



Key Message

States have a valuable opportunity to facilitate improved local implementation of policies designed to support military-connected children and ensure families are empowered with the knowledge they need by clarifying requirements, enhancing communication efforts and streamlining access to information on state and local education websites.

Analysis

Military families face distinct challenges due to frequent moves and varying educational requirements across states, directly impacting service member focus and readiness. When parents lack awareness of state policies intended to support their children, they're left to navigate complex systems during critical transition periods. This avoidable stress undermines family stability and, ultimately, mission readiness.

Best Practices and Innovative Approaches

Military-connected students bring unique strengths and face distinct challenges as they transition between schools and states. By enhancing both the implementation of supportive education policies and the accessibility of critical information, states have a powerful opportunity to reduce barriers, ease transitions and affirm their commitment to military families.

Policy Implementation

To facilitate effective implementation of Advance Enrollment, states are encouraged to adopt statutory or administrative enhancements that clarify requirements and procedures, such as:

- Outline clear procedural guidance and use of standardized enrollment applications to operationalize the state's advance enrollment provisions.
- Make clear that proof of residency isn't required for school enrollment, course registration and program application (i.e., electronic copies of military orders shall substitute in-person and proof-of-residency requirements until a specified period upon arrival).

According to War Department-sponsored research, "State Implementation of Four Initiatives to Support Military-Connected Students," examining the effectiveness of policies that states have enacted to support military-connected students (or in subsequent actions taken), the following states with existing Advance Enrollment policies have been identified as fully or partially meeting the objectives of this initiative by including clarifying language or mechanisms to operationalize the policy in legislation or agency rules, and/or having accessible information about the policy on state education websites:

Policy implementation:

Alabama*, Arkansas*, Colorado*, Delaware*, Maine, Massachusetts*, Missouri, New Mexico, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wyoming

Information access: Arkansas*, Idaho*, Ohio*

https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/wp-content/uploads/clearinghouse_report_speakmc_initiatives_20240220rev-2.pdf

*Indicates states identified by DSLO as best practice examples for policy implementation and/or information accessibility enhancements



- Explicitly include military-connected students with special education needs in Advance Enrollment provisions. Upon notification of their pending arrival, require that local education agencies facilitate the timely exchange of information and records, leveraging requirements under the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission, or MIC3.
- Require regular training for school administrators and enrollment personnel on military-specific policies, including Advance Enrollment.
- Designate a state point-of-contact, or POC, who can educate enrollment personnel on Advance Enrollment requirements, work with military school liaisons and liaise with local school agencies on behalf of military families.

✓ **Innovative approaches:**

- ✓ **Encourage districts to use the Military Student Identifier to collect and report data on military family usage of Advance Enrollment policies.**
- ✓ **Provide school districts with a statewide directory of military school liaison personnel who can facilitate trainings and liaise with military families.**

Support military children with clear, streamlined Advance Enrollment procedures, including specification that physical presence is not necessary for preliminary enrollment.

EXAMPLES:

MASSACHUSETTS

Senate Bill 3075 (2022)

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/S3075.pdf>

"SECTION 9. Chapter 71 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 6A the following section:-

Section 6B. (a) As used in this section, 'military-connected student', shall mean a student who is an unemancipated person whose parent or guardian is in (i) the active military service of the United States; or (ii) a full-time status during active service with the National Guard of any state.

(b) A military-connected student whose parent or guardian is being relocated to the commonwealth under military orders and is transferred to or is pending transfer to a military installation within the commonwealth shall be deemed a resident pupil of the applicable school district for the purposes of enrollment. A school district shall permit a military-connected student to enroll preliminarily by remote registration without charge and shall not require a parent or guardian of the military-connected student or the student themselves to physically appear at a location within the district to register the student; provided, however, that a parent or guardian shall present evidence of military orders that the parent or guardian will be stationed in the commonwealth during the current or following school year. To enroll



a student, the parent or guardian shall use an address that is: (i) within the school district where the military-connected student is to be enrolled; and (ii): (A) a temporary on-base billeting facility; (B) a purchased or leased home or apartment; or (C) federal government or public-private venture off-base military housing. Proof of residency shall not be required at the time of the remote registration but shall be required within 10 days of the student's attendance in the school district."

ARKANSAS

House Bill 1545 (2025)

<https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Acts/FTPDocument?path=%2FACTS%2F2025R%2FPublic%2F&file=501.pdf&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R>

"(a) (1) Members of the uniformed services shall under § 6-28-105 who wish to enroll their children in public school should, as soon as possible, provide advance notice to public schools regarding the enrollment of a student under this chapter to ensure the best opportunity for a smooth transition for their children.

(b) Upon receipt of official assignment notice or assignment orders, the parent, foster parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of a child, or person standing in loco parentis to a child of a member of the uniformed services may enroll, register, and coordinate education services for his or her child, including without limitation a child with special education needs or a child with a disability, in the public school of his or her choice by:

(1) Determining, in consultation with military and public school district officials, the public school in which he or she prefers to enroll his or her child according to requirements under § 6-18-1909;

(2) Contacting the public school's designated military family education coordinator with any questions or issues raised or information needed by the parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of a child, or person standing in loco parentis to a child; and

(3) Remotely submitting electronically an enrollment application for his or her child that shall include required documentation, including without limitation:

(A) A copy of the official military assignment notice or official assignment orders and military identification credentials of the member of the uniformed services;

(B) The child's unofficial education record and immunization records;

(C) Current coursework for the school in which the student is enrolled if the coursework is not included in the student's unofficial education record;

(D) A copy of the student's individualized education program, family service plan under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq., or plan under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, as applicable; and

(E) A list of any extracurricular activities in which the student participates.

(2)(c) When a public school receives notice and an enrollment application from a military family under subdivision (a)(1) of this section, the public school shall treat the notice as a provisional enrollment and provide the student with materials regarding:



- (1) Provisionally enroll, provide placement for, and enter academic course requests on behalf of the incoming student based on the student's education record provided by his or her family or the sending district;
- (2) Provide the uniformed services family with information either directly or on a Military Family link on the public school's or public-school district's website regarding:
- (A) Academic courses Career-ready pathways and other academic or education programs offered;
- (B) Electives Required academic courses for each curriculum and elective course options;
- (C) Sports School and community-sponsored extracurricular activities, including without limitation individual and team sports, clubs, junior reserve officer training corps opportunities, and Purple Star School program ambassadors; and
- (D) Contact information for the designated military family education coordinator and the Purple Star School program military family education facilitator, if applicable; and
- (E) Other relevant information regarding the public school."

6-28-116, Military family education coordinators

"(a) A Each public school with twenty (20) or more children of military families enrolled as students under this chapter or a public school district with at least three thousand (3,000) enrolled public school students district and open-enrollment public charter school shall:

- (1) Incorporate into the policies of the public school district specific procedures that outline actions to take in support of students who are the children of military families who transition to and from the public school district; and
- (2)(A)(1) Designate in each public school district a military family education coordinator to serve as the primary point of contact for each child of a military family and his or her parent or legal guardian;
- (2) Annually by September 1 provide to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education the name and contact information of the military family education coordinator; and
- (3) Post in a section designated for Military Families on the website of the public school the contact information for the military family education coordinator.

(B)(b) The Each public school military family education coordinator shall:

- (i)(1) Have Possess specialized knowledge regarding the educational needs of children of military families and the obstacles that children of military families face in obtaining an education and unique challenges faced by children of uniformed services families; and
- (ii)(2) Be included in the establishment and adoption of a public school district's and public school's parent and family engagement plan as required under § 6-15-1702; and
- (3) Serve as a navigator for uniformed services families by:
- (A) Connecting the uniformed services families to appropriate public school resources; and
- (B) Connecting families with other uniformed services families in the public school upon request.
- (C) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall supply relevant resources for the orientation and training of public school military family education coordinators under this section."



Explicitly include children with special needs of active-duty military personnel in Advance Enrollment policies.

EXAMPLES:

ALABAMA

Senate Bill 211 (2024)

<https://alison.legislature.state.al.us/files/pdf/SearchableInstruments/2024RS/SB211-int.pdf>

“(b) If the enrolling student is transferring with a Section 504 plan, an individualized family service plan, or an individualized education plan, the local board of education shall take the necessary steps including, but not limited to, the transfer of records and any prior evaluations, the performance of reevaluations, if necessary, and meetings to ensure that comparable services are in place when the child arrives in this state. If a reevaluation is deemed necessary, the reevaluation shall occur within 30 calendar days after the date of arrival, subject to the informed parental consent of the parent or legal guardian as provided by rule of the State Board of Education.”

COLORADO

Senate Bill 25-073 (2025)

https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2025a_073_signed.pdf

“(3) (f) CONSISTENT WITH EXISTING STATE AND FEDERAL LAW AND REGULATIONS, THE CHILD OF AN INBOUND ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY MEMBER WHO HAS AN EXISTING INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 22-20-103, OR AN EXISTING SECTION 504 PLAN, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 22-20-123, IS ELIGIBLE FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT, REMOTE ENROLLMENT AS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTIONS (3)(A) AND (3)(C) OF THIS SECTION, AND GUARANTEED MATRICULATION PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION. THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OR CHARTER SCHOOL WHERE THE STUDENT ENROLLS SHALL ENSURE THAT THE STUDENT RECEIVES THE APPROPRIATE SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS, CONSISTENT WITH THE CHILD’S EXISTING INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM OR SECTION 504 PLAN WITHOUT UNREASONABLE DELAY UPON ENROLLMENT.

(g) EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT AND CHARTER SCHOOL SHALL TAKE REASONABLE STEPS TO NOTIFY INBOUND ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES OF THEIR RIGHTS PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION, INCLUDING PROVIDING INFORMATION ON SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES, TO PREVENT INADVERTENT EXCLUSION AND TO ENSURE INBOUND ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE FULLY INFORMED OF AVAILABLE SUPPORTS.”

DELAWARE

House Bill 173 (2021)

[https://legis.delaware.gov/json/BillDetail/
GenerateHtmlDocumentEngrossment?engrossmentId=24646&docTypeId=6](https://legis.delaware.gov/json/BillDetail/GenerateHtmlDocumentEngrossment?engrossmentId=24646&docTypeId=6)

“§ 202. Free Schools; ages; attendance within school district; nonresidents of Delaware.



(g) For the purposes of this section, a military-connected student who is the dependent of either a person in the active military service of the United States, or in a full-time status during active service with a force of the Delaware national guard, whose parent or guardian is being relocated to the state under military orders and is transferred to or is pending transfer to a military installation within the state, shall be deemed to be a resident for the purposes of enrollment by the receiving local school district or charter school. The local school district or charter school shall permit military-connected students to enroll preliminarily by remote registration without charge and shall not require the parent or guardian of the military-connected student or the student to physically appear at a location within the district to register the student, if the parent or guardian presents evidence of military orders that a parent or guardian will be stationed in this state during the current or following school year. The parent or guardian may use an address within the district of residence where the military-connected student is to be enrolled, the address of a temporary on-base billeting facility, a purchased or leased home or apartment, or federal government or public-private venture off-base military housing. Proof of required residency shall not be required at the time of the remote registration but shall be required within ten days of the student's attendance [...]"

Information Access

To strengthen local implementation of Advance Enrollment provisions and promote seamless transitions for military-connected students, states are encouraged to consider the following actions through statute or administrative policy enhancements:

- Publish and maintain updated information and related resources on Advance Enrollment on a state education webpage dedicated to military families. And require school districts to post this information on their websites and include in enrollment materials.
 - Develop user-friendly online resources that clearly explain Advance Enrollment policies and procedures.
 - Clearly define documentation requirements.
 - Include clear information about the process for transferring IEPs and 504 plans utilizing advance enrollment provisions.

EXAMPLES:

OHIO

Ohio Department of Education and Workforce: Enrollment Options for Students from Active-Duty Military Families

<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Military-Resources/Students-and-Families/Enrolling-New-Students-in-Active-Duty-Military-Fam>



Ohio maintains a comprehensive webpage of resources on the state department of education website, including detailed information for military-connected students on transition resources, military school liaison contact information and a variety of military-specific provisions and programs, such as Advance Enrollment and Open Enrollment.

“Ohio supports military families as they navigate transitions both into and out of the state. On average, active-duty military families change duty stations every two to three years, and military-connected students may change schools six to nine times before graduating.

Schools and districts that service [Wright-Patterson Air Force Base](#), Ohio’s largest military installation, are most impacted by these enrollment flexibilities. Other schools and districts around the state may also be impacted, as these enrollment flexibilities are available to active-duty service members that work at reserve units, as military recruiters, and as Reserve Officer Training Corps instructors.

In Ohio, active-duty military families have two enrollment options to reduce barriers and improve educational options: [...]”

IDAHO

Idaho Department of Education: Supporting Military Families

<https://www.sde.idaho.gov/supporting-military-families/>

Idaho maintains a comprehensive webpage of resources on the state department of education website, including information about all four of the targeted initiatives, to include Advance Enrollment.

“Idaho is dedicated to supporting military families as they move in and out of the state and recognizes military youth may experience education challenges when they move under military orders with the service member. Some education-related barriers may include enrollment in the receiving school, placement in courses, credit transfers, participating in extracurricular activities, and the ability to meet credit requirements to graduate on time.”

ARKANSAS

House Bill 1545 (2025)

<https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Acts/FTPDocument?path=%2FACTS%2F2025R%2FPublic%2F&file=501.pdf&ddBienniumSession=2025%2F2025R>

“(i) The council shall post on its website or post by utilizing another form of public notice, including without limitation social media, information for uniformed services families, including without limitation information regarding:

- (1) The purpose, duties, membership composition, meeting agendas, and meeting minutes of the council;
- (2) Resources to assist uniformed services families with making decisions concerning school choice and educational freedom accounts;



(3) Guidance for advance enrollment;

(4) Contact information for military family education coordinators; and

(5) Purple Star School Program highlights and contact information for military family education facilitators.

(j) The division shall provide administrative staff support to the Chair of the Arkansas Council for Military Children to assist with the achievement of the purpose and the administration of duties of the council."

Conclusion

The best practices and innovative approaches outlined in this document demonstrate that meaningful progress is already underway across the country. States that prioritize clarity, consistency and communication are not only improving educational outcomes for military-connected students – they are also strengthening family stability and contributing to mission readiness.

Continued collaboration between state education agencies, local school districts and the War Department is essential to enable us to collectively build on existing progress and further improve consistency in implementation and awareness of key initiatives designed to support military-connected students. Together, we can ensure that every military-connected student is welcomed, supported and empowered to thrive – no matter where their journey takes them.