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Resource Available for Military Families with Students in Special Education ***Virginia Department of Education Developed New Guide to Assist in Transitions***

The Virginia Department of Education has developed a new guide for military families with children in special education. The 16-page guide provides information and answers to questions that military families with school-aged children might have about special education programs in Virginia public schools. Topics include enrollment, special education services, parental consent in Virginia, Section 504, dispute resolution and procedural safeguards.

Virginia — home to some of the nation's largest and most important military installations — educates more military children than almost any other state. In nearly every community in Virginia, there are children with parents or guardians on active duty with the armed forces. For a number of years, VDOE has partnered with school liaison officers, military leaders, educators and non-profit organizations to provide resources to support the unique needs of military service members and their families during all stages of transition and deployment.

“As home to so many of our nation’s veterans and active duty servicemen and women, Virginia is committed to providing our service members and their spouses with the tools and resources they need to support their families here at home,” said First Lady of Virginia Dorothy McAuliffe. “This guide will help these families navigate the education system and find resources uniquely tailored to the needs of their children.”

“Most students in military families will attend six to nine different schools — usually in several different states — between kindergarten and the 12th grade,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples. “This can be especially challenging for military parents of children with disabilities and we owe it to these families to provide resources to help them navigate these state-to-state transitions.”

“Students transitioning between schools due to frequent military relocations is always hard, but it can be especially difficult for families with students in special education,” said Delegate Kirk Cox, chairman of the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. “I hope our military families find this guide useful in answering some of their questions. The commonwealth of Virginia strives to provide the best education possible to our students and that extends especially to our students in special education. This resource guide should be an asset to families who are new to Virginia and just being introduced to our public school system.”

Printed copies of the guide were sent to school division special education directors and to Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine school liaison officers and military family coordinators. Copies will also be provided to members of the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The council, created by the 2009 General Assembly to represent Virginia in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, was formed to assist in easing the transition of children of military families into school as a result of frequent moves and deployment of their parents. [Guidance for Military Families with Students in Special Education](#) is also available in an online version.

Additional information and resources are available in a [Military Families](#) section of the VDOE website.

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