



ASSIGN AN IDENTIFIER FOR MILITARY CHILDREN IN EDUCATION DATA SYSTEMS

Although military children experience educational challenges as a result of their parents' military service, there is no method of tracking their attendance and academic progress in public schools.

KEY MESSAGE: By identifying military children and providing data on their attendance and educational outcomes, states can assist schools and districts by providing access to data to help inform policy and program decisions for this unique student population. In addition, DoD will benefit from this data in developing policy and military child education initiatives.



DISCUSSION POINTS:

- An identifier helps gathering where military-connected students attend school, their academic performance (and over time) in reading, math and science, and graduation rates. It would not be intended to create an “accountable subgroup,” but rather establish a report-only requirement in the same manner as migrant and homeless children.
- Data would be available to schools and districts as they review academic programs and school policy and would be available, upon request, by DoD or researchers to track academic and educational progress:
 - Awareness at the school and classroom level of students that might be affected by the deployment/service of a parent, or by frequent moves. For example, information on attendance can help determine whether military children are absent more often during the deployment of military parents. Data on academic progress and discipline could help schools determine the need for additional counseling services during deployments or upon enrollment after a recent move.
 - Facilitate data-driven decisions to improve distribution of DoD and local resources, interventions and other support to gain maximum impact for schools and students in need.
- Adding a field in an existing student information system should cause minimal additional cost. Many states are already collecting data on a number of subgroups or are in the process of setting up a longitudinal, statewide data system, and adding one or two more data entry points should not be a significant burden. Additionally, 97% of the school districts (with military students) have existing information systems that could be modified to include a military identifier.
- Ideally, the data collected can be structured so as to allow disaggregation of children associated with Active Duty service members and those in the Guard and Reserve.
- A Military Student Identifier is broadly supported, and endorsed by numerous school and military associations, including the American Association of School Administrators, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Military Family Association, Military Officers Association of America, Blue Star Families, National Guard Association of the United States, AUSA, America’s Promise Alliance, and the Military Child Education Coalition.

Apart from recent initiatives in a few states, only the U.S. Department of Education (ED) Impact Aid Program collects data on the number of military-connected students by school districts (not included is information on specific schools attended or academic performance of military connected students). In 2011, the Government Accountability Office reported that: “There is no data available on these [military-connected] students that could be used to assess the academic achievement or educational outcomes, or determine where funding needs are the greatest.”