Florida Military Student Education Report

Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services
October 2003

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Appendices

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State Requirement

The 2003 Florida Legislature passed Senate Bill 2802, which created a new section of law that required the Department of Education to:

"…assist the transition of these students [school-age dependents of military personnel] by improving the timely transfer of records, developing systems to ease student transition during the first 2 weeks of enrollment, promoting practices which foster access to extracurricular programs, establishing procedures to lessen the adverse impact of moves from the end of the junior as well as before and during the senior year, encouraging or continuing partnerships between the military base and the school system, providing services for transitioning students when applying to and finding funding for post secondary study, and providing other assistance as identified by department, school, and military personnel.

"…identify its strategies and efforts for assisting military-connected students in transitioning to the Florida school system, including the identification of acceptable equivalence for curriculum and graduation requirements, and report its findings to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by October 1, 2003."

Methodology

To accomplish the above requirement, Department staff reviewed national research to identify best and promising practices and to provide a framework for local collaborative efforts. To determine the current collaborative efforts between school districts and military bases in Florida, an on-line survey was developed. All school districts were asked to respond to the survey and all completed surveys were analyzed for this report.

Military Bases in Florida

As of 2003, the following military bases are located in Florida:

District	City	Name of Base	Military Branch
Bay	Tyndall AFB	Tyndall Air Force Base	Air Force
Bay	Panama City	Coastal Systems Station	Navy
Brevard	Patrick AFB	Patrick Air Force Base	Air Force
Clay		Camp Blanding Military Reservation	National Guard

District	City	Name of Base	Military Branch
Dade	Miami	Miami Coast Guard Air Station	Coast Guard
Duval	Jacksonville	Jacksonville Naval Air Station	Navy
Duval	Mayport	Mayport Naval Station	Navy
Duval	Mayport	U.S. Coast Guard Base - Mayport	Coast Guard
Escambia	Pensacola	Pensacola Naval Air Station	Navy
Escambia	Pensacola	Pensacola Naval Hospital	Navy
Hillsborough	MacDill AFB	MacDill Air Force Base	Air Force
Monroe	Key West	Key West Naval Air Station	Navy
Okaloosa	Eglin AFB	Eglin Air Force Base	Air Force
Okaloosa	Hurlburt Field AFB	Hurlburt Field Air Force Base	Air Force
Pinellas	Clearwater	Clearwater Coast Guard Air Station	Coast Guard
Santa Rosa	Milton	Whiting Field Naval Air Station	Navy

Review of Literature

In 1999, the United States Army Community and Family Support Center (CFSC) contracted with the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) to conduct a study, known as the *Secondary Education Transition Study* (SETS), related to the impact of high school transitions for the military-connected student. The study was conducted at nine Army communities/installations with a focus on determining key problem areas associated with transferring between school districts. As patterns emerged from the data, the SETS senior leaders (school superintendents, school board members, and installation commanders representing the nine selected communities) developed an action plan.

An outgrowth of the action plan was a *Memorandum of Agreement* (MOA) negotiated between the nine sites that participated in SETS so that all involved entities had a cooperative understanding of guiding principles for addressing the issues of transitioning military students. The actions listed in SB 2802 are taken directly from the guiding principles outlined in the MOA.

The MCEC developed a supporting document, *Best and Promising Practices*, building on the MOA's guiding principles. It provides a framework for possible courses of action. In *Best and Promising Practices*, the authors state, "The fundamental architecture of the *Memorandum of Agreement*, as well as the supporting *Best and Promising Practices* document, 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."

As of July 1, 2003, 130 school systems around the globe have signed the MOA; three Florida school districts (Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, and Monroe) have signed the agreement.

The SETS report, executive summary, parent guidebook, and information outlining how other systems can join in the MOA is available through the Military Family Resource Center via email request: mfrcrequest@calib.com. The MOA can be reviewed at www.militarychild.org. (See appendices A and B)

Best Practices

The following best practices are based on the *Memorandum of Agreement* and *Best and Promising Practices* developed by the MCEC.

- Improving the timely transfer of records
- Developing systems to ease student transition during the first two weeks of enrollment
- Promoting practices which foster access to extracurricular programs
- Establishing procedures to lessen the adverse impact of moves from the end of the junior year as well as before and during the senior year
- Encouraging or continuing partnerships between the military base and the school system
- Providing services for transitioning students when applying to and finding funding for post secondary study
- Providing other assistance as identified by department, school, and military personnel

The Florida Survey

The survey questions developed for the Florida survey were based on the practices described above. Additionally, personnel in several school districts were interviewed regarding their policies for transitioning military students. Based on these interviews and the above research, it was determined that the guiding principles in the MCEC *Memorandum of Agreement* and *Best and Promising Practices* would be used as a framework for the survey. The guiding principles were listed as questions with best practices listed as responses.

The survey was made available online to every school district in Florida. School district directors of Student Services and Management Information Services received an electronic letter with instructions requesting them (or designated staff persons) to complete the survey. A hyperlink to the survey's website was included in the electronic letter for easy access. Using check boxes, respondents were required to state if practices were "in place;" "not in place, but plan on implementing;" or "not in place, do not plan on implementing." Each item provided an open-ended "other" field for districts to indicate practices not previously listed. The survey closed with an optional section for respondents to indicate the ease of use and clarity of the questions asked in the survey.

Follow-up phone calls were made to districts with military bases or installations to ensure participation. Because of their proximity to military installations, contiguous counties were sent emails prompting responses.

Survey Results

I. Demographics

Of the 67 counties requested to complete the survey, 41 or 61.2% completed the survey.

Alachua	Hardee	Nassau
Bay	Hendry	Okaloosa
Bradford	Highlands	Okeechobee
Brevard	Holmes	Palm Beach
Calhoun	Jefferson	Pasco
Clay	Lake	Putnam
Columbia	Lee	Santa Rosa
Dade	Leon	St. Lucie
DeSoto	Levy	Sumter
Duval	Liberty	Suwannee
Escambia	Manatee	Union
Flagler	Marion	Volusia
Gadsden	Martin	Walton
Gulf	Monroe	

Twenty-six counties did not complete the survey.

Baker	Hamilton	Pinellas
Broward	Hernando	Polk
Charlotte	Hillsborough	Sarasota
Citrus	Indian River	Seminole
Collier	Jackson	St. Johns
Dixie	Lafayette	Taylor
Franklin	Madison	Wakulla
Gilchrist	Orange	Washington
Glades	Osceola	

Persons with the following job titles completed the survey:

Assistant Superintendent	Director of Elementary and Secondary Education
Career Counselor	
Community Affairs Director	Director of High Schools
Coordinator of Data Processing	Director of Secondary Education
Coordinator of School Choice	District Record Specialist
Department Superintendent	Educational Specialist
Director of Assessment/Secondary Curriculum	Executive Director of Secondary Education
Director of Curriculum	General Support Administrator

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Guidance Services Supervisor   Student Services Coordinator
MIS Director   Student Services Director
Records Manager   Supervisor of Student Services
Secondary Guidance Specialist

Of the school districts that responded to the survey, the following eight indicated that military installations are in their counties:

Bay
Brevard
Clay
Dade
Duval
Escambia
Monroe
Okaloosa
Santa Rosa

Although the following counties have a military base or installation, they did not complete the survey:

Hillsborough (MacDill Air Force Base)
Pinellas (Clearwater Coast Guard Air Station)

It was determined that 11 of the responding counties neighbor, or are contiguous to, districts with military installations:

Alachua	Hardee	Putnam
Bradford	Manatee	Volusia
Calhoun	Nassau	Walton
Gulf	Pasco	

II. Results

Following are the survey questions with district responses to whether the policy or practice was:

- in place
- not in place, but plan on implementing, or
- not in place

County responses are reported in three categories:

- counties with military installations
- contiguous counties
- remaining counties

1. What practices are in place to ensure a timely transfer of records?

	Counties with military installations			Contiguous counties			Remaining counties		
	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place,	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place
Developing a consistent system that allows for hand carried or temporary records to be used for placement.	7 87.5%	1 12.5%	—	8 80%	1 10%	1 10%	14 60.9%	2 8.7%	7 30.4%
Cooperating and monitoring jointly with the supported military installation the effectiveness and efficiency of in/out-processing (school clearance).	3 37.5%	3 37.5%	2 25%	3 30%	6 60%	1 10%	5 21.7%	5 21.7%	13 56.5%
Evaluating the processes through a determination of local critical effectiveness measures.	5 62.5%	2 25%	1 12.5%	3 30%	3 30%	4 40%	7 30.4%	5 21.7%	11 47.8%
Developing and disseminating a checklist of necessary registration information and withdrawal processes.	5 62.5%	3 37.5%	—	8 80%	1 10%	1 10%	14 60.9%	3 13%	6 26.1%
Providing the names of primary and alternate school personnel (including phone #, e-mail address position, etc.) for additional information pertaining to the transfer of records.	7 87.5%	1 12.5	—	9 90%	1 10%	—	13 56.5%	5 21.7%	5 21.7%
Developing a comprehensive information campaign to inform parents of transfer of records procedures.	4 50%	3 37.5	1 12.5%	2 20%	4 40%	4 40%	5 21.7%	8 34.8%	10 43.5%
Posting information contained on withdrawal documents on district Web sites.	2 25%	3 37.5%	3 37.5%	—	4 40%	6 60%	—	13 56.5%	10 43.5%

2. What system is in place to ease student transition during the first two weeks of enrollment?

	Counties with military installations			Contiguous counties			Remaining counties		
	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place
Collaboratively developing "virtual" orientation (school and installation Web sites).	3 37.5%	2 2.5%	3 37.5%	1 10%	1 10%	8 80%	2 8.7%	6 26.1%	15 65.2%
Creating and implementing combined awareness training of school and appropriate installation staff on the challenges a student faces as the "new kid."	2 25%	5 62.5%	1 12.5%	3 30%	2 20%	5 50%	3 13%	5 21.7%	15 65.2%
Highlighting and monitoring the support systems and practices that increase the likelihood that a quick assimilation will be made.	6 75%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	4 40%	1 10%	5 50%	10 43.5%	4 17.4%	9 39.1%
Communicating information about specialized high school programs (e.g.: magnet or special schools admission requirements, timelines and pre-requisites).	7 87.5%	1 12.5%	—	8 80%	—	2 20%	11 47.8%	2 8.7%	10 43.5%
Establishing an institutionalized welcome program at each high school site.	4 50%	3 37.5%	1 12.5%	1 10%	3 30%	6 60%	—	10 43.5%	13 56.5%
Encouraging counselors and/or transition specialists to participate in the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) Transition Counselor Institute.	2 25%	5 62.5%	1 12.5%	1 10%	3 30%	6 60%	—	10 43.5%	13 56.5%

3. What are the district's practices that foster access to extracurricular programs?

	Counties with military installations			Contiguous counties			Remaining counties		
	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place
Reviewing local try-out timelines and systems with an eye to the opportunity to increase access and encourage inclusiveness.	5 62.5%	2 25%	1 12.5%	5 50%	1 10%	4 40%	9 39.1%	3 13%	11 47.8%
Encouraging counselors, school coaches, and youth programs staff to routinely write letters of referral and/or recommendations for students transitioning out of the system.	4 50%	3 37.5%	1 12.5%	6 60%	1 10%	3 30%	14 60.9%	4 17.4%	5 21.7%
Posting current and accurate information (including calendars of events) on school system and installation Web sites.	7 87.5%	1 12.5%	—	7 70%	1 10%	2 20%	14 60.9%	3 13%	6 26.1%
Encouraging school system athletic and fine arts directors to network with each other on a consistent basis.	6 75%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	6 60%	3 30%	1 10%	14 60.9%	3 13%	3 26.1%
Offering a student interest inventory through phone, fax, internet, or mail to determine academic and non-academic interests to personalize information distribution on arrival and facilitate introductions to sponsors and coaches.	1 12.5%	5 62.5%	2 25%	3 30%	2 20%	5 50%	5 21.7%	5 21.7%	13 56.5%

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4. What procedures exist that lessen the adverse impact of moves from the end of the junior year and before / during the senior year?

	Counties with military installations			Contiguous counties			Remaining counties		
	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place
Using counselors and school transition specialists as outreach to students and resources to parents and staff.	6 75%	2 25%	—	8 80%	2 20%	—	16 69.6%	4 17.4%	3 13%
Encouraging and supporting student networking and sponsorship groups.	5 62.5%	3 37.5%	—	7 70%	2 20%	1 10%	12 52.2%	3 13%	8 34.8%
Giving senior students and their parents additional assistance and support as needed for graduation completion and post-secondary application.	7 87.5%	1 12.5%	—	10 100%	—	—	17 73.9%	3 13%	3 13%
Collaborating (the school system and installation partner) to determine measures to mitigate the adverse impact of senior moves; e.g. early resolution of class rank, conversion of grade point average (GPA) between losing and gaining school grading systems for the purpose of establishing class rank, competing for class honors, applying for post secondary education opportunities, etc.	4 50%	3 37.5%	1 12.5%	5 50%	2 20%	3 30%	11 47.8%	3 13%	9 39.1%
Conducting surveys of recently transitioned senior students and parents to gain feedback useful for improving senior transition actions/processes.	—	7 87.5%	1 12.5%	4 40%	2 20%	4 40%	7 30.4%	4 17.4%	12 52.2%

5. What kind of partnership exists between the military base and the school system?

	Counties with military installations			Contiguous counties			Remaining counties		
	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place
Connecting installation school liaison officers and the school district counterparts in a working group in order to share ideas about partnership systems.	4 50%	4 50%	—	2 20%	2 20%	6 60%	2 8.7%	4 17.4%	17 73.9%
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.	4 50%	3 37.5%	1 12.5%	1 10%	—	9 90%	2 8.7%	3 13%	18 78.3%
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 50%	3 37.5%	1 12.5%	1 10%	1 10%	8 80%	2 8.7%	2 8.7%	19 82.6%
Collaborating with the installation to provide a community orientation program for military families.	1 12.5%	5 62.5%	2 25%	2 20%	—	8 80%	2 8.7%	2 8.7%	19 82.6%

6. What services does the district provide for transitioning students when applying to and finding funding for post secondary education?

	Counties with military installations			Contiguous counties			Remaining counties		
	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place
Developing processes to inform parents and students of the best methods for completing college/vocational-technical application; specifically highlighting resident eligibility requirements and the opportunities and the other challenges for the mobile student.	7 87.5%	1 12.5%	—	10 100%	—	—	16 69.6%	2 8.7%	5 21.7%
Modeling what should be in a student portfolio.	6 75%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	5 50%	3 30%	2 20%	7 30.4%	6 26.1%	10 43.5%
Training counselors and teachers on how to best assist a transitioning student on preparing for college/vocational-technical application.	7 87.5%	1 12.5%	—	10 100%	—	—	17 73.9%	3 13%	3 13%
Supporting preparation programs for success on the SAT and ACT.	7 87.5%	1 12.5%	—	10 100%	—	—	19 82.6%	2 8.7%	2 8.7%
Publicizing scholarships and grants available to all students and those uniquely designed for military connected students.	7 87.5%	1 12.5%	—	10 100%	—	—	16 69.6%	3 13%	4 17.4%

7. What other assistance is your district providing, as identified by DOE, school, and military personnel?

	Counties with military installations			Contiguous counties			Remaining counties		
	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place	In place	Not in place, but plan on implementing	Not in place
Communicating variations in the school calendars and schedules by posting current/accurate calendars and school year events in a manner that is easy for parents to access.	7 87.5%	1 12.5%	—	9 90%	1 10%	—	17 73.9%	1 4.4%	5 21.7%
Defining, explaining, and illustrating the type(s) of high school schedule(s) in-place at each high school.	6 75%	2 25%	—	9 90%	1 10%	—	16 69.6%	2 8.7%	5 21.7%
Developing, encouraging, and fully supporting joint installation and school professional development communities that share strategies, resources, and effectiveness indicators.	3 37.5%	5 62.5%	—	1 10%	3 30%	6 60%	7 30.4%	1 4.4%	13 56.5%
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 is used as a resource for professional development.	2 25%	5 62.5%	1 12.5%	2 20%	1 10%	7 70%	2 8.7%	3 13%	18 78.3%
Developing joint training modules for schools and installation personnel.	1 12.5%	4 50%	3 37.5%	—	2 20%	8 80%	1 4.4%	2 8.7%	20 87%
Teaming school counselors with appropriate installation personnel/resources (chaplains, child and youth services, installation counselors) on the unique social/emotional needs of military students.	6 75%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	1 10%	1 10%	8 80%	5 21.7%	3 13%	15 65.2%
Communicating high school requirements (enhanced or alternative diplomas).	8 100%	—	—	10 100%	—	—	19 82.6%	1 4.4%	3 13%
Communicating options and opportunities for earning graduation credit.	8 100%	—	—	10 100%	—	—	20 87%	1 4.4%	2 8.7%
Communicating information about state testing (FCAT).	8 100%	—	—	10 100%	—	—	20 87%	1 4.4%	2 8.7%
Communicating opportunities available to senior students in transition to graduate from the sending high school through reciprocity.	6 75%	2 25%	—	7 70%	—	3 30%	19 82.6%	1 4.4%	3 13%

Conclusions

The Florida Survey used the guiding principles of the Military Child Education Coalition's (MCEC) *Memorandum of Agreement* and the *Best and Promising Practices* as the framework for collecting the data for this study. School districts reported the following regarding the:

Timely transfer of records

- 87.5% of the school districts with military installations and 80% of the contiguous districts have developed a consistent system that allows for hand-carried or temporary records to be used for placement.
- 37.5% of the school districts with military installations jointly monitor with the military installation the effectiveness and efficiency of enrolling and transferring military students. Thirty-seven percent of the remaining districts plan to implement this strategy.
- 87.5% of the school districts with military installations and 90% of the contiguous districts provide names and contact information of primary and alternate school personnel for additional information pertaining to the transfer of records.

Systems to ease student transition during the first two weeks of enrollment

- 75% of the school districts with military installations and 40% of the contiguous districts monitor the support systems and practices that increase the likelihood that a quick assimilation will be made.
- 87.5% of the school districts with military installations and 80% of the contiguous districts communicate information about specialized high school programs, such as magnet schools, admission requirements, and timelines.

Practices that foster access to extracurricular programs

- 62.5% of the school districts with military installations and 50% of the contiguous districts review local try-out timelines and systems to increase access and encourage inclusiveness of transfer students for extracurricular opportunities.
- 87.5% of the school districts with military installations and 70% of the contiguous districts post current and accurate information, including calendars of events, on school system and military installation websites.

Procedures to lessen the adverse impact of moves from the end of the junior year and before and during the senior year

- 75% of the school districts with military installations and 80% of the contiguous districts use counselors and school transition specialists as outreach to students and resources to parents and staff.
- 62.5% of the school districts with military installations and 70% of the contiguous districts have a system for encouraging and supporting student networking and sponsorship groups.
- 87.5% of the school districts with military installations and 100% of the contiguous districts give senior students and their parents additional assistance and support as needed for graduation completion and postsecondary applications.
- 50% of the school districts with military installations and the contiguous districts collaborate between the school system and the military installation to determine measures to mitigate the adverse impact of senior moves, such as conversion of grade point averages and applying for postsecondary education opportunities and financial assistance. Thirty-seven percent of the districts with military installations and 20% of the contiguous districts plan to implement this strategy.

Partnerships between the military base and the school system

- 50% of the school districts with military installations and 20% of the contiguous districts connect military installation school liaison officers and the school district counterparts in a working group in order to share ideas about partnership systems.
- 87.5% of the school districts with military installations include or plan to include senior level military representation from the supported military installation as an ex-officio member or an advisor to the district school board.
- 87.5% of the school districts with military installations include or plan to include an active duty member(s) or military spouse(s) as a member of the school advisory council of each high school.
- 75% of the school districts with military installations collaborate or plan to collaborate with the military installation to provide a community orientation program for military families.

Services for transitioning students when applying to and finding funding for postsecondary education

- 87.5% of the school districts with military installations have developed processes to inform parents and students of the best methods for completing applications for postsecondary education, especially resident eligibility requirements and other opportunities for mobile students.

- 87.5% of the school districts with military installations and 100% of the contiguous districts train school counselors and teachers on how best to assist a transitioning student regarding applications for postsecondary education.
- 100% of the school districts with military installations and 100% of the contiguous districts support preparation programs for success on the SAT and ACT.
- 100% of the school districts with military installations and the contiguous districts publicize scholarships and grants available to all students and those uniquely designed for military-connected students.

Other assistance as identified by department, school, or military personnel

- 87.5% of the school districts with military installations and 90% of the contiguous districts communicate variations in the school calendars and schedules by posting current and accurate calendars and school year events in a manner that is easy for parents to access.
- 100% of the school districts with military installations and 40% of the contiguous districts have developed or plan to develop and support joint professional development between the school district and military installation regarding strategies and resources to more effectively meet the needs of military-connected students.
- 25% of the school districts with military installations ensure that all school staff have basic information about military life and culture. Sixty-two percent plan to implement this strategy.
- 75% of the school districts with military installations team school counselors with appropriate installation personnel, such as chaplains and child and youth services counselors, regarding the unique social and emotional needs of military-connected students.
- 100% of the school districts with military installations and the contiguous districts communicate requirements for high school graduation, including options and opportunities for earning credits and state assessment (FCAT).
- 75% of the school districts with military installations communicate opportunities available to senior students in transition to graduate from the sending high school through reciprocity and the remaining 25% of the districts with military installations plan to implement this option.

Recommendations for the Florida Department of Education

To increase collaboration and improve the current systems that assist the transition of school-age dependents of military personnel, the Department of Education will

1. widely disseminate the results of this survey and encourage school districts to continue and expand their current collaborative efforts
2. facilitate the development and implementation of Memorandums of Agreement between school districts and military installations

3. provide districts with appropriate technical assistance related to the development of student progression plans and transfer of student records
4. facilitate conference calls with the school districts with military installations and contiguous districts to maximize access to cross-district assistance for implementation of best practices
5. review graduation requirements in other states to identify barriers to transferring credits and courses from out-of-state, including acceptable equivalences for high school courses required for graduation
6. conduct this survey in 2004 to determine the degree to which programs rated in this survey as "plan to be implemented" are actually implemented

Appendix A
Guiding Principles for Addressing the Issues
of Transitioning Military Students

From the *U.S. Army Secondary Education Transition Study.* Department of the Army, U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, and Military Child Education Coalition, 2001.

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 prerequisites).

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.

Superintendent Signature: _____

Superintendent Name: _____

School System: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B
Best and Promising Practices

From the *U.S. Army Secondary Education Transition Study*. Department of the Army, U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, and Military Child Education Coalition, 2001.

I. Introduction

May 2000, the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) briefed the twenty-seven Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) senior leaders (commanders, superintendents, and school board presidents) on the preliminary findings of the United States Army's Secondary Education Transition Study. The SETS research was conducted in order to understand the challenges that military-connected high school students have transitioning from one school system to another. The ten major patterns that emerged from the Secondary Education Transition Study data as the most cogent were the keystones of that briefing.

Working together, with the endorsement of the Chief of Staff of the Army, the SETS senior leaders developed the ten issues into an Army-wide Action Plan. The intent was to effectively use the salient patterns, lessons learned, and the shared promising practices discovered through the United States Army's Secondary Education Transition Study to increase the likelihood of predictability for the military-connected high school student. SETS is about mobile children, it is not just about the Army; therefore, the results and ideas gleaned have the potential to help all mobile students regardless of the occupation or service affiliation of their parents.

An outgrowth of the ten-issue action plan was a proposal from one of the working groups for a cooperative understanding. The concept was put forth that a Memorandum of Agreement be negotiated between the nine sites that participated in SETS. The Memorandum of Agreement, regarding Guiding Principles, operationalizes much of what was put forth in the research-based action plans. The SETS school systems and installation partners have agreed to look for opportunities, procedures, and means to ease the challenges inherent in school transition. The policy and procedures, curriculum and graduation requirements, and extracurricular participation links would be formally developed. Formal and informal articulation of courses, credits, and reciprocal avenues to fulfill graduation requirements is the highest priority.

This supporting document, Best and Promising Practices, 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 the Memorandum of Agreement, as well as the supporting Best and Promising Practices document, 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.

II. Purpose

The purpose of the following best and promising practices is to provide a framework for possible courses of action. These suggestions and examples are for local consideration and are organized in support of the Guiding Principles, as stated in the Memorandum of Agreement, developed March 14-16, 2001. Best and Promising Practices, delineates possible areas/opportunities for school systems and supporting installations as they discover, develop and share expertise. These ideas and initiatives outlined here are intended to be start points. Other creative solutions and innovative ideas, which reinforce the Guiding Principles, are encouraged.

III. Best and Promising Practices

A. Improve the Timely Transfer of Records

1. Develop and disseminate a checklist of necessary registration information and withdrawal processes.

   a. Develop administrative procedures that address transfer of school records for students entering and leaving the system.

   b. Develop a withdrawal procedure for high school students related to installation out-processing.

2. Provide the names of primary and alternate school personnel (include phone #, e-mail address position etc.) for additional information pertaining to the transfer of records.

3. Develop a comprehensive information campaign to inform parents of transfer of records procedures.

4. Post information contained on withdrawal documents on district Web sites.

5. Suggested administrative procedures for Transferring Records

   a. A general withdrawal form can be generated at the campus most times during the school year without prior notification. This is usually sufficient for enrollment in another school. The school official (principal, assistant principal, or counselor) should sign the form documenting on the form those areas not cleared, if any.

   b. In addition to the general withdrawal form, parents may request that they be provided records to hand carry with them. This request requires a 48 hour prior notice to ensure processing time and is available prior to 15 June and after 1 August of each school year from elementary and middle schools.

   c. Because they are open all summer, the process is available at all times at the high schools. If requested, the following items should be provided to students or parents, as appropriate:

      1) Copy of report cards, or current grades in classes, if available.

      2) Copy of withdrawal document form, which includes the immunization record, completed course grades (9 week grades), identification of enrollment in special programs;

      3) Copy of any other records requested by parents, including any special program supporting documentation (*at no cost*)

      4) At times, special circumstances of a family may not allow for the 48-hour

notification preferred. If this occurs, campuses need to respond to the situation with sensitivity and should make efforts to respond to the request.

B. Develop Systems to Ease Student Transition during the First Two Weeks of Enrollment
1. Share ideas for creating intentionally inviting school environments that are attuned to the needs of mobile military-connected students/families.
2. Establishing an institutionalized welcome program at each high school site. Examples are:
   a. Student and parent conference with counselor
   b. Activities to ease into new school
      1) School tour
      2) Introduction to teachers, coaches, club sponsors
      3) Assignment of cafeteria/lunch partner
      4) Escort to bus
   c. Presentation of orientation packet
      1) Welcome brochure
      2) Map of school
      3) Student handbook
      4) Student organizer/planner
      5) Organization/club information
      6) School spirit items
      7) Pass to next dance/activity
3. Develop "virtual orientation" (school and installation Web sites) For example: Each school and military installation should consider having the following information on their Web site:
   a. Calendar
   b. Transition checklist
   c. School registration form and registration packet
   d. School counselor and school newsletter
   e. Area specific items
   f. Zoning areas
   g. Student handbook
   h. School area map
   i. Link to MCEC Web site
   j. School Liaison Officer email address and the services provided
   k. Family Support Center/Army Community services available
   l. Army Family Team Building Information
   m. School Profile (test results, demographics, history of the school)

n. Sample portfolio including content example for student work (if applicable)

o. Sponsorship

4. Encourage counselors and/or transition specialists to participate in the MCEC Transition Counselor Institute

5. Conduct welcome events for new students/families

    a. Dance honoring new students/families

    b. Reception by principals, counselors

    c. Pizza party

    d. Feature new student names on media retrieval, opening exercises, school newsletter, etc.

6. Principal activities

    a. Send welcome postcard to student and family

    b. Provide name to PTA president

    c. Tea/coke party with the principal

    d. Present certificate of welcome

For Example: During the first two weeks of the regular school year there are potentially hundreds of "new" students/families. In August of 2001, Lawton Public Schools mail a card to the home of every enrolled student. The card requests that students/families *new to the Lawton-Fort Sill community* return the card to the student's assigned school. This card provides the name and address of *new to the community* students/families to the principal. Hopefully, this prevents the student from being lost in a "sea" of incoming seventh graders or sophomores.

C. Promote Practices which Foster Access to Extracurricular Programs

1. Exchange information about the governing agencies requirements for extracurricular participation.

2. Encourage school system athletic and fine arts directors to network with each other on a consistent basis.

3. Suggestions for implementation of transition processes that encourage student participation:

    a. Coaches, sponsors, and/or advisors are available to counsel incoming students year-round

    b. A student interest inventory is offered through phone, fax, internet or mail to determine academic and non-academic interests to personalize information distribution on arrival and facilitate introductions to sponsors and coaches

    c. Spring and fall orientations are conducted that include information regarding co-curricular and extra-curricular activities

    d. Incoming students are interviewed by counselors to determine interests and guide them to matching activities

    e. School Web pages include schedules, try-out time lines, activities, and contact information.

4. The school district may consider the following:

a. After meeting state requirements, schools offer open membership on a continuous basis

b. School officer elections occur in the fall

c. Perspective students auditioned via videotape for cheerleading

d. Spring induction is observed for Honor Societies (i.e. NHS, Art, Foreign Language)

e. Sports offerings are numerous enough to accommodate a year-round calendar

f. Cheerleading squads may be chosen mid-year as well as at the end of the year

D. Establish Procedures to Lessen the Adverse Impact of Moves from the End of Junior Year, as well as before, & during the Senior Year.

1. The school systems and installation partners should consider measures to mitigate the adverse impact of senior moves, such as:

   a. Early resolution of class rank of arriving students to facilitate fair competition for honors

   b. Conversion of grade point average (GPA) between losing and gaining school grading systems for the purpose of establishing class rank, competing for class honors, applying for post secondary education opportunities, etc.

   c. Priority counseling to resolve graduation requirements and assist students/parents in accomplishing actions to obtain reciprocity for course credits, graduation certificates, senior year course selections, etc.

   d. Providing post secondary education counseling to identify college/vocational-technical education opportunities and sources of potential financial assistance.

   e. Priority placement into courses/classes essential for completion of graduation requirements.

   f. Early identification and priority access to those extracurricular activities that will afford the transitioning student a greater opportunity for acceptance into post secondary education institutions.

   g. Encouraging parents to participate in early counseling sessions designed to facilitate a smooth and successful transition, as well as a productive senior year that provides the senior student with the opportunity to fulfill their secondary/post secondary educational goals.

   h. Encouraging parent participation in "College Night" activities and other available forums intended to provide students with information upon which to base post-secondary education decisions.

   i. Recognizing that those transition issues associated with the critical first two weeks of enrollment (*see MOA)* are greatest significance to transitioning seniors.

2. Conduct surveys of recently transitioned senior students and parents to gain feedback useful for improving senior transition actions/processes.

E. Communicate Variations in the School Calendars and Schedules

1. Collaborate and post current/accurate calendars and school year events in a manner that is easy for parents to access.

2. Share calendar and school year information.
3. Define, explain, and illustrate the type(s) of high school schedule(s) in place at each high school.
4. Exchange ideas and strategies for "transition labs" or other systems for academic support specifically designed to ease the adverse impact of mid-year moves.

Note: It is important for the serving schools and installations to meet regularly to work on issues related to calendars and schedules and to clarify and comprehensively define the implications for each year.

5. For purposes of this document, the terms "calendar" and "schedules" are defined in scope by means of this comprehensive list of what those terms mean relative to school and installation documents. These include (but are not limited to):
   a. Opening and close dates
   b. Beginning of semester dates
   c. Grading periods
   d. Major Department of the Army, installation/community events
   e. Graduation dates
   f. Holidays and vacations
   g. Extracurricular dates and tryout dates
   h. Assessments (e.g. PSAT/SAT, state tests, graduation tests)
   i. Enrollment dates
   j. Summer school
   k. Extended learning/ intersessions programs
6. Identify variations in schedules that it would be helpful to share with partners. For example block schedules are not the same from district to district. Many systems also have a version of block scheduling at the middle schools.
   a. Systems and campuses will develop easy to access Web and print-based publications that provide detailed descriptions of each type of schedule used.
   b. Systems and campuses will describe the processes available for transition support into and out of the scheduling systems in place at each campus
   c. Consider developing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) for the schedules with the family in transition as the primary audience.
7. Discuss and agree upon means by which basic information will be shared, from the Web page to hard copy materials for a welcome packet.
8. Compose a general timeline and process for sharing and annually updating this information among the nine installations.

F. Create and Implement Professional Development Systems
   1. Exchanging the processes and products associated with the development and support of joint installation and school system professional development communities.
   2. Share strategies, resources, and effectiveness indicators.
   3. Provide joint "Understanding the Military Family" workshops by the installation and

the schools. The Garrison/Base Commander may speak to school staffs that have a significant population of military students about how the military life and culture impact on students.

4. Offer staff development courses that include instructional strategies for meeting the needs of a diverse student population.

5. Installation and School System tours –Provide teachers from the post/base and the school system outside the gate an opportunity to tour the installation and the post/base schools, providing them a glimpse of a day in the life of the parents and their military students. These visits will facilitate the articulation of curriculum issues, expectations, and requirements for each school system.

6. Handbooks — Develop a handbook for teachers to use as a reference, outlining the roles of the military units. Publications will be developed for the installation with the school (grade level or course) curriculum expectations and requirements articulated.

7. Middle School Tours – Students from the post middle school will tour the high school in the adjacent county to provide a glimpse of a day in the life of a high school student.

8. Middle School High School Night – Twice each year, in October and May, each of the high schools in the area visit the middle school on the installation. Principals, counselors, and coaches are available to talk with rising ninth graders about opportunities, expectations, and requirements for high school.

9. Documents from the Army Education Summit held in July 2000 will be made available to school system personnel. These documents outline the ten (10) major transition issues and provide a context for teachers to understand the Army Secondary Education Transition Study.

10. School districts present Parent Information Sessions, specifically including installation families in advertising the sessions. The sessions will feature various educational topics, i.e., Attention Deficit-Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), counseling groups in the schools, etc. The annual Military Parent Academy, a weekend seminar designed to offer parenting support, will be advertised to military parents who live off-post as well as those who reside on the installation.

11. Institutionalize opportunities for parents and adopt-a-school units to be invited to visit and participate in the local schools.

12. Encourage mentor and tutor programs like Partners in Education Programs (PIE).

13. Facilitate the use of Web sites between schools.

14. Designate a staff member in each school to serve as liaison and coordinate with their counterpart at the installation. This individual will help to ensure school staffs have any available information regarding transition issues.

15. School systems should consider sending counselors and/or professional campus-level academic advisors to MCEC's Transition Counselor Institutes in order to have a designated transition specialist in place at each high school that serves military students.

G. Continue Strong, Child Centered Partnerships Between the Installation and

Supporting Schools Participate in a coordinated effort between the SETS partners to design the critical components for creating, implementing and monitoring the viability and robustness of the mutual effort and progress on the agreement (see the *MOA)*. Examples of such partnerships:

1. Establishment of a military child committee
2. Consist of members of both agencies
3. Meet regularly
4. Establish a "Local Action Plan"
5. Establish additional collaborative activities such as:
   a. Mentor/internship programs
   b. Voluntary advisory council
   c. Parent-teachers organizations
   d. Chapel youth organizations
   e. Family counseling programs
   f. Family action agencies
   g. Join ministerial alliance
   h. Speakers' bureau
   i. Pool of installation presenters for school classrooms
   j. Joint organization student leadership projects
   k. Leadership retreats for elementary or secondary students
   l. Soldier mentoring activities
   m. Encourage military parent involvement in school activities
   n. Provide clear information on the eligibility requirements for in state tuition.
6. Consider establishment of ex-officio school board member or military advisor to the school board
7. Consider establishment of installation liaison to school board
8. Exchange ideas with other school systems for coordination of effort and discussion of new challenges and opportunities.

Examples: Additional Lawton-Fort Sill Projects are: **APLAS** (Army Partnership with Lawton Area Schools.) Units develop partnership with elementary schools and provide mentors for junior high school students. Military Installation co-facilitates summer leaderships project for 100 high school students. Military parents are encouraged to attend school conferences and functions. **Wings of Eagles** provides Lawton-Fort Sill sixth-grade students a weekend (Friday-Sunday) retreat at Fort Sill to enhance the young people's self-confidence, leadership skills and self-esteem.

H. Provide Information Concerning Graduation Requirements Consider adopting the following practices that articulates the scope and conditions for reciprocity of graduation requirements:
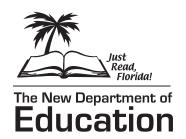   1. Permit the course as a substitute for state or Department of Defense Education

Activity (DoDEA) requirements. As long as state or DoDEA requirements are met, local requirements will be adjusted to support the student's transition.

2. A local waiver policy to include a standardized application form, a systematic review process, and flexible guidelines for approval. The waiver process will document how graduation requirements were met.

3. School officials will issue course credits to a student who transition near the end of a semester, as long as the student has passing grades.

4. In the event that a transitioning senior does not qualify for a diploma in the receiving school system, but can qualify in the sending school system, course and test credits will be transferred back to the sending school for issuance of the diploma.

5. Adopt a standardized matrix that depicts in a graphic representation the partner school systems' graduation requirements. School officials will update the matrix content annually and whenever a major revision occurs.

6. Inform school partners, parents and students about required state *exit level/end-of-course* testing and passing scores to improve probability of appropriate, timely placement in courses and programs. This information will be disseminated through system/installation Web sites and print media.

Note: The signatory partners will determine the process and responsible agents who will be required to maintain the "graduation requirements matrix" and distribute all updates. Adopt a policy of program continuity for a student enrolled in top tier diploma programs, such as a college/university preparatory program of study, and/or rigorous academic programs such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB). A student with satisfactory grades will not be required to re-qualify for these programs.

I. Provide Specialized Services for Mobile Students when Applying to and Finding Funding for Post Secondary Study

1. Share information with SETS Partners on methods that have worked in informing parents and students of the best methods for college and vocational/technical applications and the mobile student.

2. Ensure that every junior and/or senior student (and their parents) receives information about the college and vocational/technical application process, financial aid, available scholarships and grants for pursuing postsecondary education. Counselors and/or teachers provide models of completed applications, financial aid documents, scholarship and grant forms, and letters of recommendation. Include the military liaison in the distribution process.

3. Provide all 11th/12th grade students and their parents with printed information about what they will need for postsecondary educational pursuits and success. The document/handbook includes checklists, timelines, suspense dates, Web sites, phone numbers and names of contact persons at various local and state colleges/universities and at technical schools as well. The document/handbook is updated annually with assistance from counselors, other school personnel and college/university/technical school contacts. This document/handbook would be

included in the welcome/orientation packet that all transfer students receive upon arrival at their new school. In addition, multiple copies of the document/handbook will be provided to the military liaison for distribution from that office.

4. Conduct a district-wide college night and individual school college nights as well to provide information and assistance for students and/or parents with college and/or vocational/technical applications and financial aid packets. Information about available scholarships and grants should also be provided. College and vocational/technical admissions professionals conduct all activities. Ensure that the military liaison is included on the mailing lists of all scholarship, grant, and financial award grantees. The military liaison can schedule and replicate this program possibly at their Youth Activities Center on the installation.

5. Hold career education/information seminars for transitioning students. Invite representatives from local colleges/universities/vocational-technical schools, civic groups and various companies that provide scholarships or financial assistance to interested students, such as the Kiwanis, IBM, Texas Instruments, Coca-Cola, What-a-Burger, Motorola, Dupont, Texaco, Service Merchandise, Wal-Mart and J. C. Penney. Keep the military liaison informed of the dates of these seminars or that individual could also schedule similar seminars at the installation.

6. Work with MCEC to inform the colleges and universities of the unique needs of military students related to (post secondary) application and funding.
   a. Request that MCEC send copies of all documents that describe and detail the unique needs of military students to local college/university admissions personnel. (Local district/installation will provide addresses.)
   b. Provide the name of the military liaison to the local college/university.
   c. Create a local Task Force and/or Standing Committee that includes representation from MCEC, public education, the military liaison, local colleges/universities and vocational-technical schools to develop solutions to identified needs and to address issues affecting transitioning students. (Names of committee members would be included in the document/ handbook that is distributed to all transitioning students.)

7. Train counselors and teachers on how to best assist a mobile student on preparing college and vocational/technical applications.
   a. Ensure that all high school counselors and the military liaison are provided with information and training from the MCEC Transition Counselor Institute — provide videos, booklets, or other publications that can be distributed at local schools or on the installation. Counselors will in turn serve as resources/trainers for teachers.
   b. Provide assistance on completing college applications, choosing a career, pursuing financial aid and completing financial aid packets, writing resumes and themes for college entrance requirements, and securing letters of recommendation from former and current teachers and administrators. Training software could possibly be installed on one or more installation computers at the youth activities center.

c. Partner with local colleges, universities, and technical schools to conduct orientation classes for local seniors. Create a mentoring program that matches successful college freshmen with local seniors to assist with the college application and financial aid process. Hold several program sessions on the military installation, if necessary.

d. Use resources of the installation Education Center to provide information and assistance to parents and students — especially about careers and opportunities to finance post-secondary education through military service. Provide information about various funding sources, scholarships and grants that are available for special populations such as single parent families, military dependents, and minority groups.