



VIRTUAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

States can provide military students with technology-based educational opportunities (virtual schools) to gain knowledge and skills necessary to succeed when confronted with the challenges of transitioning between duty stations.

KEY MESSAGE:

Military families seek continuity and stability for their children's education. Virtual schools can provide a bridge for military children transitioning between school districts where they may no longer have access to specific curricula. Eligible military children could participate without a residence requirement if moving to/from the school within impacted states and for the gaining school, to accept credits taken through the virtual program.



DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Military service members are routinely reassigned to new duty stations on a three to four-year rotation, most often in the summer. Children need access to courses while transferring between duty stations to alleviate burdensome schedules when students are required to make up classes in order to graduate without delay.
- When children of military families move midterm, as a result of their parents' service, they are often disadvantaged due to missed deadlines for course completion or registration. A child could anticipate a midterm move and register for virtual classes in the receiving state for the transition semester.
- While the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children provides opportunities for assistance during transition, it does not address virtual school support which has been made more readily available after the compact was enacted.
- Many states have state-governed virtual school systems that present opportunities to improve transition education assistance. Often, military families transferring on official military Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders are not eligible to register in courses, until they are physically located within district boundaries.
- States may consider modifying eligibility criteria to enable military children to participate in virtual school programs while stationed in another state.
 - o If coursework is required during the transition, parents can enroll the children in the receiving state virtual school network so that credits will transfer to any district near the assigned location.
 - o If a specific housing location has not been identified, children can enroll in virtual schools, receiving a sense of comfort that their credits will transfer and they will not incur a setback in education.

About 185 thousand military children move between schools annually. Of these, a third move during the school year and either lose education opportunities or receiving incomplete grades. Consequently, they may have to shift the normal course of study to attend summer school or add extra classes to a full curriculum, in order to graduate with their peers.