

MILITARY FAMILY TRANSITION

Youth - Schools Working Group Report



Table of Contents

1. Working Group Report - Highlights
2. Working Group Report
3. Primary Issues / Challenges identified
4. List of Commanders, working group members, school districts & representatives
5. Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) / Guiding Principles -
for forming partnerships among school districts, military organizations and the
transitioning military families to assist military connected school age children.
Procedures for establishing, promoting and joining into a MOA.
6. Other Local / Perception issues identified

Military Family Transition Working Group, Youth - School Transition

Highlights

- ✓ The findings represented here are a first step – identification of issues/challenges. Need to build on this work by developing appropriate actions, both locally and at the State level.
 - Ultimately, education issues are local ones, therefore Commanders/installations should continue to partner with their local schools to address these challenges.
 - There is an important role for the State. As a leader in the nation, Florida provides great visibility for these issues and, at a minimum, can lead efforts to work with other States on items such as reciprocity, creating an environment supportive of improvements for military and mobile families.
- ✓ This state-initiated, statewide, multi-service review of military Youth-Schools issues is a “first of its kind” effort.
- ✓ There are 33,000 military-connected school aged youth in Florida.
- ✓ Improvements for military families posture Florida positively with a larger constituency -- the mobile family.
- ✓ Washington/Department of Defense personnel are interested in the findings and follow-on actions.
- ✓ Findings/issues from this effort are similar to the findings of other studies (adding validity to the results and identifying a source of past recommendations/follow-on actions).
- ✓ Summary Findings -- Issues are grouped in six broad categories.
 - **Graduation requirements.** Graduation/advancement mandates; interpretation of academic records; GPA calculation/credit; reciprocity of State mandated courses; support for newly arriving juniors and seniors (college applications, scholarships, etc.).
 - **Registration.** Delayed official records arrival, transitional residence address, or lack of specific State form for shots (though documented on other forms) precluding registration.
 - **Orientation.** Access to counselors over the summer; orientations focused on local student; inconsistent information on-line (generally focused on local/internal customer).
 - **Opportunities.** Deadlines preclude transitioning/military students from access to advanced classes, dual credit programs, early graduation options, extracurricular sports/activities, charter schools, etc.
 - **Communication.** Information on unique procedures/programs not targeted to new arrivals/parents (i.e., peer counseling/mediation, discipline); assumption that students/parents already know.
 - **Facilities.** Crowded schools (primarily Tampa and South Florida); student/teacher ratio, transportation (buses), or safety issues – in general detract from the learning experience, individual attention, controlled environment, and discipline – impact the willingness or desire of personnel to relocate.

Report of Findings

In response to the interest expressed by the Governor and the thirty military commanders at the February 2001 Florida Base Commanders Meeting at U.S. Southern Command, a working group of military representatives was established to review ways to facilitate assimilation of the military child, as well as all mobile children, into the Florida school system.

Provided are results of the initial raw data collection from the Military Family Transition Working Group. Represented herein are issues identified by members of the military commands and military communities in the State of Florida. This is the first step in the improvement process – identification. From here we must partner with our local schools, and with the State, to develop and implement improvements.

It is important to emphasize that the military community identified many positive factors concerning Florida schools during the course of gathering this information. Most significant among these is the tremendous receptiveness of local school officials when approached concerning challenges facing military/transitioning youth. An example is the responsiveness of Hillsborough County and Monroe County school officials involved with their local Working Group representatives, taking immediate actions on many of the items identified in their sessions. As a result the Hillsborough County School Board approved a resolution adopting “Guiding Principles” supporting military youth (principles were outlined in an agreement previously developed by other school systems in the nation concerning this issue). Further, Key West/Monroe County military commanders report no issues related to “Military Youth Transition” due in part to the responsive actions of school officials addressing the items they identified.

Given the charter of the Working Group -- identify issues and challenges -- the information provided with this document focuses on the challenges to be addressed and, without proper caveat, could be interpreted as an unfairly negative reflection of our schools. The issues presented here are not an indictment of the schools that support the military youth in Florida, simply an outline of how we can proceed as we endeavor toward continuous improvement.

As stated earlier, identifying and presenting transition issues is just the first step in the task of addressing youth-school transition challenges. In general, subsequent steps include:

- On-going partnering and communication between local communities/school systems and military commands to implement improvements.
- Leverage Florida’s position as a national leader, raising visibility concerning the macro challenges identified in this report. As appropriate, Florida can work with other states on challenges such as reciprocity...creating an environment supportive of improvements for the military, and mobile, family.
- State Working Group and/or forum to develop actions to address State level issues and systemic challenges; participants should include State Officials, local military and school officials, and Department of Defense officials from Washington (they’ve remained informed and interested in this “first of its kind” effort undertaken in Florida).
- Continued coordination with the State Secretary of Education’s office on how to resolve state-level issues.

As evidenced by recent supportive actions of Governor Bush and other State Officials, Florida has a unique appreciation for the significance of the aggregate military establishment, to include the military's \$30 billion economic impact on the State's economy. Transition issues addressed here, and subsequent improvements made, impact 33,000 military-connected school aged youth in the State of Florida. Furthermore, any improvements implemented postures the State of Florida positively with a larger population – the mobile family. The challenges faced by military families are similar to those faced by this country's increasing number of civilian mobile families. Therefore, improvements or solutions developed for the military family enhance Florida's stature and support of this greater constituency.

The military community and the Working Group look forward to continuing this important work as we partner with Local and State Officials and our schools.

Summary Findings

Issues identified are grouped in six broad categories as presented below.

- **Graduation requirements.** Curriculum mandates for advancement to the next grade or graduation; inconsistent interpretation of academic records and GPA calculation/credit; reciprocity of State mandated courses (state history, etc.); appropriateness of State testing impacting a transferring student; relationship with, and support from, counselors for newly arriving juniors and seniors (college applications, scholarships, etc.).
- **Registration.** Unnecessary delays and preclusions due to delayed records arrival; inability to register/attend due to lack of a permanent address while transitioning; inability to register/attend due to lack of a specific state form for health records and shots (though requirements may be documented on forms from another state).
- **Orientation.** No access to counselors over the summer; weak school orientations and sponsorship programs...not targeted to students transitioning from out-of-state; inconsistent or nonexistent information available on-line (current on-line information generally focuses on issues of concern to local/internal customers, not a student relocating from outside the State).
- **Opportunities.** School schedules/calendars challenge military related students; procedures (deadlines, course sequencing, etc.) preclude the transitioning/mobile student from access to advanced classes, dual credit programs (college and high school), early graduation, extracurricular sports/activities, charter schools, etc.
- **Communication.** Information on procedures and unique programs are not provided or targeted to new arrivals and their parents (i.e., peer counseling/mediation, discipline)...it appears that too often there is an ill founded assumption that students/parents are already aware via previous association with the schools.
- **Facilities.** Includes crowded schools (primarily Tampa and South Florida), student/teacher ratio, transportation (buses), or safety issues which in general detract from the learning experience, individual attention, controlled environment, and discipline. Impacts the willingness/desire of personnel to relocate to various areas.

Background

During his semi-annual meeting with Military Commanders in February 2001, Governor Bush requested input concerning issues affecting military families as they transition to Florida. To respond to this request, and to benefit from the positive climate for improvement evidenced by Governor Bush's interest and past actions, the military commanders in the State provided representatives to serve on a Military Transition Working Group. Transition issues cover a broad range of diverse issues. Therefore, as an initial foray, the working group targeted issues negatively impacting the youth of military families as they transition into Florida schools.

Youth transition issues, and schools in particular, have long been a concern and focal point for military parents as they undertake military directed relocations. Institutionally, in recent years the Department of Defense has increased their efforts to address specific challenges associated with school transition issues, with the recently completed U.S Army Secondary Education Transition Study being one indicator of this effort. Therefore, the undertaking in Florida is timely. The Department of Defense Educational Opportunities Directorate, under the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management Policy, has contacted the Working Group to remain abreast of developments and to offer their support and their willingness to participate in subsequent forums.

Methodology

The intent of the Working Group is to identify issues (1) for presentation to the Governor and State Officials and (2) for subsequent collaborative work toward resolution. At the local installations and communities, the working group members utilized various formats to collect issues, including roundtable discussions, focus groups, and surveys. To the greatest extent possible, participation was inclusive; command representatives, military personnel, spouses, students, as well as leadership from the local schools. The purpose was solely to identify issues, though in some cases recommendations for resolution were discussed as well.

The first phase of effort concludes with presentation of the issues to the Governor/State Officials. Subsequent phases likely involve working with State Officials on improvements or solutions – possibly conducting a State forum to address issues – and, of course, working at the local level (with State support as appropriate) to develop and implement improvements with local school systems.

In this endeavor we've drawn from, and benefited from, existing expertise and experience available with the Military Child Education Coalition and the recent U.S. Army Secondary Education Transition Study.

Acknowledgements

The working group appreciates **Governor Bush's** desire to alleviate the unique challenges that face the military community. Similarly, we thank **Enterprise Florida** and the **Florida Defense Alliance** for their great support as they efficiently coordinated and facilitated information sharing and the telephonic meetings of the Working Group. We also must acknowledge the benefit of the **Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)** and **U.S. Army Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS)**. The MCEC was a great source of counsel on gathering and presenting information and the SETS is a thorough reference on school transition issues affecting our military community. Lastly, we truly appreciate the unwavering support of the **Military Commanders in the State** who provided the representatives for the Working Group and who fully supported their local efforts to gather the issues presented here.

MICHAEL L. RHODES
Chair, Military Family Transition Working Group

Enclosures

1. Recap of primary, major issues identified by military commands/communities.
2. Listing of participating Commanders, Working Group representatives, School Districts involved and, where appropriate, the participating school representative.
3. Memorandum of Agreement and Guiding Principles previously committed to by school districts in the nation as a result of the U.S. Army Secondary Education Transition Study (can be added to/endorsed by any school district hosting military youth, or can be used as a template to outline improvements).
4. Recap of local or perception issues identified during the information gathering. This is provided for local use, where appropriate.

ISSUES / CHALLENGES

<i>Category</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Organization</i>
<i>Graduation Requirements</i> <i>Curriculum mandates for advancement to the next grade or graduation; inconsistent interpretation of academic records and GPA calculation/credit; reciprocity of State mandated courses (state history, etc.); appropriateness of State testing impacting a transferring student; relationship with, and support from, counselors for newly arriving juniors and seniors (college applications, scholarships, etc.).</i>			
Graduation requirements	GPA	Grading scheme changes altered standing, need to ensure consistency and/or other similar consideration.	Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division
Graduation requirements	Required courses	If students intend to transfer prior to end of the semester or the school year, they should not be required to take Florida History. Student should be free to satisfy a different course requirement.	Eglin AFB
Graduation requirements	School records during transfer	Transitioning students from DoD schools arrive without records if they are an ESE or other special need student. It was reported that the DOD schools do not allow students/parents to handcarry or make copies of their records causing difficulties & delay.	Eglin AFB
Graduation requirements	Weighted courses -	Weighted courses in Florida are not recognized in many other states and may affect college opportunities, GPA, etc.; Need standardization.	Eglin AFB
Graduation requirements	Course credit/reciprocity	Difficulties experienced concerning reciprocity among states for course accreditation (incoming & outgoing).	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Graduation requirements	Testing	The test schedule disadvantages military transfers into FL; school does not offer prep course in late summer. Should waive requirement or make accommodations for testing of incoming students.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Graduation requirements	Phys Ed required courses	PE requirements for HS Courses mandated in FL are not necessary in other states; precludes completing more desirable classes. Courses accepted elsewhere suddenly fail to meet FL requirements, potentially delaying graduation.	SOUTHCOM
Graduation requirements	FCAT	FCAT type testing from other states should be accepted by FL. It causes premature testing of children who have recently arrived in the state.	SOUTHCOM
Graduation requirements	Reciprocity	Methodology for course transfer from other states is flawed. Burden of proof is nearly entirely on the student to demonstrate course content meets Florida criteria. Should not be so difficult; education professionals should be able to fix.	SOUTHCOM

ISSUES / CHALLENGES

<i>Category</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Organization</i>
Graduation requirements	Awareness of mobility issues	Mil Children penalized for being mobile; such as days attendance for honor roll; early grad application denied as it must be in BEFORE the fall term; similar testing to FCAT in other states not accepted; no dual enrollment in HS & college spring deadline.	SOUTHCOM
Graduation requirements	Grading structure/GPA	Need consistency with weighted courses, grade structure, etc., so that students are not unfairly penalized in GPA/class standing, etc.	SOUTHCOM
Graduation requirements	Graduation requirements.	It is difficult to get FL schools to accept courses from other states to satisfy graduation requirements. Should be made easier and/or give benefit of doubt to students unless proven otherwise.	SOUTHCOM
Graduation requirements	Early Graduation	Application for early graduation takes place in the spring & excludes military family/student transitioning in the summer.	SOUTHCOM
Graduation requirements	Reciprocity	Recipricol agreements/standards between states for courses are not generally available. The lack of reciprocity can cause significant difficulty, undue stress and repetitive course work for students.	SOUTHCOM
Graduation requirements	Course requirements	Some courses in FL are not needed in other states. Should have flexibility in course selections based on expected graduation in Florida or in another state. Need standardization among states.	SOUTHCOM
Graduation requirements	Graduation	Need to strongly review credit requirements for graduation, transcripts, processing and record handling/reciprocity. Must incorporate/develop an appropriate process for the military transitioning student.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing

Opportunities *School schedules/calendars challenge military related students; procedures (deadlines, course sequencing, etc.) preclude the transitioning/mobile student from access to advanced classes, dual credit programs (college and high school), early graduation, extracurricular sports/activities, charter schools, etc.*

Opportunities	Accomodation of transfer during junior or senior year	Military transfers during their junior or senior year, having to take the FCAT, have reduced number of opportunities to successfully complete.	Eglin AFB
----------------------	--	--	-----------

Opportunities	Sports	When a student arrives at the Florida school he/she could be faced with having to sit out an entire season due to inflexible tryout schedule.	Eglin AFB
Opportunities	Prepare and place special Ed students	Need greater Information/ability to address Special Education requirements prior to arrival.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Opportunities	Sports teams, theatre, extracurricular	Students should not have to wait another year to participate because they were unavailable to try out. If they were participating at last location, they should be allowed to continue (at least some consideration/opportunity).	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Opportunities	Advanced and elective courses	Should allocate space in elective & advanced courses for late arrivals. Should develop approaches & avoid essentially repeating the same course to satisfy graduation requirements. Need a greater number of advanced placement courses & elective offerings.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Opportunities	Credits	Course content and course sequencing need greater consistency to facilitate the transfer between state colleges.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Opportunities	Advanced placement	Close out of Advance Placement enrollments does not allow for the late summer relocations of family members.	Patrick AFB
Opportunities	Course availability/selection	Insufficient availability of courses/opportunities for incoming students based on timing of relocation.	SOUTHCOM
Opportunities	Music courses	Limited availability of special programs such as music studies in elementary schools negatively impacts transfers to FL schools.	SOUTHCOM
Opportunities	Course options	Requiring applications for dual enrollment in the spring penalizes many military related students/transfers.	SOUTHCOM
Opportunities	Availability of courses	Space availability in key courses is limited or non-existent, penalizing military/mobile students most.	SOUTHCOM
Opportunities	Calendar	Earlier start of school calendar is difficult for transitioning students.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Opportunities	Advanced courses	Need more programs for gifted students.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing

Registration *Unnecessary delays and preclusions due to delayed records arrival. Inability to register/attend due to lack of a permanent address while transitioning; inability to register/attend due to lack of specific state form for health records and shots (though requirements may be documented on forms from another state).*

Registration	Medical	School Physical, FL does not accept other states physical/medical certificate which causes unnecessary difficulties and delays.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Registration	Transfer records	School record Transfers - school does not accept hand carried records temporarily, waits until official records are received which causes unnecessary delays.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Registration	School registration	Children cannot register without civilian lease agreement or government assigned housing paperwork resulting in enrollment delay.	Patrick AFB
Registration	Sports	Children could not participate in school sports programs because transcripts from previous school had not been received.	Patrick AFB
Registration	Medical records	Medical records and forms are not accepted from other states, even if all the information is the same.	SOUTHCOM
Registration	Medical records	Medical records/forms not accepted from other states delaying entry into FL school. Should not have to find local Doctor & obtain local forms if the same info is on existing records. Potential several week delay (insurance transfer, appointment, etc.).	SOUTHCOM
Registration	Residence requirements	Proof of residence delays starting school. Military often may be awaiting housing & in temporary housing. Should be allowed to enroll/attend school where they ultimately will reside. Parents will provide transportation.	SOUTHCOM
Registration	Medical requirements	Access to shot records/appropriate forms delayed entry to school.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing

Orientation *No access to counselors over the summer; weak school orientations and sponsorship programs...not targeted to students transitioning from out-of-state; inconsistent or nonexistent information available on-line (currently on-line information generally focuses on issues of the local/internal customer, not a student coming from outside the State).*

Orientation	Counselors	Insufficient numbers of guidance counselors; need a lower ratio; counselors need more training to advise college bound students.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Orientation	Sponsorship	Sponsors for children to assist in transition and orientation.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Orientation	Orientation/Social and emotional needs.	Orientation should be available for transferring students.	SOUTHCOM
Orientation	Counseling unavailable	Counseling and prep for school is not available during the summer when transitioning students arrive.	SOUTHCOM
Orientation	Social isolation	Social transition issues (friends, being the new kid, knowing the school/programs) should be addressed.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Orientation	Orientation	School needs orientation for all students.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing

Communication *Information on procedures and unique programs are not provided or targeted to new arrivals and their parents (i.e., peer counseling/mediation, discipline)...appears that too often there is an assumption that students/parents already know via previous association with the schools.*

Communication	Information on processes	School policy/conduct discipline not explained "peer court", parental involvement--- information not easily available.	SOUTHCOM
Communication	Home school	Home school regulations should be more easily & readily accessible so that options are known.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing

Facilities *Includes crowded schools (primarily Tampa and South Florida schools), student/teacher ratio, transportation (buses), or safety issues which in general detract from the learning experience, individual attention, controlled environment, and discipline. Impacts the willingness/desire of personnel to relocate to various locations.*

Facilities	Transportation	Need buses/alternatives for after school activities.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Facilities	Overcrowding	Overcrowding/insufficient classroom space impacts quality of education. Need to eliminate or replace temporary portables.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Facilities	Overcrowding	Grave concerns for crowding on buses & in classrooms; student to teacher ratio; impact on educational experience and safety.	SOUTHCOM

Participating Commanders, Working Group Representatives, School Districts and School Representatives

<i>Commander / POC</i>	<i>Command / School district</i>	<i>School representative</i>
<i>General Tommy R. Franks</i> <i>MAJ Frank Ladson</i>	<i>CENTCOM</i>	
<i>MAJ Denise L. Williams</i>	Hillsborough; Pinellas; Manatee; Pasco; Polk; Hernando; Sarasota; Orange; Charlotte	
<i>General Charles Holland</i> <i>Ms. Cindy Smith</i>	<i>SOCOM</i> Hillsborough; Pinellas; Manatee; Pasco; Polk; Hernando; Sarasota; Orange; Charlotte	
<i>Vice Admiral Alfred G. Harmes</i> <i>Mr. Honor Bell</i>	<i>CNET</i>	
<i>Lieutenant General Maxwell C. Bailey</i> <i>LTC Sue Nelson</i>	<i>Air Force Special Operations Command (HQ AFSOC/CC)</i>	
<i>Major General Gary Speer</i> <i>Mr. Michael Rhodes</i>	<i>SOUTHCOM</i>	
<i>Mr. Maurice Tricarico</i>	Broward Miami-Dade	Dr. Frank Till, Superintendent Phyllis Hallberg; Mercedes Toural
<i>Major General Larry K. Arnold</i> <i>Ms Catherine Tarrant</i>	<i>First Air Force</i> Gulf; Bay	

Commander / POC

Command / School district

School representative

Major General Douglas Burnett

Dept of Military Affairs, U. S. Army and U. S. Air Force National Guard

CPT Gray Johnson

Rear Admiral David S. Belz

JIATF East

PO1 Conrad Bel

Maj Michael Aid

Monroe

Rear Admiral Jan Gaudio

CDR Navy Region SE(NAS Jacksonville, NAVSTA Mayport and NAF Key West)

LCDR Maria Rogers

Brigadier General Stephen Seay

STRICOM

Mr Jim Kay

Brigadier General Donald P. Pettit

Patrick AFB

Ms. Lillian Cassidy

Mr. Maurice Cronin

Brevard

Brigadier General William F.

Tyndall AFB

Ms. Catherine Tarrant

Bay; Gulf

James E. McCalister, Superintendent

LT Brian Cortez

Commander / POC

Command / School district

School representative

<i>Brigadier General William W. Hodges</i> <i>Ms. Cindy Smith</i>	<i>MacDill AFB</i> Hillsborough; Pinellas; Manatee; Pasco; Polk; Hernando;Sarasota;Orange; Charlotte	
<i>Brigadier General Robert W. Chedister</i> <i>Mr. David Swanick</i>	<i>Eglin AFB</i> Okaloosa; Walton; Santa Rosa; Escambia	Principals: Mrs. Donna Hannah; Mrs Janie Varner; Mr David Larrimore; Dr. Karen Combs; Dr Linda Smith
<i>Captain Fred Shutt</i> <i>Master Chief Virgil Jones</i>	<i>Coastal Systems Station, Panama City</i> Bay	
<i>Colonel Steven R. Fulghum</i> <i>LTC Matt Christ</i>	<i>482d Fighter Wing Homestead ARS</i> Miami-Dade	
<i>Captain Collin Campbell</i> <i>LCDR Art Smith</i>	<i>U. S. Coast Guard Integrated Support Command</i>	

Military Family Transition - Other Associate Members

Ms. Kellie Jo Kilberg, Enterprise Florida

Ms. Kathy Ward, Enterprise Florida

Ms. Marla Gilman, OTTED Governors office state of Florida

LTG (Ret)Pete Taylor, Military Child Education Coalition

Ms. Mary Keller, Military Child Education Coalition

Ms. Cathy Franks, Associate

Ms.Lillie S. Cannon, National Military Family Association

Ms. Joyce Wessel Raezer, National Military Family Association

Dr. Jean Silvernail, OSD Educational Opportunities Directorate

Procedures for Joining in the Memorandum of Agreement

The Guiding Principles for Addressing Issues of Transitioning Military Students

The intent of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is to invite school systems that serve military connected children to join together in committing to The Guiding Principles, as articulated in the MOA, hereafter referred to as the Agreement. A team of practicing school superintendents, school board members, and commanders developed the Agreement. The Guiding Principles are designed to encourage and support schools as they work together to increase the likelihood of predictability for mobile students and, as such, are:

- a unified understanding among many systems and; therefore, are not subject to local changes, additions, or modifications.
- an interconnected, total construct that asks participants to commit to The Guiding Principles as a unified whole.
- the nexus of local action and solutions.

Suggested Steps to Becoming a Signatory in the Agreement

- 1) Study and discussion of the Agreement by the superintendent with the installation commander.
- 2) Collaboration between the individual school systems and the installation in order to analyze how the Agreement “would look” in local implementation.
- 3) Understanding and commitment by the local governing board (school board).
- 4) Adoption by the local governing board and signature by the superintendent.
- 5) Communication of The Guiding Principles to local school constituencies.
- 6) Development of a plan for local action.
- 7) Commitment to link with other signatories regarding specific areas open to reciprocity.

The Guiding Principles: Scope of the Memorandum of Agreement

The Guiding Principles are:

- For and about the best interests of children.
 - A formalized covenant focused primarily on transition challenges for mobile students.
 - An Agreement among school systems that is supported by the installations that the schools serve.
 - Grounded in comprehensive research.
 - Based-upon common understandings and targeted areas of professional and academic reciprocity among school systems that serve military-connected students.
 - Respectful of local school autonomy and supportive of local action planning.
-
- The Guiding Principles are not perfunctory, rather signatories agree to actions worked in concert.
 - The Guiding Principles are not exclusive to public schools that serve Army installations; rather any school system that serves military-connected students is invited to join the agreement.
 - The Guiding Principles are not to be adopted in part, rather they are to be considered in totality, in concept and process, as a far-reaching and formal commitment.

The Three Rs for Joining the Agreement

There are three prerequisites to consider before joining the Agreement: relationships, roles, and responsibilities. These are the cornerstones for building initial community receptiveness and, upon adoption, sustaining the commitment to the Guiding Principles.

Relationships

There are two core relationships necessary to the function of the Agreement. First, a strong working relationship between the installation commander and the supporting school's superintendent and governing body (school board) is essential. Secondly, there must be a willingness to be a part of a worldwide community of schools, represented by the other signatory school systems.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Superintendent — The superintendent of schools is “in charge” of the decision to initially consider the Agreement. During the study phase through adoption and implementation, the superintendent is responsible for building understanding by working collaboratively with appropriate system administrators and principals. Once the Agreement is adopted by the governing board (school board) and signed by the superintendent, the processes necessary to take action should become components of professional development in a way that permeates and affects daily practice. Additionally, the superintendent should work with the installation commander in localizing solutions to challenges faced by military-connected students.

School System Governing Boards — The board begins by working with the superintendent to carefully study the Agreement. The board considers the Agreement for adoption and upon formal acceptance they authorize the superintendent to become a signatory.

The Commander — The installation commander's primary role is to take a personal interest that, in turn, will foster and sustain strong partnerships with the supporting schools. This can be done by providing opportunities for the school leadership to become informed about military life and the importance of helping teens in transition. The commander provides input to local action plans that meaningfully addresses transition issues specific to military-connected students and helps determine progress checks for the schools as well as the installation.

Process Note:

If the school system concurs with The Guiding Principles, outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement, the Agreement should be placed as an “action item” at the next available governing board (school board) meeting. Upon approval, the superintendent should sign the Agreement and send a facsimile copy to the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) at (254) 953-1925. Upon receipt, MCEC will add the superintendent's signature to the original MOA document, send the update to the Agreement stakeholders, and distribute the updated document to all signatory superintendents. For additional information contact MCEC at: (254) 953-1923 or <mailto:mary.keller@militarychild.org> .

Memorandum of Agreement

I. Purpose

This agreement is designed to facilitate the mutual development of reciprocal practices, conduits for information between systems about requirements, and accelerate the exchange of emerging opportunities. The fundamental architecture of this agreement is to sustain partnerships that serve as extraordinary models. The anticipated outcome will be institutionalized systems for transition predictability of the high school experience for the military connected student. The intent of this Memorandum of Agreement is to immediately address transition problems identified in the United States Army's Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) data. For the sake of the child, this Memorandum of Agreement is adopted by the United States Army's Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) partners in a way that models and exemplifies partnership, flexibility, inclusiveness, and information sharing for all schools that serve high school age military students.

II. Scope and Memorandum of Agreement Time Table:

Designed to address transition challenges that are primarily high school connected, the scope of this document and process is to agree on issues that can be immediately solved and to begin implementing those solutions not later than School Year 2001/2002

III. Guiding Principles

Whereas, Military students are faced with numerous transitions during their formative years, and..

Whereas, Moves during the High School Years provide special challenges to learning and future achievement, and...

Whereas, There are some 175,000 secondary school-aged students of military personnel, and...

Whereas, The Army's Secondary Education Transition Study revealed that the average military-connected student transitions more than two times during their high school years...

Whereas, The participants of the Secondary Education Transition Study understand that there are many students in schools that face transition challenges...

Therefore, be it resolved that in the best interest of all students in transition, we the undersigned agree to:

Improve the Timely Transfer of Records.

Practices may include:

1. Developing consistent systems that allow for hand carried or temporary records to be used for placement.
2. Cooperating and monitoring jointly with the supported military installation the effectiveness and efficiency of in/out-processing (school clearance).
3. Evaluating the processes through a determination of local critical effectiveness measures.

Develop Systems to Ease Student Transition during the First Two Weeks of Enrollment.

Practices may include:

1. Collaboratively developing “ virtual” orientation (school and installation Web sites).
2. Creating and implementing combined awareness training of school and appropriate installation staff on the challenges a student faces as the “ new kid.”
3. Highlighting and monitoring the support systems and practices that increase the likelihood that a quick assimilation will be made.
4. Communicating information about specialized high school programs (e.g.: magnet or special schools admission requirements, timelines and pre-requisites).

Promote Practices Which Foster Access to Extracurricular Programs.

Practices may include:

1. Reviewing local try-out timelines and systems with an eye to the opportunity to increase access and encourage inclusiveness.
2. Encouraging counselors, school coaches, and Youth programs staff to routinely write letters of referral and/or recommendations for students transitioning out of the system.
3. Posting current and accurate information (including calendars of events) on school system and installation Web sites.

Establish Procedures to Lessen the Adverse Impact of Moves from the End of Junior Year, as Well as Before, and During the Senior Year.

Practices may include:

1. Using counselors and school transition specialists as outreach to students and resources to parents and staff.
2. Encouraging and supporting student networking and sponsorship groups.
3. Giving senior students and their parents additional assistance and support as needed for graduation completion and post-secondary application.

Communicate Variations in the School Calendars and Schedules .

Practices may include:

1. Collaborating and posting current/accurate calendars and school year events in a manner that is easy for parents to access.
2. Sharing calendar and school year information
3. Defining, explaining, and illustrating the type(s) of high school schedule(s) in-place at each high school.

Create and Implement Professional Development Systems.

Practices may include:

1. Emphasizing strategies that support attention to individual student needs.
2. Developing, encouraging, and fully supporting joint installation and school professional development communities that share strategies, resources, and effectiveness indicators.
3. Discovering, recognizing, and consider replicating proven practices in sponsorship and peer mentor programs.
4. Ensuring that all professional school staff has the basic information about military life and culture. For example Army Family Team Building (AFTB) or other service modules could be used as a resource for professional development.
5. Developing joint training modules for schools and installation personnel.
6. Teaming school counselors with appropriate installation personnel/resources (chaplains, child and youth services, installation counselors) on the unique social/emotional needs of military students.

Continue Strong, Child-

Centered Partnerships between the Installation and the Supporting School.

Practices may include:

1. Connecting Installation School Liaison Officers and the school district counterparts in a working group in order to share ideas about partnership systems.

2. Including senior level military representation from the supported military installation as an ex-officio member or an advisor to the district school board / advisory council.
3. Encouraging site leaders to include an active duty member(s) and/or military spouse(s) as a member of the site based management team (or equivalent organization) of each high school that serves military students.
4. Collaborating with the installation to provide a community orientation program for military families.

Provide Information Concerning Graduation Requirements.

Practices may include:

1. Communicating high school requirements (enhanced or alternative diplomas).
2. Communicating options and opportunities for earning graduation credit
3. Communicating information about state testing
4. Communicating opportunities available to senior students in transition to graduate from the sending high school through reciprocity.

Provide Specialized Services for Transitioning Students When Applying to and Finding Funding for Post Secondary Study.

Practices may include:

1. Developing processes to inform parents and students of the best methods for completing college/ vocational-technical application. Specifically highlight resident eligibility requirements and the opportunities and the other challenges for the mobile student.
2. Modeling what should be in a student portfolio.
3. Training counselors and teachers on how to best assist a transitioning student on preparing for college/vocational-technical application.
4. Supporting preparation programs for success on the SAT and ACT.
5. Publicizing scholarships and grants available to all students and those uniquely designed for military connected students.

IV. Commitment

The signatory leaders commit to continue developing and implementing best and promising practices that will assist the transitioning military-connected student, as defined and articulated March 2001

Be it resolved, therefore, that the following school system signatories enter into this agreement on behalf of their organizations.



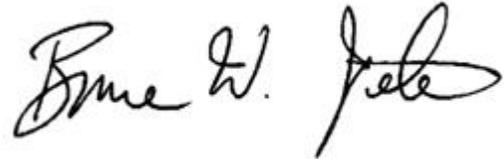
Clover Park School District # 400
Lakewood, Washington



Killeen Independent School District
Killeen, Texas



Cumberland County Schools
Fayetteville, North Carolina



Korea District
Seoul, Korea



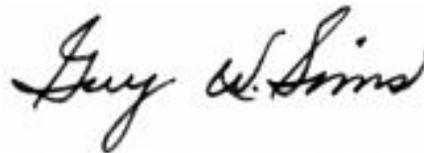
El Paso Independent School District
El Paso, Texas



Lawton Public Schools
Lawton, Oklahoma



Ft Campbell Schools
Ft Campbell, Kentucky



Muscogee County School District
Columbus, Georgia



Kaiserslautern District
Baumholder, Germany



Copperas Cove Independent School District
Copperas Cove, Texas

Future Signatories

LOCAL/PERCEPTION ISSUES

<i>Category</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Organization</i>
Graduation Requirements <i>Curriculum mandates for advancement to the next grade or graduation; inconsistent interpretation of academic records and GPA calculation/credit; reciprocity of State mandated courses (state history, etc.); appropriateness of State testing impacting a transferring student; relationship with, and support from, counselors for newly arriving juniors and seniors (college applications, scholarships, etc.).</i>			
Graduation Requirements	FCAT	FCAT tests change the emphasis of teaching.	Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division
Graduation Requirements	Competency testing.	Benefits of testing accrue to the school rather than the student.	Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division
Graduation Requirements	Testing	Graduation should not be based solely on competency testing.	Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division
Graduation Requirements	Emphasis on grades	Too much emphasis on grades and testing; changes in curriculum & acceptable levels of reading and writing contribute to challenges.	Eglin AFB
Graduation Requirements	English as a second language	Teacher spends inappropriate amount of class time focusing on non-English speaking students. Negatively impacts the amount of course work to be accomplished for achieving state standards.	SOUTHCOM
Graduation Requirements	Curriculum and educator deficiencies	Children are bored with material, grade school teachers seem not to care.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Graduation Requirements	Curriculum deficiencies	Curriculum is about a year behind. Administration didn't support children's best interest.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Graduation Requirements	Curriculum deficiencies	Came from European school that was advanced, FL system didn't recognize her credit; adjusting, different mentality; low education emphasis.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Graduation Requirements	Curriculum deficiencies	The school here is about one year behind the schools in Montana. The guidance counselors have too many students.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing

LOCAL/PERCEPTION ISSUES

<i>Category</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Organization</i>
Graduation Requirements	Curriculum deficiencies	Courses do not challenge children.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Graduation Requirements	FCAT	FCAT requirements seem to be based on dollar generated interests.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Graduation Requirements	Curriculum deficiencies	Schools don't know what classes to put children in/curriculum behind, limited elective course selection.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Graduation Requirements	Reciprocity	Family transferring to Nebraska, although son had been promoted to the 12th grade he did not qualify as a senior at the receiving school.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Graduation Requirements	Curriculum deficiencies	School system seems to be behind by one year, not enough teaching aids for quality education, not enough computers, too many children.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Graduation Requirements	Curriculum deficiencies	Need more guidance; curriculum seems to be behind.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Graduation Requirements	Curriculum deficiencies	School system is different, classes are behind.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Graduation Requirements	FCAT	General feeling of FCAT pressure on teachers for tests results due to impact of funding for schools; not healthy.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Graduation Requirements	Curriculum deficiencies	FL schools are behind, don't offer special classes to help slower students.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Graduation Requirements	Curriculum deficiency	FL schools are behind other states in curriculum.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing

LOCAL/PERCEPTION ISSUES

<i>Category</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Organization</i>
<i>Communication</i>	<i>Information on procedures and unique programs are not provided or targeted to new arrivals and their parents (i.e., peer counseling/mediation, discipline)...appears that too often there is an assumption that students/parents already know via previous association with the schools.</i>		
Communication	Extracurricular activities	Boy Scouts fee paid and no meetings held.	Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division
Communication	Magnet or Charter schools	Would like better/easier information on charter schools - how's and why's ; how to register ; waiting list; what community; community served; hours.	SOUTHCOM
Communication	Information sharing	Inconsistent in informing parents of attendance, curriculum changes, calendar changes.	SOUTHCOM
Communication	Parental involvement opportunities	Lack of opportunities for parental inclusion in school.	SOUTHCOM
Communication	Calendar	Days off changed throughout the year with short amount of future notification; schedule changes made it hard to plan; parents not informed early on.	SOUTHCOM
Communication	Discipline	Absences and credits at Rutherford need to be dealt with.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Communication	Disciplinary	Some people in the school have a non-responsive attitude.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Communication	Educator qualifications	Seems like the school doesn't care.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Communication	Educator qualifications	You can't request a specific teacher at Lynn Haven, not happy with Lynn Haven- put kids in private school, wide range of kids mixed in class.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing

LOCAL/PERCEPTION ISSUES

<i>Category</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Organization</i>
<p><i>Facilities Includes crowded schools (primarily Tampa and South Florida schools), student/teacher ratio, transportation (buses), or safety issues which in general detract from the learning experience, individual attention, controlled environment, and discipline. Impacts the willingness/desire of personnel to relocate to various locations.</i></p>			
Facilities	Transportation and discipline	Buses are overcrowded; disruptive students/passengers are not controlled/disciplined.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Facilities	Bus availability	Buses are too crowded; should be available in more instances.	SOUTHCOM
Facilities	Discipline	Insufficient enforcement Of School Policy on conduct.	SOUTHCOM
Facilities	School districting	Zoning- why go to Rosenwald if Everett is closer? Personal issue with principal at Tyndall.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Facilities	Facilities disrepair	Rosenwald has poor looking facilities on the outside- for first impression; zoning problems with middle school districting.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Facilities	School district	Rosenwald takes away school choice from Everett, why bus to Rosenwald if Everett is closer?	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Facilities	School lunches	Came from Georgia and cost of school lunches jumped from \$.65 to \$1.75.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Facilities	School districting	School zoning- why bus to Rosenwald if Everett is closer? Rosenwald doesn't have a good reputation.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Facilities	School district geographic boundaries	Busing zone- Rosenwald- Everett, quality of discipline is lacking.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing

LOCAL/PERCEPTION ISSUES

<i>Category</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Organization</i>
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>School schedules/calendars challenge military related students; procedures (deadlines, course sequencing, etc.) preclude the transitioning/mobile student from access to advanced classes, dual credit programs (college and high school), early graduation, extracurricular sports/activities, charter schools, etc.</i>		
Opportunities	School Calendar	Current early start (Aug 9) is a major problem. Military students that relocate to the state throughout the month of August and are now missing one or more weeks of school because of the early start date.	Eglin AFB
Opportunities	School districts	Need more alternatives for school choice outside of immediate geographic area.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Opportunities	Supplies for students	Schools have an inadequate amount of supplies for course offerings.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Opportunities	Curriculum deficiencies	Standards are too low; State standards conflict with the county standards; sponsorship package does not include the grade standard.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Opportunities	Special education qualification and services.	Insufficient number of Speech Therapists.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Opportunities	Special education	The specific school assignment of children with Special Needs was not consistent.	Patrick AFB
Opportunities	Calendar	School calendar is not consistent with most systems nationwide.	Patrick AFB
Opportunities	In-state tuition availability	In state tuition for FL colleges is not always available.	SOUTHCOM
Opportunities	Day care	Need access to school/pre-school day care programs; both before and after school program openings(AM & PM).	SOUTHCOM
Opportunities	ESL	Language problems-overcame it; overseas schools seem more advanced.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing

LOCAL/PERCEPTION ISSUES

<i>Category</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Organization</i>
Orientation <i>No access to counselors over the summer; weak school orientations and sponsorship programs...not targeted to students transitioning from out-of-state; inconsistent or nonexistent information available on-line (currently on-line information generally focuses on issues of the local/internal customer, not a student coming from outside the State).</i>			
Orientation	Magnet schools	Magnet Schools are not sufficiently advertised prior to arrival in FL; school stats are not available on websites.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Orientation	School districts	School zones are not advertized. Need accessible advance information to make informed decisions.	MacDill AFB / CENTCOM / SOCOM
Orientation	Bright futures scholarships	Counseling for bright futures scholarships is not easily/readily available.	SOUTHCOM
Orientation	Student isolation	Child is below power curve, had problem adjusting in Rosenwald.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Orientation	Curriculum deficiencies	Came from small school that had quality education, but when we got to Tyndall- not a good experience- mixed classes, Tyndall is behind.	Tyndall AFB / First Air Force / 325th Fighter Wing
Registration <i>Unnecessary delays and preclusions due to delayed records arrival. Inability to register/attend due to lack of a permanent address while transitioning; inability to register/attend due to lack of specific state form for health records and shots (though requirements may be documented on forms from another state).</i>			
Registration	Special education	Difficulty with transferring in of a physically handicapped child. Problems included difficulty in finding the appropriate services for the child to obtaining the proper testing.	Eglin AFB
Registration	Special Education	IEP - Florida re-tests and repeats the process vs. accepting previous testing which causes delays and frustration.	SOUTHCOM
Registration	Records transfer	Records were misplaced by Florida schools.	SOUTHCOM