

# The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

## Fact Sheet for Service Providers

### Background

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children is an agreement among states to alleviate many of the school transition problems military families encounter. States agree to address specific school transition issues in a consistent way and minimize school disruptions for military children transferring from one state school system to another. It's up to the states to work together to resolve specific transition issues for individual students. The regulations and expectations of the Compact also apply to students transferring to, from or between Department of Defense Education Activity schools. As of August 2014, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have passed legislation to become members of the Compact, which consists of general policies in four key areas: eligibility, enrollment, placement and graduation.

### Policy areas

#### Eligibility

The Compact asks school districts to examine their rules for eligibility to allow children of military parents to have the continuity they need.

#### ▶ Enrollment

- › Children of deployed service members living with noncustodial parents, relative or friends outside the school district may continue to attend their own school if the caregiver provides transportation.
- › A power of attorney is sufficient for enrollment and other actions requiring parental participation or consent.

#### ▶ Extracurricular participation

- › Children may participate in extracurricular activities — provided they're eligible — even if application deadlines and tryouts have passed.
- › Schools must make reasonable accommodations but are not required to hold spaces open for military-related transferees.



## Enrollment

The Compact has provisions to facilitate enrollment in the following areas:

### ▶ Education records

- › Parents may take a set of unofficial records to the new school, which include all the information the new school needs to enroll and place the child until the district receives the official records.
- › All sending school districts are required to forward official transcripts within 10 days of a request from the receiving state school district.

### ▶ Immunizations

- › A child needing additional immunizations may enroll and begin school.
- › Parents have 30 days to get their child immunized.
- › Further immunizations must start within 30 calendar days of enrollment. Tuberculosis testing is not covered since the TB test is not an immunization but rather a health screening.

### ▶ Kindergarten and first grade entrance age

- › If the entrance age requirement is different, children may continue in the same grade if they have already started kindergarten or first grade.
- › Children are allowed to move up to first or second grade, regardless of age requirements, if they have completed kindergarten or first grade in another state.



## Placement

For student placement in required classes, advance placement and special-needs programs without a delay, the Compact requires cooperation in the following areas:

### ▶ Course and education program placement

- › A receiving school district must initially honor placement based on the student's enrollment in the sending state, provided the new school has a similar or equivalent program.
- › The new school may evaluate the student after placement to ensure it is appropriate, but the school may not put children into "holding classes" while they await assessment.
- › The receiving school may allow the student to attend similar education courses in other schools within the district if the receiving school does not offer such courses.

### ▶ Special education services

- › Students covered by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act receive the same services, although not necessarily identical programs, identified in the individualized education program from the sending state. This is a parallel requirement under federal law.

▶ **Placement flexibility**

- › School districts are encouraged to determine if course or program prerequisites can be waived for students completing similar coursework in the sending school district, allowing students to take advanced courses rather than repeating similar basic courses.

▶ **Absence related to deployment activities**

- › Students may request additional, excused absences to visit with their parent or legal guardian immediately before, during and after deployment.
- › Schools have flexibility in approving absences if there are competing circumstances, such as state testing or if the student already has excessive absences.

## **Graduation**

The Compact requires school districts to make the following accommodations to facilitate on-time graduation:

▶ **Course waivers**

- › School districts may waive courses required for graduation if similar coursework has been completed in another school.
- › Such waivers are not mandatory under the Compact, but a school district must show reasonable justification to deny a waiver.

▶ **Exit exams**

- › A school district may accept the sending state's exit exams, achievement tests or other tests required for graduation instead of requiring the student to meet the testing requirements of the receiving state.
- › States have flexibility to determine what tests they will accept or require the student to take.

▶ **Transfers during the senior year**

- › If a student moves during the senior year and the receiving state is unable to make the necessary accommodations for required courses and exit exams, the two school districts must work together to obtain a diploma from the sending school so the student can graduate on time.

## **Resources**

### **Department of Defense Education Activity**

<http://www.dodea.edu/Partnership/interstateCompact.cfm>

### **Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission**

<http://www.mic3.net>

