

# MCEC COVID-19 Resources for PARENTS

## FAQ by Parents of High School Students

### Moving, Transfer of Credits, Exams

***“We’re stressing because we do not understand if our son will have to retake high school classes next year because we don’t know if he will get full credits for the classes he is taking. On top of everything, we’re supposed to move and he’s transferring to a DoDEA school in the fall.”***

Many families share this concern, as school districts vary in how to address the current situation. Most schools have responded very positively and will give students full credits. We suggest reaching out to your school and ask for information on whether or not your student will receive full credits. If not, find out what your student can do to receive full credits, for example, by finishing the course online. Explain that you are a military-connected family and will move soon based on official military orders.

Before you move, get in touch with the School Liaison Officer (SLO) and see if your area has a [Military Student Transition Consultant \(MSTC\) or MSTC Affiliate](#) that can help with transitioning and resources. Also, we suggest that all military families become familiar with the [Military Interstate Children's Compact](#) as it provides for the uniform treatment of military children transferring between school districts and states. DoDEA schools are committed to ensuring that school policies and procedures mirror those in the Compact’s guidelines and related rules.

Consider compiling and maintaining an [Academic Portfolio](#) that you hand carry to your next duty station. Gather up copies (or print if textbooks are online) of the textbook covers, syllabi, and table of contents of the classes your son is taking. Gather samples of coursework that he did, along with graded papers and tests. Having this information can be helpful for the new school if there are concerns or questions about course placement or course credits.

Connect with the [DoDEA School](#) before you move and ask what they need from you to make this transition as smooth as possible. Also find out how you can access the student or school handbook for more detailed information on the school and classes that are being offered. Schedule a meeting as soon as you arrive at the new duty station.

***“My student missed an exam before the school closed. He was supposed to take a make-up once the school opened again, but now the school will be closed for the rest of the school year.”***

Contact the school. In several school districts, the exam make-up window has been extended through December of 2020. Some schools determine make-up exams on a case-by-case basis. If you are scheduled to move soon, discuss options and come up with a plan to make sure that your student will get full credit for the class.

For More Information: [Parents@MilitaryChild.org](mailto:Parents@MilitaryChild.org)



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***I know that under the MIC3, I can request and hand-carry school records to our new location. With the school being closed, I don't know if I can get records. What do I do if we have to move, and we don't have a copy of the school records?"***

Please contact the school and explain that you are scheduled to move based on official military orders. Ask if there is a way that the school can provide a copy of the records.

In the meantime, reach out to each teacher, including extracurricular or special instruction teachers. Explain that you will be moving. Request that teachers send you letters of recommendation or letters of suggestion for the new teachers. Consider sending them a resume, especially if your student is in high school, to give teachers more background information about your student. Ask teachers to provide personal insight to help ease the transition for your child and help the new teacher become familiar with your child's academic strengths and weaknesses. Providing these letters that give insight into the student's abilities and academic skills can also help with placement. Ask each teacher if it is okay to share their email address with the new teacher in case there are any questions.

We also suggest putting together an [Academic Portfolio](#) that contains course descriptions or syllabi, test scores, transcripts, extracurricular activities and volunteer log. Also, consider making copies of textbook covers, table of contents. Write down URLs and print out the table of contents if textbooks are online. Gather work samples that best represent what your student has learned in each subject, including screenshots of work that your student is completing now online. The portfolio will provide a polished and current snapshot of your student's academics and activities.

***"My freshman didn't sign up for classes for the new school year because we are scheduled to move. With all the changes to PCS moves, we're not sure if we are going to move and when. Should my student sign up for classes at the current school, or should we wait?"***

The recent changes have turned many plans upside down. With the current situation still unfolding, it is difficult to tell how exactly PCS moves will be affected in the weeks to come. Consider reaching out to the counselor and explaining your situation. Ask what options your student has if you should not move as scheduled. Come up with an academic plan for your student. At the same time, reach out to the new school and ask for guidance. Check out [SchoolQuest](#) for resources on transitions and planning ahead. Also, watch the webinars on [Chart Your Course-Academic Plan](#) and [Transitions](#) for more information.



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### College-Bound Students, ACT/SAT and AP

#### *“How will ACT/SAT tests be affected?”*

The [ACT](#) has rescheduled its April 4 national test date to June 13 across the U.S. All students registered for the April 4 test date will receive an email from ACT in the next few days informing them of the postponement and instructions for free rescheduling to June 13 or a future national test date. The next ACT national test dates are June 13 and July 18. Students who can't or don't wish to reschedule may receive a refund of their April registration fee. The [ACT, Inc.](#) states that “ACT is committed to making every effort to help students impacted by this test date change, particularly seniors facing college application deadlines for this fall. More information will be released as it becomes available in the days ahead. You'll find the latest updates on [act.org](#).”

The College Board who administers the [SAT](#) canceled the May 2, 2020, SAT and SAT Subject Test administration. Students who already registered for May, whose March test centers were closed, or who do not receive March scores because of any irregularities will receive refunds. The next SAT test is scheduled for June 6. The [College Board](#) continues stating that “we're working with test centers and we'll decide whether we can safely hold that administration as soon as it's feasible, given the evolving public health situation. We'll add U.S. and international test administrations in response to canceled administrations. We'll be flexible in making the SAT available in school and out of school as soon as the public health situation allows.”

Although unlikely, in case schools should remain closed this fall, the College Board is looking at providing a digital SAT for home use.

Please note that many colleges and universities have already suspended the SAT and/or ACT score requirements for 2021 applicants. We recommend checking out each college's website that your student is applying to for its updated policies on SAT/ACT requirements.

#### *“The College Board canceled the SAT Subject Test that my junior had signed up for. We're not sure if we should forget about him taking that test.”*

Please know that the great majority of colleges do not require SAT Subject Tests; however, there are a few colleges that recommend or consider them as part of admissions. We suggest checking if the colleges that your son is interested in recommend or consider SAT Subject Tests, and then make a decision that is best for your student.

The [College Board](#) is currently considering rescheduling SAT Subject Tests for later this year.



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***“My student worked so hard on maintaining a high GPA. How will colleges look at pass/fail or progressing/non-progressing that many high schools are doing for this semester? How can she stay competitive when other students get actual grades for virtual learning?”***

Different high schools have come up with different ways on determining grades, with many schools adopting a pass/fail for this last part of the semester. Admission staff are aware that some students' GPA may be affected negatively. The good news is that colleges are typically taking a holistic approach to determine admission and are unlikely to let a pass or a progressing grade for one quarter be a determining factor.

Students can stay competitive by continuing to challenge themselves by taking a more rigorous course load throughout the high school years. Once your student has narrowed down her options, connect with the colleges. Colleges consider demonstrated interest! For a detailed discussion on what colleges are looking for, please watch the webinar on [College Readiness](#).

Since high schools across the country do not use the same grading scale, many colleges have been in the practice of recalculating a student's GPA based on their own criteria. If you moved during high school, request that each high school send in the transcript. The former high school that weighted the grades or gave weight to honors classes, for example, will send a transcript with the weighted grade(s). That way the colleges get a transcript along with a school profile for each high school that describes each school's grading policies and your student's GPA or rank. Here's a tip: Always keep copies of the school profile that was current when your student attended.



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***“My 11<sup>th</sup> grader is taking AP Government. What will happen now?”***

The [College Board](#) is providing free, live, and on-demand AP courses and has developed a new at-home testing option.

For each AP subject, there will be two different testing dates. For students who do not have access to the internet or a device, the College Board is working on solutions to help students get what they need to show their best work. If you need mobile tools or connectivity or know someone who does, you can [reach us](#) directly to let us know.

***“How can we decide on which college is the best fit when we can’t visit campuses?”***

Let’s face it: there are advantages to visiting and getting a feel for the campus. Here are some tips that help with decision-making if you can’t visit.

1. Take a virtual tour. Check multiple virtual tour options online like [eCampusTours](#) as well as the college’s website to get a glimpse of the surroundings. Colleges are businesses. Beware that they are advertising.
2. Read up on the town and surrounding neighborhood. Is it safe? If you are stationed far away, consider what your student can do over breaks when some campuses close. Are there grocery stores close by? For more tips, watch the [Preparing to Fly the Nest](#) webinar.
3. Check social media. Read college bloggers’ and students’ comments and impressions about the college. Consider following the college on social media. Read their newsletters.
4. Get the details. Look beyond the glossy pictures. Check out departments, student life, research opportunities, professors and their background. Find out employment rate of recent graduates. Google “Common Data Set” followed by the college’s name to get details about graduation rates, retention, financial aid distribution and more. Use the school’s [Net Price Calculator](#) for more personal financial feedback. Check the school’s [financial health](#) and [endowments](#).
5. Connect. Ask the admission office to put you in touch with current students (preferably more than one). Have a list of questions ready to ask. Don’t be afraid to ask, “What do you not like?” Ask if there are students/alumni at your location that you could talk with. One of the advantages of being a mobile military family is that we get to know lots of people. Find out if your acquaintances know alumni that you can connect with to get some realistic feedback.

For more tips on narrowing down options, watch [Selecting the College that Fits](#)

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***“My junior hasn’t taken the SAT or ACT yet. With colleges going increasingly test-optional, is it necessary for her to take those tests? I heard that students should submit test scores at those competitive colleges, even if it’s “optional.”***

Test-optional gives students the flexibility to submit standardized scores or not. We suggest to research each college to see how they interpret test-optional for their particular admission process. If you are unsure or cannot find that information, contact the college to ask for detailed information. Some schools might still consider test scores in their process, especially for merit scholarships, even though they have just announced that they are test-optional. Typically, it can't hurt to submit a test score, if it's a score a student is happy with. At the same time, if your student is not submitting test scores to a test-optional college, admissions staff look at other factors to determine admission.

Even colleges that consider test scores, look at the totality of the student’s academic record. This not only means looking at the difficulty level of the courses, but at the trend over time, along with the letter grades. In short, send in the best possible application package that you can. For more details watch the webinar [Chart Your Course for College Readiness](#)

***“I heard that some colleges are going to test-optional. Without the SAT or ACT, what will they use to determine admission or even merit scholarships?”***

Admission officers at colleges are still discussing how the current situation will impact future admissions as well as merit scholarships that some colleges provide. In the meantime, many colleges have announced that they are test-optional for 2021 applicants. In addition, some high schools have gone to pass/fail; other high schools still give grades for all classes, while other schools give grades only for some select classes. As the situation is evolving, colleges are likely to announce further guidance for applicants.

When we look at those colleges and universities that have been test-optional for years, we can see that those schools often look at the students in context of their school and environment by taking a holistic view of the student. They place emphasis on grades, course rigor and if students challenged themselves by taking, for example, honors or AP (Advanced Placement) classes. Colleges typically also place emphasis on the essay. Even if a college states that the essay is optional, we suggest that students always submit the essay. When writing the essay, ask yourself: Why should the college admit me as a student? What can I bring to the campus?

Other areas that colleges consider when they look at applications are extracurricular activities, letters of recommendation, and showing interest in going to that particular college. Being a military-connected student can be an advantage because they can show that they have been resilient through changing in and out of different school systems and have faced separation and other hardships. For a more detailed discussion on what colleges consider, check out the free webinar [Chart Your Course for College Readiness](#)

