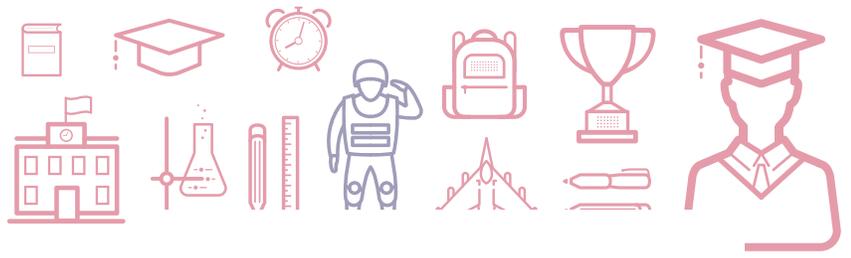


# EDUCATION REVOLUTION



**Their  
Right.  
Our Fight.**  
What You  
Need to  
Know  
About  
Military  
Kids in  
Your  
Schools.





# MILITARY LIFE is hard enough. **SCHOOL** SHOULDN'T HAVE TO BE.

.....

JOIN THE  
CONVERSATION.

.....

 @military\_family

 facebook.com/militaryfamily

**#BattleForBetterStandards**

[www.MilitaryFamily.org/  
EducationRevolution](http://www.MilitaryFamily.org/EducationRevolution)

**Military kids need your help.  
Join the Education Revolution.**

Let us connect you with military families in your community and education experts who specialize in understanding the issues affecting military kids.

**Contact us.**

National Military Family Association  
3601 Eisenhower Avenue, Suite 425  
Alexandria, Virginia 22304  
703.931.6632

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# Why an Education Revolution?

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## **Why an Education Revolution?**

*There are more than 1.6 million military kids in the United States. Of those, 933,000 are school-aged children, ages 6–18. Many are affected by uneven and inconsistent academic standards.*

While military families may look like other families in your community, they're not.

**The average military child changes schools nine times between kindergarten and graduation.**

These military-required moves uproot children from their schools and communities, requiring young children to contend with new school districts and inconsistent academic standards on a regular basis. Varying standards create gaps in learning, inconsistent instruction, and academic disadvantages with permanent impact.

Uneven education standards across the country hurt many children—especially our nation's military children who are put at a severe disadvantage all because their mom or dad signed up to protect our country.

Join us in our Education Revolution, and help ensure military children—and all children—have access to high, consistent education standards whether they're in your district or across state lines.

**Military kids' education shouldn't suffer because of their parent's call to serve.**

# Interstate Compact

## Interstate Compact Quick Facts:

### THE COMPACT PROTECTS MILITARY CHILDREN WHO



Are enrolled in K-12 in a public school and...

Have a parent on active duty, including activated Guard and Reservists or...



Are the children of fallen, medically retired, or discharged service members, for one year following the service member's death, retirement, or discharge.

### THE COMPACT IS RECOGNIZED IN



### THE COMPACT WILL HELP MILITARY KIDS WITH



Enrollment  
Placement  
Attendance  
Eligibility  
Graduation

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (the Compact) is an agreement among all 50 states and the District of Columbia to provide uniform treatment for military children enrolling in new school districts. It was specifically designed to eliminate some of the roadblocks military kids face transitioning to new schools.

The purpose of the Compact is to make sure military kids are immediately enrolled in their new school after a move, placed in the appropriate academic program, and able to graduate on time.

## How does the Compact work?

The Compact establishes a consistent set of rules applicable to military children in all public school districts. This comprehensive approach provides consistency for military kids as they transition in and out of districts with varied policies.

The Compact is maintained by the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3). Each state appoints a representative to serve on the MIC3 as that state's Compact Commissioner. Working with state councils, Compact Commissioners are responsible for raising awareness of the Compact in local school districts, coordinating with local military officials to address common transition-related issues, and assisting military families with questions about the Compact.

## Who is the Compact Commissioner in your state?

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

The Interstate Compact requires states to establish a council which, along with the state Compact Commissioner, is responsible for raising awareness about the Compact and ensuring its provisions are implemented across the state. Each state council should include a military liaison (identified by the Department of Defense) as well as state and local education officials.

State councils are a great mechanism to enhance understanding between military installations and the education community and can effectively address transition issues unique to their state. Many states have an active state council tasked with developing policy concerning operations and procedures of the Compact within the state, and who are also responsible with informing school districts about the terms of the Compact. These councils have to meet regularly to be effective, but too often, that doesn't happen.

The Compact has created positive and impacting procedures—like those that govern transfer of records, kindergarten and first grade entrance ages, course sequencing, entrance and exit testing, and graduation requirements, among others—that smooth the school transition for thousands of military children.

### **But there's a problem.**

Not all school districts, administrators, and teachers are familiar with the Compact and its requirements.

## *How you can help.*

1. Get in touch with your state Commissioner and ask how you can ensure the Compact is being followed by all the school districts in your state.
2. Encourage your state Commissioner to schedule regular state council meetings – and plan to attend one. State council meetings are an ideal forum to raise issues affecting military families among state-level education officials and foster greater collaboration among those officials and the military in your state.
3. Encourage your state Board of Education and local school districts to create military-specific pages on their websites to welcome new military families, help them understand the standards in your state, guide them on the appropriate steps to take as they enroll their child, and provide direct access to resources.
4. Ensure schools have funding to establish programs to support military students, such as student ambassadors, dedicated counselors, or transition centers to welcome new military families.

# Uneven and Inconsistent Standards

## ***Inconsistent Standards Leaves Kid Stuck Relearning Material***

“At Camp Pendleton, our daughter attends San Onofre School, part of the Fallbrook Union school district of California public schools. We were told it had been recognized as a distinguished school and one of the best schools on base,” said Nicole Burns, a Marine Corps spouse.

After the family received military orders from Lejeune to Pendleton, Nicole noticed that all the work her daughter brought home from school was focused on lessons she had done a full year ago. She was assured by the teacher that her daughter would receive additional, more challenging work, but after more than six months at the school, she has yet to see that happen.

“Our daughter has become bored in school, and we are looking into other outlets in which she can have a true liberal arts education, which unfortunately can be high out-of-pocket costs. I know that many of the issues here in the public school are likely due to funding, but as a family who would have never willingly chosen to live in this school district, it’s frustrating.”

**—Nicole Burns**

Though the Interstate Compact aims to smooth school transitions for military families, roadblocks still exist. One challenge is academic standards that vary from state to state. While most states use Common Core standards, some states do not. Furthermore, varying state assessments make it hard for parents to know which schools in their new districts are helping students succeed and which are falling short.

Across all states, school districts vary in their success meeting their state’s benchmark standards.

**Uneven and inconsistent standards are hurting our military children.**

### ***Military-connected students in your state will...***



Experience learning gaps that hinder their educational success.



Struggle emotionally when they’re behind in the classroom because they’re catching up and learning new material at the same time.



Suffer academically and emotionally when moving from a high-standards district to one with lower standards.

## FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

Military families struggle to make sure their child isn't lost in the shuffle and that their educational needs are met. One way for school districts to ensure they're meeting the needs of their military families is with the Military Student Identifier. With the creation of the Every Student Succeeds Act, military-connected students are now recognized as a distinct subgroup. Once fully implemented, the Military Student Identifier (MSI) will provide educators and policymakers with valuable data about military students' academic outcomes, enabling school officials to create programs and policies to better meet their needs.

Families are learning to advocate for their child using resources available, **but measurable and impactful change starts with you.**

### *How you can help.*

1. Ensure your state's academic standards are high and lead to college and career readiness.
2. Provide resources so schools — especially those serving military kids — can help students meet your state's standards.
3. Work to adopt clear, public assessments of your state's schools so parents and administrators know which schools are succeeding and which are falling short.
4. Work with school districts in your state to implement the Military Student Identifier, then use that data to create policies and programs to support military-connected kids.



After moving from a school in Florida where their daughter was excelling and had a wonderful group of friends, 11-year-old Chloe was struggling in 5th grade in Washington state. She's a soft-spoken girl who managed to settle in to another new school, made new friends again, and finish the school year—but she didn't finish strong. Their studious daughter was struggling. The Duenas Family faced a big decision: should they stay the course knowing their daughter would be with her newly formed friends, but struggling academically or should they hold her back to make sure she was mastering the skills she needed to succeed?

Mom, KC Duenas, a Navy service member, explained, "If we would have sent her to 6th grade to follow the linear path, she would've been in double math classes, double reading classes... we decided to hold her back in 5th grade because we didn't want to see her struggle even more than she had."

# Emotional Struggles

Making friends in a new school is tough, and losing those hard-won friends can be devastating. This pattern leaves many military kids feeling isolated and misunderstood. Between the stress of deployments and military training and the pain of being the new kid yet again, military kids' emotional struggles impact their learning.

## *From Good to Bad: How Stressful Military Moves to New Schools Hurt Military Children*



"I'm excited to see what my new school is like!"

*Most resilient military kids embrace the excitement during the first few weeks at a new school.*



"Everyone already has friends, I'll never fit in here."

*Some may notice it's difficult to make friends and fit in with peers because they're new.*



"This new school is awful. I miss my friends. I hate it here."

*Parents begin seeing a change in their student's behavior. Elementary-aged kids may act out. Parents of older children and teens may see grades slipping and decreased communication at home.*



"I hate myself. No one understands me. I must be stupid."

*Emotions like anger and frustration surface and inner dialogue shifts to negative self-talk.*



**The average military child changes schools**

**NINE TIMES**

**between kindergarten and graduation.**

## *How you can help.*

1. Encourage school districts to create and implement programs and policies that support military kids emotionally.
2. Provide access to school counselors who are familiar with the mobile military lifestyle and its impact on children.
3. Encourage school districts to implement continuing education for any counselor who is not familiar with the military community and circumstances faced by the average military child.

## ***Standards Discrepancy Makes It Hard for Military Kids, Especially Those with Individualized Education Program (IEPs)***

“The lack of consistency across state lines is frustrating to all four of our children,” said Air Force spouse Elizabeth Woodley. For two of Elizabeth’s children, the struggle is pronounced: they have IEP’s, and she says she spends the first three months at a new school just getting her children’s basic needs met.

“It feels like preparing for battle. Getting files in order and readying your verbal comebacks for anything they might say that sounds like less than what you think your child needs, less than what another state already established your child needs, yes, going through stress and hoops again because we crossed state lines.”

“We’ve had the pleasure of seeing a cross section of people, communities and cultures that all come together to create our one nation,” she said. “And the uniqueness of each region is amazing, but children throughout the nation are not being provided equal opportunities to adequate testing and standards. This has a huge impact on military children who literally cross the nation bouncing from school to school.”

—***Elizabeth Woodley***

## ***Inconsistent Standards, Kid Gets Held Back***

“We chose to live in Daphne, Alabama because the schools were rated high, the houses were nice and it seemed safe,” Jasmine Dupont said. After a stint in Florida and then three years in Oregon, the Duponts PCS’d with the Coast Guard to Alabama. For their son, the problems at school started almost immediately. “We realized quickly that he was lacking in reading, spelling, and math. We worked insanely hard that year.”

For all of third and fourth grades, the Duponts devoted themselves to bringing their son up to the standards expected of him in Alabama. They reached out to the teacher repeatedly to check in and figure out what they could do to help their son succeed, but two days before the end of the school year, they learned their son had failed fourth grade.

“He was left behind, simply stated. All of our help, fighting with the school, trying to stay up to date with the teachers did not help. It was the most helpless feeling knowing that we had failed him and the schools had failed him.”

“Nothing made me angrier than having my son judged off a test score,” Jasmine said. “Nothing made me angrier than hearing my son say “I’m just not good enough” when we broke the news that he wouldn’t be in 5th grade with his friends.”

“There is nothing standard about our children.”

—***Jasmine Dupont***

***Moving was difficult enough as it is, but the school telling her that her AP courses wouldn’t be figured into her GPA was so frustrating. It wasn’t our daughter’s fault we moved to this location.***

# Helping High Schoolers

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## ***High School Student Deals With Transfer Issues Affecting College***

“When I got orders to PCS to a command job with a late May change of command, we found out Howard County, Maryland schools have a policy that prohibits students from taking final exams early—no exceptions,” said Mary O’Brien Simmons, who is in the Air Force. Her daughter, Kelly, was a junior, and despite moving on orders, her Maryland school wasn’t willing to make special accommodations for their daughter to take her final exams and complete her school year.

“When I went over [the principal’s] head, the “compromise” was to have her take the exams in a hotel room three weeks after we moved and she had turned in all of her books,” Mary said. “They wouldn’t provide a transcript to enroll her in Texas schools for her senior year until the finals were graded.”

Once they settled into school in Texas, the Simmons family discovered that there were still more obstacles ahead of them. “The new Texas school transcribed her Maryland transcript to make it look like she attended school there all four years, changing Honors classes they didn’t offer to the “closest thing.”

Unfortunately, the “closest thing” didn’t accurately depict her daughter’s coursework and academic success.

“I didn’t realize how bad it was until we were halfway through submitting college applications,” Mary said. “Military kids deserve better!”

—**Mary O’Brien Simmons**

During the teenage years, friendships are crucial, clubs and sports are important, and school transitions become tougher than ever. The issues faced by military-connected high school students are some of the most complex. At a minimum, they’re trying to graduate on time. But mostly, they’re looking to prepare for college or a financially secure job—and their grades and extracurricular activities matter.

## **Graduation**

When credits don’t transfer to a new school, students may have to retake classes, tests and extra courses to stay on track. Parents of high schoolers have some protection under the Compact—schools can waive graduation requirements in order to allow the senior to graduate on time. But occasionally, a high school is unable or unwilling to waive a requirement.

Students in academically demanding environments, like Advanced Placement classes and International Baccalaureate® programs, have their own obstacles. The academic focus areas are different, and despite a student’s work ethic and study habits, it’s not easy to move from one to the other. They may have to take classes below their academic level in their new school or their rigorous study of a certain subject may not be applicable in the new school’s program—leaving them playing catch-up once again. All of this can affect their graduation date.

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***“Our children don’t have a fighting chance at a **normal education** bouncing from one location to another.”***

## FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

### Extracurricular Activities

From life learning to college applications, extracurriculars play a huge role in the lives of high school students. High schoolers who participate in extracurricular activities have an additional set of hoops to jump through when they transition to a new school. Some teens have no choice when a military move takes them across the country in the middle of a school year. They miss tryouts for various clubs and teams, which is not only emotionally draining but also detrimental to a student's chances of being recruited by colleges for specific programs, and scholarships.

### *How you can help.*

1. Encourage districts to adopt policies, like advanced enrollment, that allow students to sign up for courses and programs before a move to smooth transition.
2. Remove barriers that prevent military kids from participating in school-sponsored extracurriculars by extending tryout dates and waiving residency requirements when students transfer due to a military-ordered move.



The Krismans, an active duty Navy family living in Gig Harbor, Washington, know how difficult moving can be on their high schooler. Their daughter, who is 14 years old, is quiet and hasn't coped well with the changes that military life brings. Mom Kelly says the whole family revolves around how her daughter is doing moment to moment. They worry that she's not improving and aren't always sure where to turn for help.

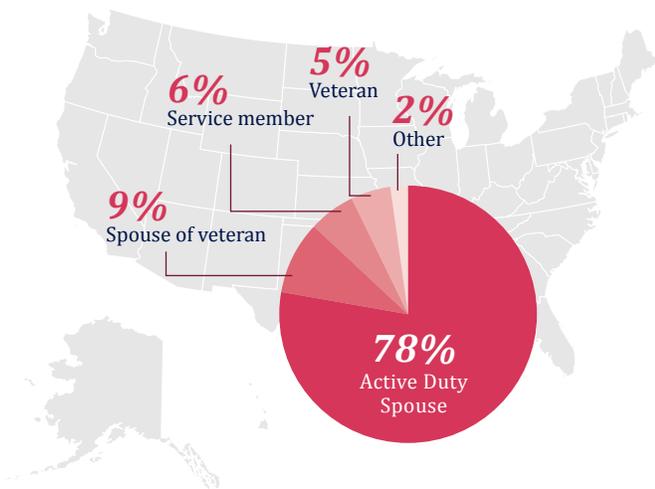
"This most recent move has been the roughest yet," she shared. "Making friends has been a real struggle and our daughter is now battling depression, mostly due (I believe), to the stresses of moving and struggling making friends when peer groups have already been established. It affects her school work, her home life, everything."

# The Aftermath of a Military Move

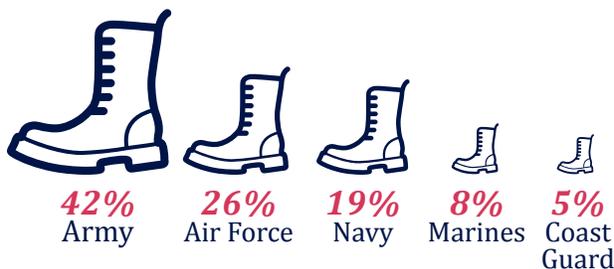
In 2018, we surveyed more than 1,500 military families about their experience with schools across the country as part of our Education Revolution. Here's what they told us:

**1,652**  
SURVEY RESPONDENTS

come from all 50 states & overseas locations



## SERVICE BRANCH



*Our children have started out ahead of each school by far, and with each move have had to **dumb themselves down** to our new location's standard of education. I have had to consistently speak with the school about challenging my children and fight for this to be done.*

*My children struggle because **curriculum and standards are different in every school.***



THE AVERAGE MILITARY KID **MOVES NINE TIMES** BEFORE GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL



**1 IN 4 MILITARY KIDS**  
*are being left behind in school*

**ONE OUT OF FOUR**  
*parents say...*



the academic standards  
used by their child's school  
**DO NOT set high expectations**

their kid arrived at their new  
school **significantly behind** in  
reading or math



the school their child came  
from **didn't prepare them**  
for their current school

their child **will not be ready** for  
the academics at a new location



We have chosen to  
homeschool, in part **to**  
**avoid the issues that**  
**would occur with**  
**changing schools**  
frequently.

**Education is**  
**a right, and**  
**should be equally**  
**accessible and**  
**consistent for**  
**everyone, no matter**  
what their parents  
do for a living.

We didn't arrive  
early enough to get  
to choose a school.  
**We get what's left.**

The teaching  
methods have been  
different and the  
**kids sometimes**  
**have a hard time**  
**adjusting.**

# The Aftermath of a Military Move

## HIGHEST STANDARDS

States parents say set the highest standards



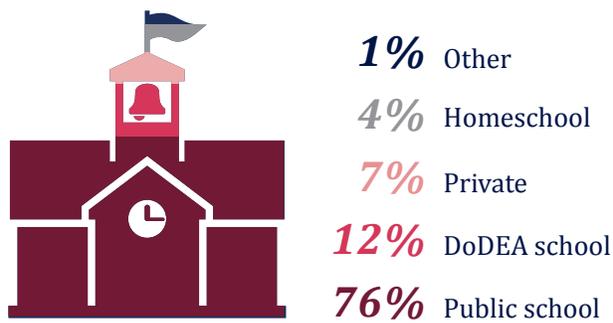
## LOWEST STANDARDS

Parents say these states & schools have the lowest standards



## WHERE THEY LEARN

Kids of respondents were spread evenly among grades Kindergarten through 12



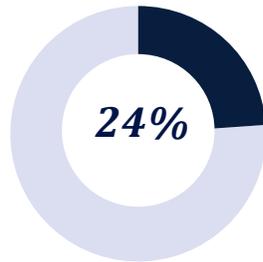
*The changing goals of the different school systems and regional differences in interpretation of special education have **set two of my children back by at least one grade level.***

*My child just completed the 5th grade and **it felt like it was a wasted year.** There was no academic growth at all. It's so disappointing to see all of these really intelligent children forced into going to an F-rated school in one of the lowest ranked school districts in the state just because of their father's job.*

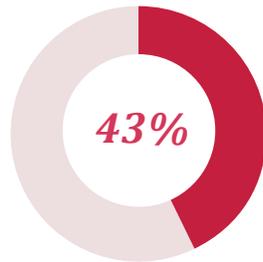
**4th**  
GRADE

Parents say is the toughest year  
with academic standards

Where do parents learn about academic standards?



School information sessions  
or school website



Conversations with teachers

23% say they **could not help** their child meet math standards.

**Their Right.  
Our Fight.**

*Our littlest heroes make enough sacrifices. A quality education should not be one of them.*

*Our child has attended 7 different schools, it has been hard on him because **the quality of schools are not the same everywhere and the standards are different in each state we have lived.***

*Math has been the biggest challenge.*

We all agree military kids deserve a top-notch education. And we want to be your battle buddy in the fight to make it happen. Not sure where to start?

We've got you covered at:  
[militaryfamily.org/  
educationrevolution](https://militaryfamily.org/educationrevolution)

There is a significant difference in availability of military liaison assistance from one school to another.



My child has not been able to make any roots and *must always adapt to a new learning style at his new school.*

10 different schools, 10 different standards.



My kids are always behind and always struggle to catch up. With the schools across the nation not having the same curriculum, *it's always a guessing game as to what they will need to know at the new duty station.*



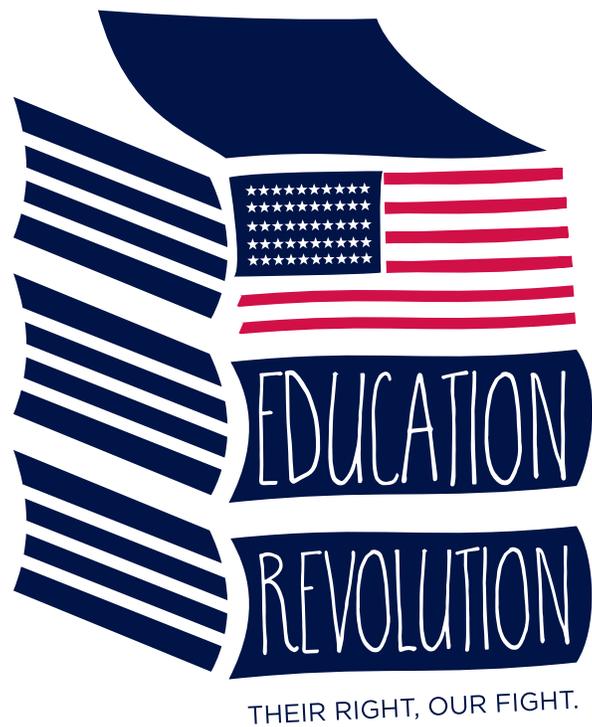
Military kids' education shouldn't be collateral damage of their parents' call to serve.

The battle for freedom is the service member's job. The battle for education is ours.



*Join the Revolution.*

**MilitaryFamily.org/  
EducationRevolution**



[militaryfamily.org/educationrevolution](http://militaryfamily.org/educationrevolution)



NATIONAL  
MILITARY FAMILY  
ASSOCIATION