



The Military Student Identifier

DAVID F. SPLITEK, PhD
Program Manager, Higher Education Initiatives



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.

