





Key Message


Military families can be disadvantaged in school enrollment options for their children due to military-directed moves. States can assist by increasing military-connected students' access to schooling options, allowing them to remain in their current school placement despite a relocation from temporary to permanent housing, and including them within existing enrollment prioritization systems.

Analysis

Due to housing shortages near military installations, military families often experience delays in receiving permanent housing upon a permanent change of station move to a new location. States have enacted changes to education statutes to give military families with school-aged children improved access to interdistrict and intradistrict transfer programs upon initial PCS and related subsequent changes of residence. To reduce barriers when accessing school district open enrollment programs, states can enact the following policies:

 **Military Clause:** This provision increases military family access to interdistrict and intradistrict transfer options by providing automatic eligibility and exempting application deadlines and other requirements to accommodate the timing of military moves or prohibiting districts from denying an application for interdistrict or intradistrict transfers by military children.

 **Placement Stability Provision:** This policy allows a military child to enroll and attend school outside of the zoned area of their temporary lodging/housing based on anticipated permanent residence, or permits them to remain in their current school placement despite a change of residence prior to the end of the school year or prior to graduation, if they are a high school junior or senior.

 **Military Priority Category:** This approach mitigates the lack of access to interdistrict and intradistrict transfer programs caused by capacity limits and application windows by including military students as a priority group within existing open enrollment prioritization systems (such as what is provided for siblings, the children of employees and foster/homeless youth).



Best Practices

1. Arkansas

Provision providing military-connected pupils automatic enrollment in a public school of their choice, the ability to enroll in advance in a public school of choice and various policies and resources providing additional protections and clarifications for military families seeking access to open enrollment

EXAMPLES:

Arkansas Code Annotated (2023), Title 6, Subtitle 2, Chapter 18, Subchapter 19, Section 1909
<https://law.justia.com/codes/arkansas/2023/title-6/subtitle-2/chapter-18/subchapter-19/section-6-18-1909/>

“(a) A child shall be eligible for enrollment in the public school district of his or her choice if he or she is a dependent of a:

- (1)** Uniformed service member in full-time active-duty status;
 - (2)** Surviving spouse of a uniformed service member;
 - (3)** Reserve component uniformed service member during the period six (6) months before until six (6) months after a Title 10, Title 32, or state active duty mobilization and service; or
 - (4)** Uniformed service veteran who is returning to civilian status at the conclusion of the uniformed service veteran’s active duty status.
- (b)** If a student eligible under subsection (a) of this section seeks to attend a school in a nonresident district, the student’s parent, legal guardian, or person standing in loco parentis to the student shall submit an application approved by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education by regular mail, electronic mail, or in person to the student’s nonresident district and resident district, which includes:
- (1)** A copy of the identification card of the student’s parent, legal guardian, or person standing in loco parentis that qualifies the student under this section; and
 - (2)** A copy of the official orders, assignment notification, or notice of mobilization of the student’s parent, legal guardian, or person standing in loco parentis.
- (c)** An application deadline required under this subchapter shall not apply to a school transfer under this section.
- (d)** A student eligible for a school transfer under this section shall be permitted only one (1) school transfer per academic year under this section.
- (e)** The parent, legal guardian, or person standing in loco parentis to a student eligible for a school transfer under this section shall be responsible for the transportation of his or her child to and from a nonresident district.”

**House Bill 1545 (2025)**

<https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Home/FTPDocument?path=%2FACTS%2F2025R%2FPublic%2FACT501.pdf>

“SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-28-108 is amended to read as follows:
6-28-108. Advance enrollment.

(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. [...]

(d) A public school:

(A)(1) Shall, in determining the acceptance of a student's enrollment in the public school, consider the:

(A) The student's enrollment application date and the anticipated date of enrollment of a the student under subdivision (a)(1) subsection (a) of this section in light of;

(i)(B) Class sizes;

(ii)(C) Course prerequisites or conflicts; and

(D) The availability of elective courses;

(B)(2) (A) May preregister a student in anticipation of the student's enrollment under subdivision (a)(1) of this section; and Shall not deny a student enrollment in the public school or the public school district under this section unless there is a lack of capacity.



(B) A lack of capacity may be claimed by a public school district only if:

(i) The public school district has reached the maximum student-to-teacher ratio allowed under federal law, state law, the Standards for Accreditation for Public Schools and School Districts, state rules, or other applicable federal regulations; and

(ii) The claim of lack of capacity is timely and consistent with state and federal law;

C(3) May seek waivers from the State Board of Education to accommodate a student under this section, including without limitation required class ratios. Shall not discriminate on the basis of gender, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, military family status, or disability;

(4) Notify a prospective student's family in writing regarding whether the student's enrollment has been accepted or rejected within fifteen (15) calendar days of receiving the student's enrollment application and supporting documentation; and

(5) As soon as practicable, request that a sending district provide a student's official education record as specified by § 6-28-107 to confirm the student's provisional enrollment, placement, and course preregistration conditions."

2. Connecticut

Provision amending existing Advance Enrollment policy, allowing military-connected children to remain in their school district for the duration of the school year, even if their parent relocates due to military orders (Any child in grade eleven, may continue for one additional school year to graduate from that district.)

EXAMPLE:

House Bill 6442 (2025)

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2025/FC/PDF/2025HB-06442-R000820-FC.PDF>

"(a) Each local or regional board of education shall furnish, by transportation or otherwise, school accommodations so that each child five years of age and over and under twenty-one years of age who is not a graduate of a high school or technical education and career school may attend public school, except as provided in section 10-233c and subsection (d) of section 10-233d. For purposes of establishing the residency of a child of a member of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, and who is seeking enrollment in a school under the jurisdiction of a local or regional board of education for a town in which such child is not yet a resident, such board shall accept the military orders directing such member to the state or any other documents from the armed forces indicating the transfer of such member to the state as proof of residency. If a child of a member of the armed forces is enrolled in a school under the jurisdiction of a local or regional board of education for a town, and such member has received military orders directing such member from such town or any other documents from the armed forces indicating a change of residency from such town during the school year, such child may continue to be enrolled in such school until the end of the school year while such member remains a member of the armed forces, except that any such child in grade eleven may continue to be enrolled in such school for an additional school year while such member remains a member of the armed forces."



3. North Carolina

Provision amending existing Advance Enrollment policy, allowing military-connected children to enroll and attend school in the school district of anticipated domicile for a period of one year following a relocation due to military orders (Any child who is a high school junior or senior may enroll and attend school in the school district of their anticipated domicile through high school graduation despite any later changes in domicile.)

EXAMPLE:

Senate Bill 118 (2025)

<https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2025/Bills/Senate/PDF/S118v5.pdf>

“(a9) A student who is not a domiciliary of a local school administrative unit shall be permitted to register to enroll in the public schools of that unit by remote means, including electronic means, prior to commencement of the student’s residency in the local school administrative unit if all of the following apply:

(1) A parent or legal guardian is (i) on active military duty and is transferred or pending transfer pursuant to an official military order to a military installation or reservation in the State or (ii) will be separating from active military duty within a 12-month period.

(2) Upon request by the local school administrative unit where the student seeks to register to enroll, a parent or legal guardian provides a copy of (i) the official military order transferring to a military installation or reservation located in the State, (ii) the official separation orders, or (iii) an official military document showing the anticipated date of separation or date of projected Permanent Change of Station to the State.

(3) A parent or legal guardian completes and submits the local school administrative unit’s required enrollment forms and documentation, except that other than proof of residency and documentation related to disciplinary actions pursuant to G.S. 115C-366(a4) shall not be required until the student transfers into the local school administrative unit, at which time they shall be required prior to commencing attendance: G.S. 115C-366(a4).

(4) A parent or legal guardian submits proof of residency and documentation related to the disciplinary actions pursuant to G.S. 115C-366(a4) upon the child commencing attendance. If the proof of residency has not yet become available because the parent or legal guardian and child are residing in temporary housing, the local school administrative unit shall do the following:

a. Allow the child to enroll and begin attending school in that unit of anticipated domicile for a period of up to one year (i) from the parent or legal guardian’s reporting-for-duty date, separation date from active military duty, or anticipated separation date from active military duty or (ii) through the end of the school year before being considered a resident of another local school administrative unit.

b. Allow a child who is a high school junior or senior to enroll and begin attending school in that unit of anticipated domicile through high school graduation.”



4. Arizona ▲

Provision adding children of members of the armed forces who are on active duty or killed in the line of duty to the existing prioritization system for open enrollment in public schools, to include charter schools

EXAMPLES:

House Bill 2311 (2024), Arizona Revised Statutes, Section 15-184

<https://www.azleg.gov/ars/15/00184.htm>

“15-184. Charter schools; admissions requirements; parental classroom visits

A. A charter school shall enroll all eligible pupils who submit a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level or building.

B. A charter school shall give enrollment preference to pupils who are returning to the charter school in the second or any subsequent year of its operation and to siblings of pupils who are already enrolled in the charter school.

C. A charter school may give enrollment preference to children who are in foster care or meet the definition of unaccompanied youth prescribed in the McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act (42 United States Code section 11434a).

D. A charter school may give enrollment preference to and reserve capacity for pupils who either:

1. Are children, grandchildren or legal wards of any of the following:

(a) Employees of the school.

(b) Employees of the charter holder.

(c) Members of the governing body of the school.

(d) Directors, officers, partners or board members of the charter holder.

2. Attended another charter school or are the siblings of that pupil if the charter school previously attended by the pupil has the identical charter holder, board and governing board membership as the enrolling charter school or is managed by the same educational management organization, charter management organization or educational service provider as determined by the charter authorizer.

3. Are children of a member of the armed forces of the United States who either is on active duty or was killed in the line of duty.”

House Bill 2311, 2024, Arizona Revised Statutes, Section 15-816.01

<https://www.azleg.gov/ars/15/00816-01.htm>

“B. A school district shall enroll at any time any resident pupil who applies for enrollment to the school district pursuant to this section. A school district shall give enrollment preference to and reserve capacity for all of the following:

1. Resident pupils.

2. Pupils returning to the school from the prior year.

3. Siblings of pupils already enrolled.



C. A school district may give enrollment preference to children who:

1. Are in foster care.
2. Meet the definition of unaccompanied youth prescribed in the McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act (P.L. 100-77; 101 Stat. 482; 42 United States Code section 11434a).
3. Attend a school that is closing.
4. Are children of a member of the armed forces of the United States who either is on active duty or was killed in the line of duty."

5. California

Provisions specific to military pupils that increase access to open enrollment policies and policies providing placement stability through subsequent moves from temporary to permanent housing following a PCS

EXAMPLES:

 **Assembly Bill 306 (2015), California Education Code, Title 2, Division 4, Part 27, Chapter 2, Section 48307**

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=EDC§ionNum=48307

"(g) Notwithstanding any other provision of this article, a school district of residence shall not prohibit the transfer of a pupil who is a child of an active military duty parent."

 **Assembly Bill 208 (2005), California Education Code, Title 2, Division 4, Part 27, Chapter 2, Section 48308**

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=48308.&nodeTreePath=2.3.3.2.7&lawCode=EDC

"(a) (1) An application requesting a transfer pursuant to this article shall be submitted by the parent of a pupil to the school district of choice before January 1 of the school year preceding the school year for which the pupil is requesting to be transferred. This application deadline may be waived upon agreement of the school district of residence of the pupil and the school district of choice.

(2) The application deadline specified in paragraph (1) does not apply to an application requesting a transfer if the parent of the pupil, with whom the pupil resides, is enlisted in the military and was relocated by the military less than 90 days before submitting the application.

(b) The application may be submitted on a form provided for this purpose by the department and may request enrollment of the pupil in a specific school or program of the district of choice."



Assembly Bill 2949 (2019), California Education Code, Title 2, Division 4, Part 27, Chapter 2, Section 48204.6

https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=48204.6&nodeTreePath=2.3.3.2.1&lawCode=EDC

“(b) Notwithstanding Section 48200, the local educational agency serving a pupil who is a child of a military family shall do either of the following:

- (1) Allow the pupil to continue his or her education in the school of origin, regardless of any change of residence of the military family during that school year, for the duration of the pupil’s status as a child of a military family.
- (2) For a pupil whose status changes due to the end of military service of his or her parent during a school year, comply with either of the following, as applicable:
 - (A) If the pupil is enrolled in kindergarten or any of grades 1 through 8, inclusive, allow the pupil to continue his or her education in the school of origin for the duration of the school year.
 - (B) If the child is enrolled in high school, allow the pupil to continue his or her education in the school of origin through graduation.”

6. Florida

Ensures placement stability through subsequent moves following a PCS, provides preferential consideration for open enrollment, and allows military-connected students to participate in a sport in a different school despite a transfer

EXAMPLES:

Senate Bill 672 (2016), Title XLVIII, Chapter 1002, Section 31
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2024/1002.31>

“1002.31 Controlled open enrollment; public school parental choice.– [...]

(f) For purposes of continuity of educational choice, a student who transfers pursuant to this section may remain at the school chosen by the parent until the student completes the highest grade level at the school.”

Senate Bill 662 (2020), Title XLVIII, Chapter 1003, Section 05
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2024/1003.05>

“1003.05 Assistance to transitioning students from military families. – [...]

(4) A student whose parent is transferred or is pending transfer to a military installation within the state while on active military duty pursuant to an official military order shall be considered a resident of the school district for purposes of enrollment when the order is submitted to the school district and shall be provided preferential treatment in the controlled open enrollment process of the school district pursuant to s. [1002.31](#). [...]



▲ **House Bill 7029 (2016), Title XLVIII, Chapter 1002, Section 31**
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2024/1002.31>

“1002.31 Controlled open enrollment; public school parental choice.– [...]

(c) Each district school board must provide preferential treatment in its controlled open enrollment process to all of the following:

1. Dependent children of active duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders.
2. Children who have been relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone.
3. Children who move due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.
4. Students residing in the school district.”

House Bill 7029 (2016), Title XLVII, Chapter 1002, Section 31
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2024/1002.31>

“1002.31 Controlled open enrollment; public school parental choice .– [...]

(b) A student may not participate in a sport if the student participated in that same sport at another school during that school year, unless the student meets one of the following criteria:

1. Dependent children of active duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders.
2. Children who have been relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone.
3. Children who move due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.
4. Authorized for good cause in district or charter school policy.”

7. Kentucky 🍷🍷

Ensures placement stability through subsequent moves from temporary to permanent housing following a PCS

EXAMPLE:

House Bill 266 (2020), Kentucky Revised Statutes, Chapter 159, Section.075
<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/statutes/statute.aspx?id=55087>

“(5) To accommodate for temporary housing, if a child utilizes this section to enroll in a district, but the residence identified in subsection (3) of this section has not yet become available, then the district shall allow the child to enroll and begin attending the district regardless of the child’s temporary residence and subsequently be included in the district’s calculation of average daily attendance under KRS 157.320, for a period of up to one (1) year from the parent’s or guardian’s reporting-for-duty date or separation date before being considered a resident of another district.”



8. Utah ▲ ●●

Ensures placement stability through subsequent moves from temporary to permanent housing following a PCS and includes military pupils as a category in its existing priority system

EXAMPLES:

Senate Bill 233 (2022), Utah Code, Title 53G, Chapter 6, Part 4, Section 402

<https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53G/Chapter6/53G-6-S402.html>

▲ “(1) Each local school board is responsible for providing educational services consistent with Utah state law and rules of the state board for each student who resides in the district and, as provided in this section through Section [53G-6-407](#) and to the extent reasonably feasible, for any student who resides in another district in the state and desires to attend a school in the district, giving priority to a child of a military service member or a child of a DOD civilian.

●● (6) An enrolled nonresident student shall be permitted to remain enrolled in a school, subject to the same rules and standards as resident students, without renewed applications in subsequent years unless one of the following occurs:

- (a) the student graduates;
- (b) the student is no longer a Utah resident;
- (c) the student is suspended or expelled from school;
- (d) except for a student described in Subsection (6)(e), the district determines that enrollment within the school will exceed the school's open enrollment threshold;
- (e) for a child of a military service member or a child of a DOD civilian who moves from temporary to permanent housing outside of the relevant school district boundaries following a permanent change of station:
 - (i) in kindergarten through grade 10, the student completes the current school year; or
 - (ii) in grades 11 and 12, the student graduates.”