



Key Message

Military families homeschool their children at nearly twice the rate of civilian families and face unique challenges associated with military life. State policies that streamline homeschool requirements, expand access to educational resources such as extracurricular activities and sports, and clarify participation requirements for Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps, or JROTC, can contribute to greater stability for military families, which supports retention efforts.

Discussion Points

- Military families who choose to homeschool face the challenge of adapting to the legal landscape at each new duty station – often with vastly different oversight requirements. These frequent transitions demand proactive learning, strategic planning and swift compliance with unfamiliar regulations, ranging from no supervision to highly structured mandates involving curriculum approvals and quarterly reporting.
- Military families must adapt quickly to new state homeschooling regulations during PCS moves, which can result in educational disruptions that may impact their children's learning continuity and overall well-being. These stressors affect not only family stability, but also a service member's ability to stay mission ready. A clear, portable homeschooling policy would reduce these unnecessary burdens, enabling military parents to focus on their duties with greater confidence and peace of mind – ultimately strengthening operational effectiveness and retention across the force.
- The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children includes many provisions that ease enrollment challenges for military-connected students. However, since the compact does not apply to homeschool programs, there is currently no singular mechanism outside of state-specific adoption of identified best practices to assist military homeschool families transferring between states.



Twenty states allow homeschool students full access to interscholastic activities. An additional five states permit participation with local district approval, while five others require part-time or dual enrollment. In contrast, twenty-one states restrict access by requiring full-time enrollment or “bona fide” student status, effectively barring homeschoolers from participating.



- A 2017 federal 50-state review (<https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/about/its/initiatives/non-public-education/files/homeschool-comparison-chart.pdf>) categorizes homeschool regulations by application requirements, state assessment access, evaluation requirements, curricular public services access and extracurricular activity participation. The Military Homeschoolers Association (<https://militaryhomeschoolers.org/>) has identified unique challenges, including regulatory compliance during frequent moves and a lack of credit transfer mechanisms.
- According to 10 U.S. Code, Section 2031 (f)(1) (<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title10-section2031&num=0&edition=prelim>), public high schools with JROTC programs are required to allow eligible homeschool students to participate. States can ensure that information about this requirement is easily accessible and shared with local school districts.
- Extracurricular activities – including music, athletics and interscholastic events – provide the social connections and competitive opportunities that help military children build resilience and adapt to new communities with each move. However, because most interscholastic activities are governed by an external state association, variances between states are frequent in terms of access.
 - Nineteen states allow full interscholastic access for homeschool students: Arizona, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont and Wyoming.
 - Five states allow participation with local district approval: Massachusetts, North Dakota, New Jersey, Rhode Island and South Dakota.
 - Five states require part-time or dual enrollment for homeschool students: Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska and Washington.
 - Twenty-one states bar homeschoolers from interscholastic activities by requiring full-time enrollment or “bona fide” student status: Alabama, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.
- Under 34 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 300.131 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300/subpart-B/subject-group-ECFR3556f7ac2fe0a92>), local education agencies must identify and evaluate children with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private schools within the district. They are also required to develop a services plan for each eligible student. Federal funds must be used proportionately for these students, and state or local funds may supplement – but not replace – this allocation.
 - Some states, such as Arkansas and Massachusetts, have extended provisions contained within state policies implementing federal law to students with disabilities who are homeschooled by explicitly including them in the definition of privately educated students.



Recommended state actions

States can help facilitate greater stability for military families who homeschool their children by considering the following policy changes or information enhancements:

- Full inclusion in interscholastic activities: Allow homeschooled students to participate in public school extracurricular activities and sports.
- Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps access: Clarify that pursuant to federal law, homeschool children are required to have access to JROTC programs. Ensure local education agencies provide clear and accessible guidance to schools and information for parents.
- Compliance grace periods for relocating families: When applicable, provide a compliance grace period for relocating military families that provides reasonable time for them to meet new state homeschool requirements without disrupting their children's education. A 30-day window prevents families from falling into immediate noncompliance during a PCS move.

Innovative state approaches

States may want to consider the following creative and pioneering solutions to assist families who have chosen homeschooling as the best educational choice for their children. Although these approaches may not be feasible for all states or local education agencies, due to funding or policy frameworks, they provide additional opportunities for states to demonstrate their commitment to supporting all students, regardless of schooling model.

- Parent-issued diploma recognition: Some states have created pathways to recognize parent-issued homeschool diplomas for all official state purposes, including driver's licenses and employment. This eliminates bureaucratic barriers that can complicate military teens' transitions during frequent relocations.
- School facilities and equipment access: Require local education agencies to provide homeschooled students after-hours access to available auxiliary student services and facilities, such as school libraries, when requested and on a space-available basis.
- Special education support: Extend state and federal provisions that require private school students to have access to special education and related services to homeschooled students. Specify that homeschooled children are entitled to receive special education services that are included within their individualized education program, Section 504 plan, or individualized family service plan – such as speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, counseling, transportation and assistive technology services.