

Florida Military Student Education Report

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 (see Appendix A). 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 (see Appendix B). 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:

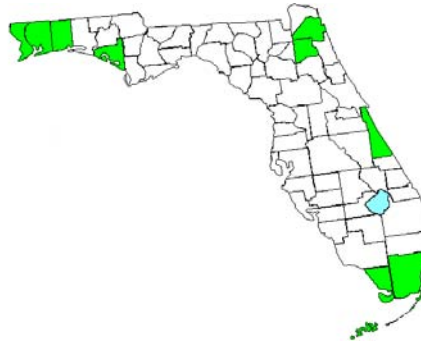
Assistant Superintendent	Director of Elementary and Secondary Education
Career Counselor	Director of High Schools
Community Affairs Director	Director of Secondary Education
Coordinator of Data Processing	District Record Specialist
Coordinator of School Choice	Educational Specialist
Department Superintendent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

Guidance Services Supervisor
MIS Director
Records Manager
Secondary Guidance Specialist

Student Services Coordinator
Student Services Director
Supervisor of Student Services

Of the school districts that responded to the survey, the following nine 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%

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