSUE:0::::P2_ISSUE:3


In addition, the **Common Education Data Standards**, the gold standard used by states and the federal government added a common definition for the military-connected student indicator: *An indication that the student is currently serving on Active Duty, in the National Guard, or in the Reserve components of the United States military services.*

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

The next big step took place in December 2015, when Congress approved and President Obama signed the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, now styled the **Every Student Succeeds Act** (ESSA). ESSA includes the military student identifier as a required data element for all annual state data collections.



THIS IS REAL PROGRESS AND CERTAINLY GOOD NEWS.



Collectively, school districts, states, the Department of Education, DODEA, etc., need to review the results of this data and determine what it says about military children as they move around the world and through their K-12 years of education. If the information is collected and never analyzed or interpreted, then the time and energy of those collecting the data has been for nothing. Making sense of the data and using it to improve the way military students are educated is a great opportunity.

Let's not pass this by.