



The Vital Addition of the Military Student Identifier in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)



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More than 90% of school-age military-connected students in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve are in public school classrooms. The academic success as well as the attuned services for these children depend on a network of informed, supportive professionals who can respond effectively to their unique challenges.

For the first time in the history of our Nation, the military-connected student – who also serves – is recognized in our education policy. In December 2015, the members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives

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voted in favor of the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**. Senators Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray and Representatives John Kline and Bobby Scott were instrumental in the acceptance of the Act. The legislation, signed by the President

on December 10, includes a military-connected student identifier that will enable military leaders, educators, and elected officials at all levels of government to understand how military-connected children are performing in school. Despite the high number of military-connected students, with the vast majority in public school classrooms, no

reliable, consistent, school-based data has existed on the academic well-being of these students – until now.

“We know military-connected children move three times more often than their peers, creating the opportunity for disruptions, disconnects and gaps in education, in addition to the stress of having parents away from home for long periods of time,” said Dr. Mary Keller, president and chief executive officer of MCEC. “Without the military student identifier, educators and policy leaders have no way of knowing whether these students are faring well, keeping pace, or falling behind. The identifier will provide data to inform both educators and policymakers, enabling them to adjust programs, direct resources and adopt strategies that support these students and their military families.”

The military student identifier in ESSA applies to students with a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces on active duty. The Military Child Education Coalition strongly supports the inclusion of students whose parents serve in the National Guard or Reserves as part of the ESSA reporting on military-connected students.

Teachers and school administrators are often unaware of military-connected children within their schools and classrooms and therefore may not be as attentive to the academic needs or the social and emotional well-being of these children. More accurate considerations of the amplified needs of these children will be possible via this landmark recognition of military-connected students.