Overview of Military Student Identifier Policies

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Overview of Military Student Identifier Policies

- What is it?
- What states have it?
- Mechanics of collecting it
- Benefits
- Issues to consider

What is a military student identifier?

A flag or notation in an education data system for military-connected students

What states have a military student identifier?

Legislative Requirement	Independent Policy
• Alaska	• Florida
• Arkansas	• Maine
• Illinois	• Michigan
• Indiana	• South Carolina
• Minnesota	
• Nevada	
• North Carolina	
• Tennessee	
• Texas	

Mechanics of military student identifier

* **How is data collected?**
* **How is military-connected defined?**
* **How is data shared?**

How is data collected?

- Illinois – time of annual enrollment or any time during the school year on a standard enrollment form or separate form
- Maine – first day of school "welcome packet"
- Minnesota – district enrollment forms have self-identify check box
- North Carolina/Tennessee – require Board of Education/Department to develop process to identify
- Most states include data in school information system, although some states (TN) require data to be maintained in separate database

How is military-connected defined?

There is a great variety in the way in which "military-connected" is defined for purposes of identifying students. Some of the ways in which children are identified include:

* Parent or guardian is military-connected
* "Parent" is military-connected
* A family member other than a parent or guardian serves
* Child resides in the household of a person on active duty or reserve
* Parent, stepparent, sibling, or any other person residing in the same household as the student
* "Child of a military family"
* "Immediate family member, including parent or sibling"
* "Dependent"

How is military-connected defined? Cont.

- All states include 4 branches of military (Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force)

  Some also mention:
  - Reserves (10 states)
  - National Guard (10 states)
  - Coast Guard (5 states)

- All states include active duty

  Some also mention:
  - Medical discharge (for a period of one year)
  - Retired (for a period of one year)
  - Died on active duty (for a period of one year)

How is military-connected defined? Cont.

DOD cites best practice definition as:

"...pupil whose parent or guardian is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, a reserve component thereof or the National Guard..."

Nevada AB 224 (2013)

How is data shared?

- School accountability report card
- State longitudinal data system – most common
- Aggregated data reported to State Board of Education

Examples of Legislation

See Education Commission of the States Analysis of Military Student Identifier Policies August 2014 for examples of legislative language

Benefits

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- To best serve this population, we have to accurately identify them
- Inform policy and program decisions at local, state and federal level
- Establishes a "report-only" requirement in the same manner as migrant and homeless children – not intended to create an "accountability subgroup"
- Ability to track attendance, academic progress, and graduation
- More awareness at school and classroom level
- Facilitate data-driven decisions to improve distribution of resources

Benefits Cont.

- Minimal additional cost in adding a field to existing student information system

- Aside from local efforts, only the U.S. Department of Education Impact Aid Program collects data on the number of military students – often an undercount and some divisions receive less funds than they are eligible to receive

Issues to Consider

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- Some may see this as adding another mandate/reporting requirement for schools when they are already over-burdened with reporting requirements and paperwork
- May require schools who are not currently collecting this information to change their enrollment form
- Defining who you are actually trying to capture may be difficult especially on a school enrollment form
- Privacy issues – some individuals may oppose the mandatory reporting/sharing of this personal information
- Policy and resource implications of what you do when you have this data about military connected youth (achievement levels, graduation, etc.)