

K-12 Education Program Content Guide

The following established style guidelines reflect the longstanding practices of developers and editors of content for the K-12 Education Program area. They are consistent with rules and guidance outlined in the Associated Press Stylebook and reflective of Office of Military Community and Family Policy style and usage preferences.

Do

- Pay attention to the overall organization and flow of an article. Information and ideas should be logically organized and there should be some sense of continuity or flow from one idea to the next.
- Avoid redundancy.
- Write in gender-neutral terms, except if appropriate (for example, gender-specific services/groups).
- Write in relationship-neutral terms, such as “partner” or “couple.”
- Flesh out and clarify statements and ideas.
- Ensure that subheads reflect the content of the following text.
- Focus on the positive side of content as much as possible.
- Keep the wide audience range in mind.
- Use “softening” or qualifying words, such as “generally,” “may be,” “can be” or “might” to avoid making blanket statements about how people feel or react in different circumstances. See the examples below:

WRONG: “Children **have** difficulties in school when one of their parents deploys.”

BETTER: “Children **may have** difficulties in school when one of their parents deploys.”

Do Not

- Make assumptions.
- Tell people how they feel.
- Tell people what they should/need to/must/ought to/can’t/won’t do.
- Tell people what they always/never do.

Formatting

- “Less is more” — be concise.
- Use bulleted formatting for clarity when appropriate.

Preferred Terms

Preferred	As opposed to
military life	military lifestyle
some or many	most or all
can, may or might	will or are
often or generally	always
tend to	usually
partner, spouse, parent or guardian	husband, wife
families enrolled in EFMP	EFMP families
families with special needs, children with special needs, youth with special needs, students with special education needs	special needs families, exceptional families, or special needs children, kids or youth
provided at no cost to leadership	free
free to service members and families	no cost
Army Community Service	Army Community Services
augment	adding to
military life	military lifestyle

Definitions

Term	Definition
accreditation	Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance developed by American universities and secondary schools. Accreditation involves external validation by a regional accreditation organization and requires documentation of improvement efforts, results and impact on student achievement.
Department of Defense Education Activity	The Department of Defense Education Activity, or DODEA, is one of two federally operated school systems. It is responsible for planning, directing, coordinating and managing prekindergarten through 12 th grade educational programs on behalf of the Defense

Term	Definition
	<p>Department. DODEA is globally positioned and operates 160 accredited schools in eight districts located in 11 foreign countries, seven states, Guam and Puerto Rico. Also known as DODEA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Defense Education Activity–Europe operates 64 schools within three districts throughout Bahrain, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The system serves over 24,000 school-age children of active-duty military and civilian employees. • Department of Defense Education Activity–Pacific operates 45 schools located in Japan, South Korea and Guam that serve more than 21,000 children of service members and eligible DOD civilian personnel families stationed throughout the Pacific theater. • Department of Defense Education Activity–Americas operates 50 schools located in the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast regions of the United States, Puerto Rico and Cuba, serving more than 20,000 school-age children of active-duty military and civilian employees.
district	<p>A district is a subdivision of several designated schools with defined geographic boundaries.</p>
educational services	<p>Educational services are educational curriculum and services reasonably comparable to those normally provided without charge in public schools in the United States.</p>
eligible dependent	<p>An eligible dependent is an individual who either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the child, stepchild, adopted child or ward of a DOD sponsor and is eligible for other command-sponsored benefits such as hospital, commissary, postal service privileges, installation access, etc.; has not completed secondary school; and who will reach their 5th but not 21st birthday by Sept. 1 of the current school year. • Has disabilities and is between 3 and 5 years of age by Sept. 1 of the current school year. This eligible dependent may be enrolled in DOD or non-DOD educational programs until the age of 22.

Term	Definition
Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children	The Defense Department, in collaboration with the National Center for Interstate Compacts and the Council of State Governments, developed the compact to address the educational transitions for military families. Through the compact, all 50 states, Washington, D.C. and the Department of Defense Education Activity work together to provide a consistent set of policies to make starting a new school, joining extracurricular activities and meeting graduation requirements as easy as possible for military-connected students.
local education agency	A local education agency refers to a public board of education or other public authority within a state that maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district or other political subdivision (including a combination of school districts or counties) recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public schools. Both school districts and county offices of education are local education agencies. Some states treat charter schools as local education agencies. Also known as LEA.
Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission	The Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission is a partnership between the Defense Department and state governments that addresses some of the educational challenges transitioning children of military families encounter. The Compact addresses the key issues encountered by military families such as eligibility, enrollment, placement and graduation. Also known as MIC3.
overseas areas	Overseas areas are any areas situated outside the United States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the possessions of the United States, excluding the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and Midway Island.
regional accreditation organization	A regional accreditation organization is an organization approved and certified by the U.S. Department of Education to conduct independent reviews of schools to ensure the quality and consistency of their educational programs.

Term	Definition
school	A school is an organizational unit established to provide primary and secondary education for eligible minor dependents of DOD sponsors.
school liaisons	School liaisons are located at each installation and are the central point of contact for commanders, military families and local school systems on school-related matters for grades pre-K-12. School liaisons advocate, advise and build alliances to help address education concerns, challenges or issues of the Total Force and offer a network to educate and provide information or referral for both military families and school districts. School liaisons help with transition support before and after a PCS and can connect parents to the Exceptional Family Member Program and their special’s special education department, as well as help parents navigate their new school district’s special education program. School liaisons can provide information on school districts and boundaries, assist with transfer of credits and class registration, help locate after-school and extracurricular programs, set up tutoring and youth sponsorship referrals, and help with college, career and military readiness.
space-available	Space-available are pupil accommodations that may be made available in Defense Department schools if it is determined that a school operated by the DOD has adequate staff and other resources to permit the enrollment of space-available students.
space-required	Space-required are pupil accommodations that must be provided by the DOD schools.
special education	Special education is specially designed instruction provided to meet the unique needs of a child with special needs, ages 3 through 21. Special education is one part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act which ensures that all children with special needs have access to a “free appropriate public education” and they have the necessary tools to meet their educational goals. The act governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities, ages birth through 21.

Term	Definition
special programs	Special programs include programs such as gifted or talented, English as a second language, honors, international baccalaureate and Advanced Placement. In some states, these programs may fall under the special education umbrella.