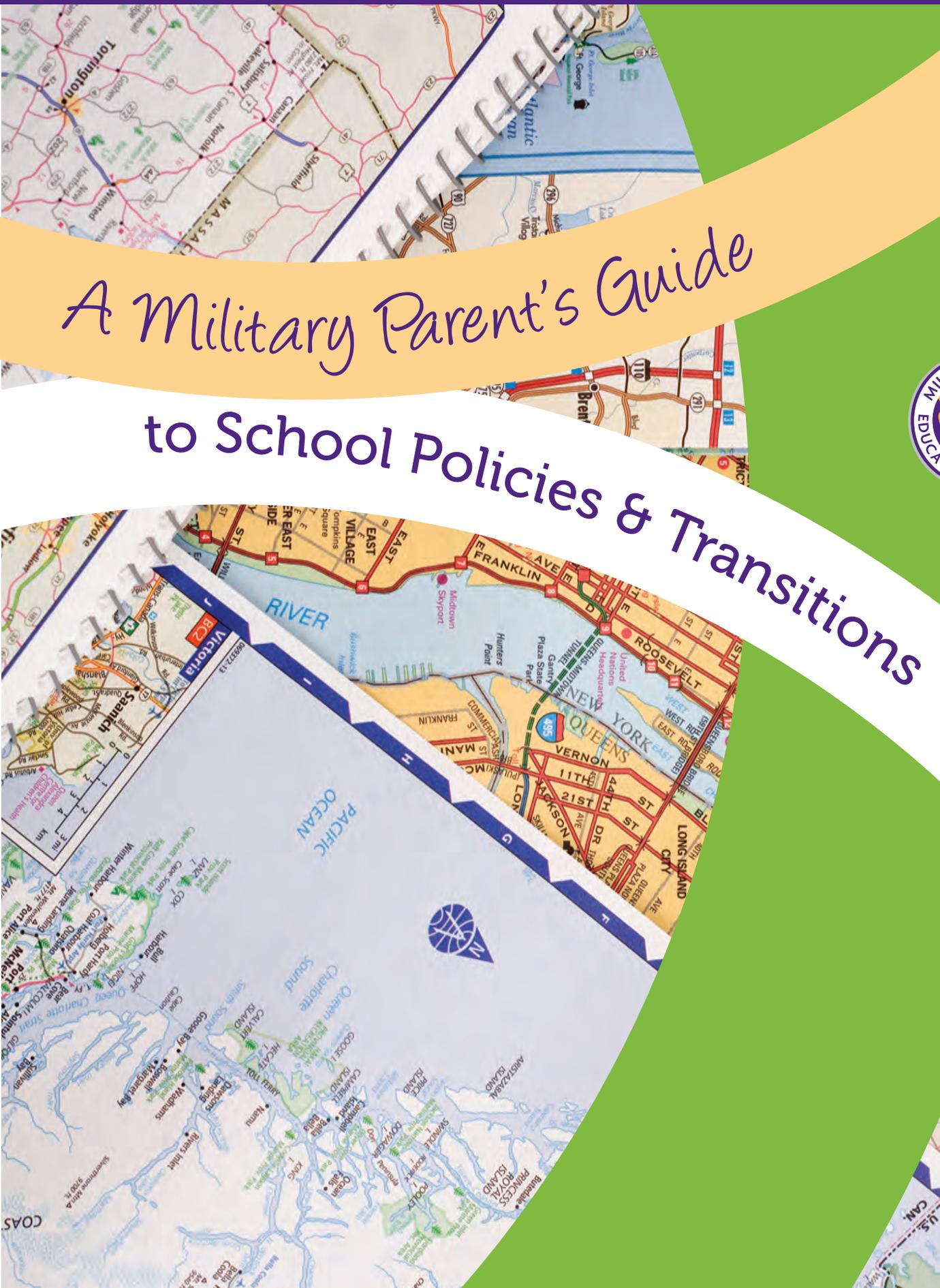


# A Military Parent's Guide

# to School Policies & Transitions





# The Packing List

It only takes one move before you realize there are some things you do NOT want the movers to pack. These are the things that you need right away. Once you have children in school, this list gets a little longer. These are all things that you need to carry with you when you move—even if you are just moving across town. Keep these things in a safe and easy to access location when you move:

- Student's Birth Certificate
- Student's Social Security Card
- Student's Health and Immunization Record
- Legal Documents as Needed
- Proof of Residency / Copy of Orders

## *From the School You Are Leaving*

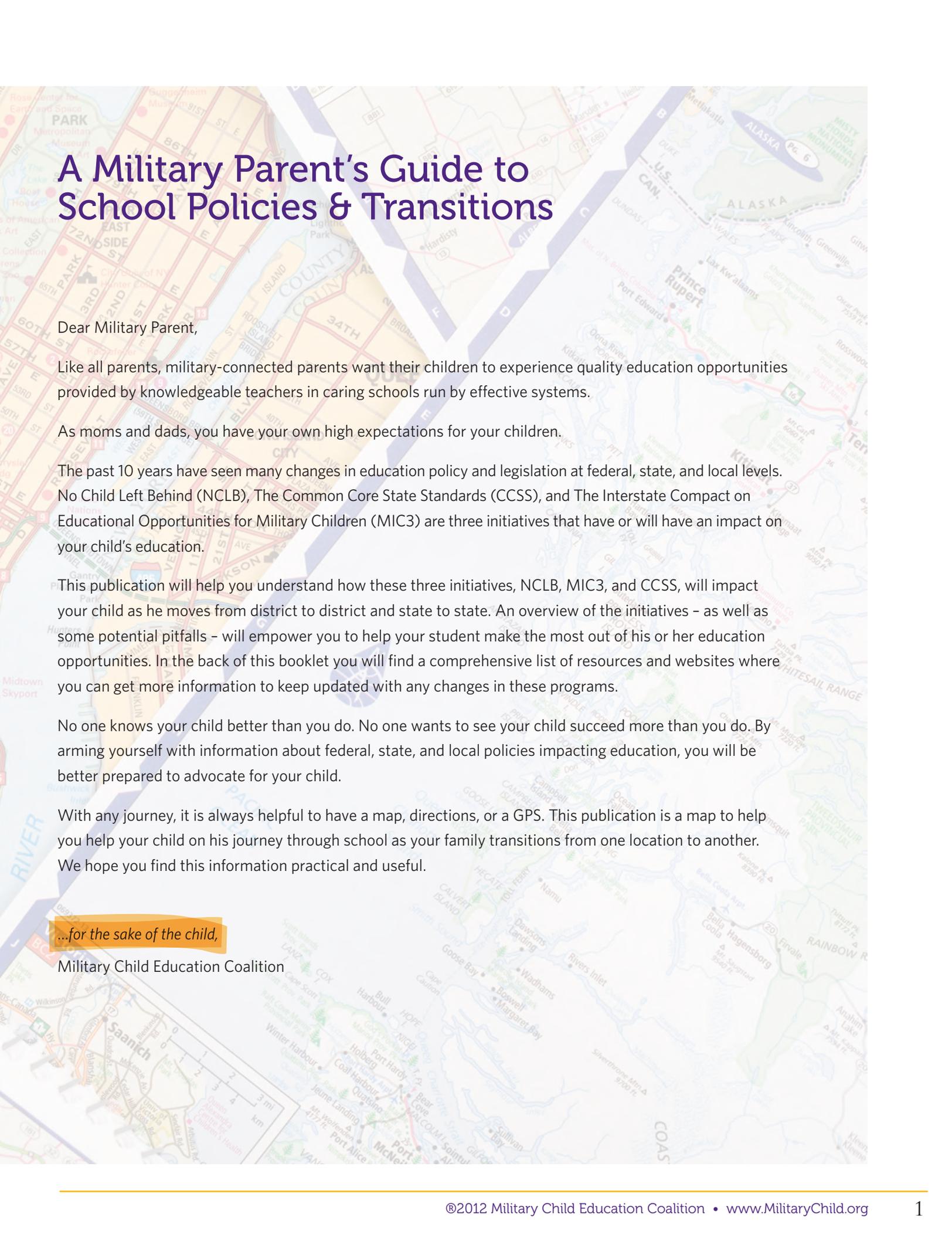
- The Address, Phone Number, other Contact Information
- Course Description Book and Grading Scale (grade 6 and above)
- Copy of the Cover of Each Textbook or the Title Page
- School Handbook
- School Website URL
- Copy of Your Child's Cumulative Record
- Current Schedule
- Report Card
- Withdrawal Grades or Progress Report
- Testing Scores (Standardized or Special Program Testing) with Score Interpretation

## *Special Program Records*

- Individual Education Plan (IEP), Individual Accommodation Plan (504), Gifted Program Description
- English as a Second Language or Bilingual Education
- At Risk or Other Plans for Classroom Modifications

## *Other*

- Samples of Work (Portfolio)
  - Activity Records (Extracurricular)
  - Community Service or Volunteer Hour Records
  - Other Work or Performance Examples
  - Academic Recognitions and Competition Participation
- 



# A Military Parent's Guide to School Policies & Transitions

Dear Military Parent,

Like all parents, military-connected parents want their children to experience quality education opportunities provided by knowledgeable teachers in caring schools run by effective systems.

As moms and dads, you have your own high expectations for your children.

The past 10 years have seen many changes in education policy and legislation at federal, state, and local levels.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB), The Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children (MIC3) are three initiatives that have or will have an impact on your child's education.

This publication will help you understand how these three initiatives, NCLB, MIC3, and CCSS, will impact your child as he moves from district to district and state to state. An overview of the initiatives – as well as some potential pitfalls – will empower you to help your student make the most out of his or her education opportunities. In the back of this booklet you will find a comprehensive list of resources and websites where you can get more information to keep updated with any changes in these programs.

No one knows your child better than you do. No one wants to see your child succeed more than you do. By arming yourself with information about federal, state, and local policies impacting education, you will be better prepared to advocate for your child.

With any journey, it is always helpful to have a map, directions, or a GPS. This publication is a map to help you help your child on his journey through school as your family transitions from one location to another.

We hope you find this information practical and useful.

*...for the sake of the child,*

Military Child Education Coalition

## Getting Started - How to Read the Map:

# Understanding the Acronyms of Education

If you have been connected to the military very long, you know that it takes a little bit of time and training to understand all the acronyms that are used. You may even remember a time when you were confused or didn't understand what someone was saying because they used so many acronyms or abbreviated words. After a little time, however, you found yourself using terms like PCS, POV, and TDY like they are common, everyday words that everyone should understand. The same is true in the education world. There are many confusing acronyms and abbreviated terms that are used when talking about programs and policies but with a little practice and training, you will understand what they mean.

## Here are some that are used all over the nation:

### **AYP - Adequate Yearly Progress.**

AYP refers to the accountability plan used by schools and school districts to determine their progress toward the NCLB goal of proficiency in reading, English, language arts, and math, for 100% of their students by 2014. Each state determined its own plan and measures progress annually. Accountability plans review student assessment performance and various other data to determine progress. Each state's plan is unique.

### **ESEA - Elementary and Secondary Education Act.**

ESEA was passed in 1965 as a part of the "War on Poverty." The emphasis of this law was equal access to education, high standards, and accountability.

### **LEA - Local Education Agency or Local Education Authority.**

The LEA is the agency that has oversight of local schools. LEAs are known by different names in different states. In some instances they may be referred to as a Unified School District or Independent School District. LEAs are usually governed by an elected school board.

### **NCLB - No Child Left Behind.**

In 2002, Congress amended ESEA and reauthorized it as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This landmark legislation seeks to raise the academic performance of all children, subgroup by subgroup, with the ultimate goal of 100% proficiency by 2013-2014.

### **RTI - Response to Intervention.**

RTI is a method of systematic assistance provided to students who are at risk of failing academically. RTI is designed to prevent academic failure through early intervention and frequent measurement of progress.

### **RTTT - (also RTT, and R2t) Race to the Top.**

RTTT is a "contest" created by the United States Department of Education. States compete for grants that address innovation and reform of various areas of state education systems that will positively affect student achievement.

### **ACT and SAT.**

The ACT and SAT are both standardized achievement tests that most students have to take for college admission. The highest possible score on the ACT is a 36. Only one percent of all students make a 36. The highest possible score on an SAT is 2,400. A student has to get an 800 on each of three components - reading, math and writing - to receive a perfect score. There are also versions of these tests that students can begin taking as early as middle school which help students prepare for the test and gives them an assessment of where they may need extra work or help.

## When your students get to middle and high school you will want to be familiar with these acronyms:

### **AP - Advanced Placement.**

Academically challenging classes that students may elect to take in high school. Students take a test at the end of the class and may receive college credit for the class if they score high enough.

### **AVID - Advancement Via Individual Determination.**

AVID programs target students who may be academically average but who desire to go to college and are willing to work hard to achieve that goal. The programs are in high schools but may begin as early as 6th grade.

## **GPA - Grade Point Average.**

Many schools in the United States assign a point value to a letter or number grade that a student earns. A commonly used scale is a four point scale, with four being the highest value. Some schools weight grades (add additional points) for honors and other advanced courses. GPA is calculated by taking the number of grade points a student earned in a given period of time divided by the total number of credits taken. A student's GPA determines where they rank in academic achievement compared to their peers. GPAs can present challenges for transitioning students if they move from a district that uses weighted grades to a district that does not use weighted grades or vice versa.

## **IB - International Baccalaureate.**

IB is a rigorous college preparation course of study that leads to examinations for highly motivated high school students. A student can start in an IB program in elementary school, although most begin in 9th grade. Students can earn college credit from many colleges and universities if their exam scores are high enough.

## **CCSSI or CCSS - Common Core State Standard Initiative or Common Core State Standards.**

The CCSS is an initiative by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices to identify the specific skills and knowledge students need to have in school in order to be prepared to enter college or the workplace. Standards have been written for math and English language arts.

(See page 6 for more detailed information about CCSS.)

## **EFM and EFMP - Exceptional Family Member and Exceptional Family Member Program.**

This is a term used by the military to designate a family member who has been identified as having a special need or the program that serves these individuals. Special needs may be medical or educational. Most installations have an office and a designated individual who runs the program.

## **IEP - Individualized Education Program (or Plan).**

An IEP is a plan that is designed to meet the unique educational needs of a student with special needs. The plan is written by the ARC, ARD, or IEP Committee. The IEP is mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Act.

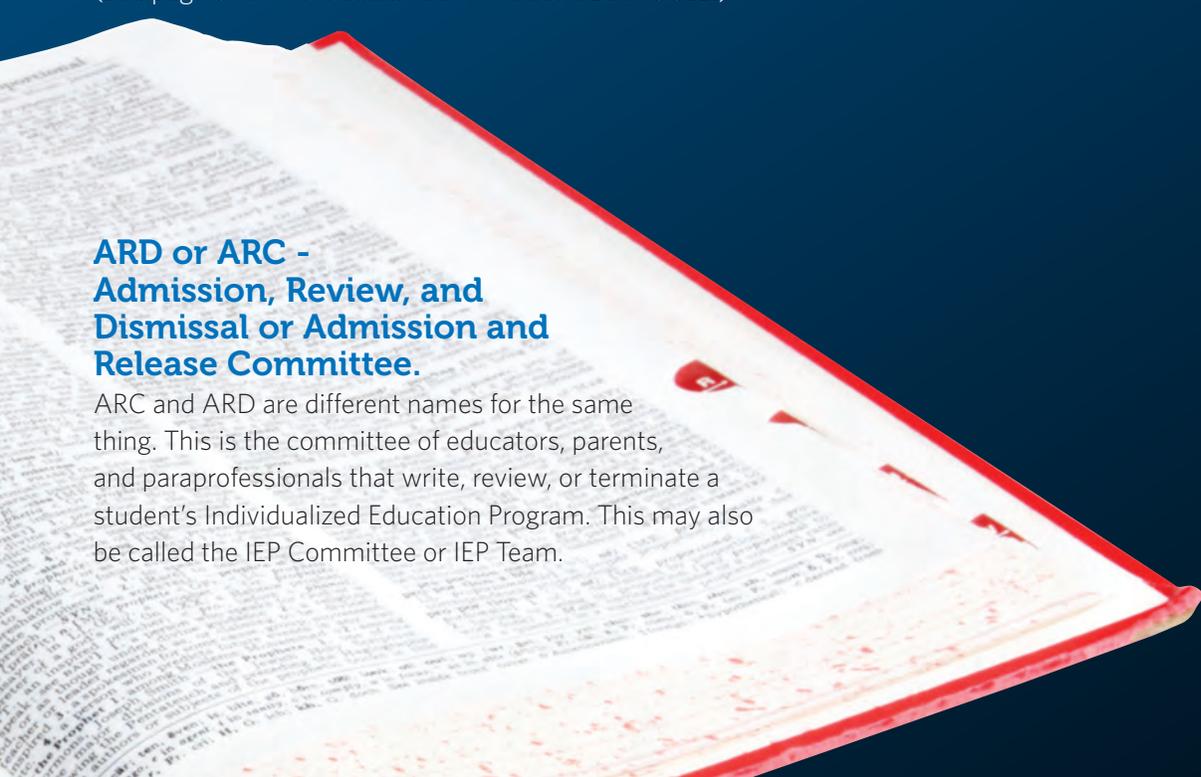
*An IEP is usually associated with a disability, but in some states gifted students are considered to have unique learning needs and IEPs are written for them.*

## **IDEA - The Individuals with Disabilities Act.**

IDEA is our nation's special education law that governs how states and public agencies provide services to individuals with disabilities, from birth to 21.

## **ARD or ARC - Admission, Review, and Dismissal or Admission and Release Committee.**

ARC and ARD are different names for the same thing. This is the committee of educators, parents, and paraprofessionals that write, review, or terminate a student's Individualized Education Program. This may also be called the IEP Committee or IEP Team.



**If you have a child with special needs, you know learning the acronyms can be even more confusing. Many LEAs use different terms for similar things.**

.....

### **The Rehabilitation Act and Section 504.**

(Sometimes this is referred to as “Five-O-Four”) Before there was IDEA, there was the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Section 504 of this Act is important to students who may not qualify for special education services but require some type of accommodation to ensure they have equal access to educational opportunities. A student may receive a 504 accommodation without going through the IEP process.

### **TAG, GATE, and G/T - Talented and Gifted, Gifted and Talented Education, and Gifted/Talent.**

These are all three common acronyms used for programs in schools for children with exceptional abilities. There is little consistency in gifted programs. Identification and admission into these programs is different from state to state. There is little consistency in gifted programs even within the same state; therefore, some district program may not be appropriate for students who were served in another state’s gifted program.

### **Finally, as a military parent you will want to know:**

#### **DoDEA, DoDESS, DoDDS - Department of Defense Education Activity, Department of Defense Elementary and Secondary Schools, Department of Defense Dependent Schools.**

The Department of Defense Education Activity is the federal agency that operates its own schools in the United States and overseas. DoDDS refers to schools outside of the Continental United States and DoDESS to schools within the United States.

#### **MIC3 - The Interstate Compact on Education Opportunities for Military Children.**

The acronym MIC3 actually stands for The Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission, which is the group that oversees the Compact. MIC3 is commonly used to refer to the actual agreement. The MIC3 is a compact with 43 member states, plus the District of Columbia (as of September 2012) that have agreed on procedures and policies to remove education barriers for transitioning military students (For more on MIC3, see page 8).

#### **MCEC - The Military Child Education Coalition.**

(That’s us!) A 501(c)(3) non-profit, world-wide organization, the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) is focused on ensuring quality educational opportunities for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition. You will find MCEC programs like Student to Student (S2S), Junior Student to Student (JS2S), and Military School Transition Consultants (MSTC) in schools near military installations.

Now that we are all speaking the same language, let’s look a little more closely at the three things that will most likely impact your child’s education as they move from state to state:

**NCLB,  
CCSS, and  
MIC3.**

# NCLB - A Road Map for the Nation

NCLB was signed into federal law on January 8, 2002 by President George W. Bush. This legislation required states to formalize their academic standards in reading/English language arts and mathematics as the first step in a comprehensive standards/assessment/accountability program. (The area of standards is one that is undergoing considerable change. In the next few years as states begin to implement CCSS children will begin to see more consistency and continuity in educational goals as they move from state to state. See Page 6)

Next, states had to align their schools' curriculum to their state standards. Now they could assess students to make sure they were learning what they needed to learn. Test results and other data were then disaggregated by a variety of indicators that included ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, language proficiency of non-native speakers and special education subgroups. Students who needed extra help and attention could be identified. Schools and school systems could also be rated by how well they meet standards through the state developed accountability program.

Another provision of the law requires that all students are taught by highly qualified teachers and parents are informed if their student does not have a highly qualified teacher. Safe schools were also an important part of the legislation.

For the military parent, NCLB is important because it enhances transparency in the education system. Parents can now access information about what is being taught and how it will be tested. Because schools are held accountable for improving student performance and their performance is reported annually, parents can use this information to learn more about their children's current or future schools. Informed, mobile military families can make the best decisions for their children.

## One way or another, this law covers **all public schools in all states.**

Major provisions of the NCLB law include standards, assessments, accountability, highly qualified teachers, and safe schools.

NCLB legislation required states to formalize academic standards as the first step in a comprehensive standards/assessment/accountability program. The area of standards is one that is undergoing considerable change. In the next few years, as states begin to implement CCSS, children will begin to see more consistency and continuity in educational goals as they move from state to state. (See Page 6)

### MCEC Tip #1

*Read up on your state's reading/English language arts and math by accessing them through the SchoolQuest Library.*

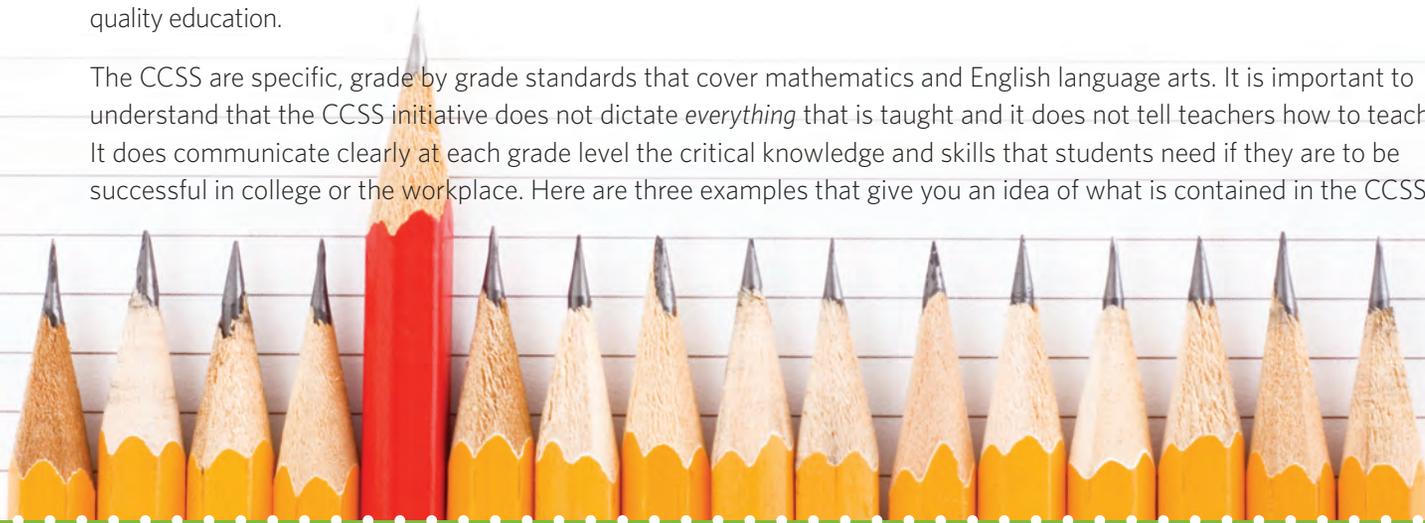
*If your state is already implementing CCSS, you can see all the standards at [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).*



# CCSS: Destination Careers & College

The Common Core State Standard Initiative began in 2008. This effort by the Chief Council of State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA) represents a major and critically important shift in education in the United States. This state-led initiative establishes a set of clear and consistent educational goals, grade level by grade level, for mathematics and English language arts. The development of the standards took several years. They were developed using evidence from the highest state standards throughout the nation as well as international standards. Experts in the education field, teachers, parents, and other school personnel from diverse backgrounds were involved in the development of the standards. The standards are designed specifically to ensure that children graduate from high school ready to enter college or the workplace. They are also benchmarked against international standards ensuring our children are competitive in the global marketplace. They provide students and parents with clear educational goals. This initiative is particularly important to the mobile military-connected child because it provides continuity and consistency as they move across state boundaries. The CCSS will be the same no matter where students live and are an important step to ensuring all children receive a high quality education.

The CCSS are specific, grade by grade standards that cover mathematics and English language arts. It is important to understand that the CCSS initiative does not dictate *everything* that is taught and it does not tell teachers how to teach. It does communicate clearly at each grade level the critical knowledge and skills that students need if they are to be successful in college or the workplace. Here are three examples that give you an idea of what is contained in the CCSS.



*This example is taken from the geometry section of seventh grade mathematics:*

- Draw, construct and describe geometrical figures and describe the relationships between them.
- Solve real-life and mathematical problems involving angle measure, area, surface area, and volume.

## **This second example of what the Standards look like is from elementary English language arts:**

### *Grade 3*

- 1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- 2 Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

### *Grade 4*

- 1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- 2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

### *Grade 5*

- 1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- 2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

*This final example is from 6th grade mathematics:*

- 1 Compute fluently with multi-digit numbers and find common factors and multiples.
- 2 Fluently divide multi-digit numbers using the standard algorithm. Fluently add, subtract, multiply, and divide multi-digit decimals using the standard algorithm for each operation.
- 3 Find the greatest common factor of two whole numbers less than or equal to 100 and the least common multiple of two whole numbers less than or equal to 12. Use the distributive property to express a sum of two whole numbers 1-100 with a common factor as a multiple of a sum of two whole numbers with no common factor. *For example, express  $36 + 8$  as  $4(9 + 2)$ .*

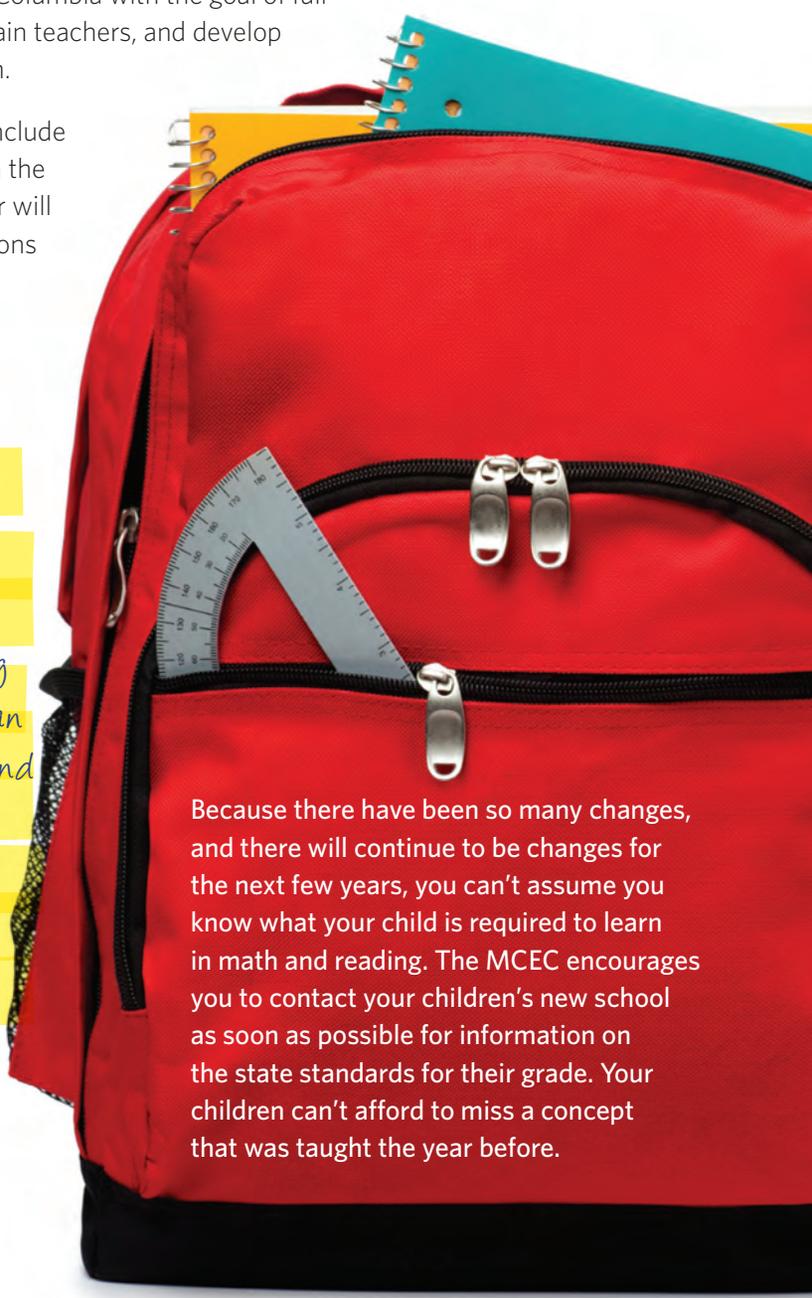
The CCSS have been adopted by 45<sup>1</sup> states and the District of Columbia with the goal of full implementation by 2014. States must align their curriculum, train teachers, and develop and acquire assessment tools before implementation can happen.

Currently there are about 50 curriculum standards when you include DoDEA, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the District of Columbia. With the adoption of CCSS students who move from one area to another will begin to see continuity in their educational goals and expectations most significantly in mathematics and reading language arts.

## MCEC Tip #2

*Read up on your state curriculum standards in reading and math. Find out if your state has adopted CCSS or is in the process of implementing them. If your state has implemented CCSS you can find a complete list of the standards - the skills and knowledge your child needs to have - by going to [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)*

*The document containing the standards can be downloaded and viewed at this website.*



Because there have been so many changes, and there will continue to be changes for the next few years, you can't assume you know what your child is required to learn in math and reading. The MCEC encourages you to contact your children's new school as soon as possible for information on the state standards for their grade. Your children can't afford to miss a concept that was taught the year before.

<sup>1</sup> Alaska, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia have not adopted the CCSS. Minnesota has adopted the English language arts portion of the CCSS (as of September 2012).

# MIC3 - Avoiding the Detours

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children (MIC3) is an agreement between states that outlines how states will remove barriers to educational success caused by frequent moves and deployment of military families. This state led initiative has no impact on any federal law nor is participation in the Compact tied to any federal funding.

The goal of the Compact is to replace the widely varying policies affecting transitioning military students. Consistency in policy provides students with predictability when they transition. The MIC3 does not address curriculum or standards.

The MIC3 is a result of work by the Department of Defense and the Council of State Governments' National Center for State Compacts that began in 2006. In November of 2007 the document was completed, and the first state to enter the MIC3 was Kansas in April 2008. The Compact became active when Delaware entered as the 10th state in July 2008. States enter into the Compact voluntarily. To date (September 2012) 43 states and the District of Columbia are members of the Compact.

*The MIC3 is relatively new. It takes some time for new policies to get to the campus level. As a parent, you want to be familiar with the language of the Compact. Your installation School Liaison Officer would be a good starting point for questions regarding the Compact. You can also contact your state's MIC3 Commissioner through the MIC3 website, [www.MIC3.net](http://www.MIC3.net)*

## The issues addressed by the MIC3 include:

### Enrollment

- Educational Records and Acceptance of Hand Carried Records
- Immunizations
- Kindergarten & First Grade Entrance Age
- Enrollment Placement & Attendance
- Course & Educational Program Placement
- Special Education Services
- Placement Flexibility
- Absence Related to Deployment Activities

### Graduation

- Waiving courses required for graduation if similar course work has been completed
- Flexibility in accepting state exit or end-of-course exams, national achievement tests, or alternative testing in lieu of testing requirements for graduation in the receiving state
- Allowing a student to receive a diploma from the sending school instead of the receiving school

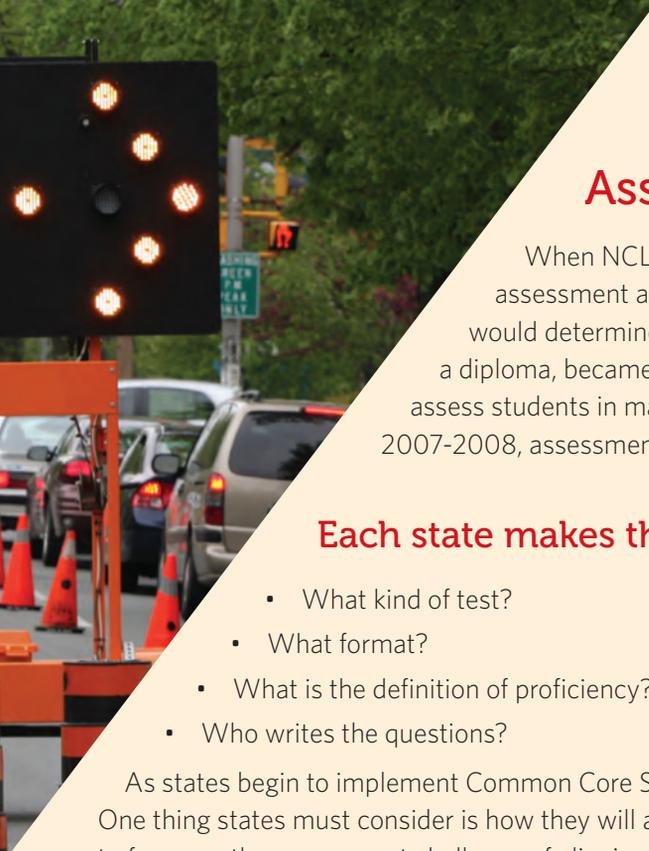
### Eligibility

- Eligibility for Student Enrollment
- Eligibility for Extracurricular Participation

### MCEC Tip #3

*Check out the What Works Clearinghouse, established by the Department of Education, for more information on scientifically based research and classroom tested education strategies.*

*Go to <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>*



## Assessment - "Are We There Yet?"

When NCLB was signed into law in 2002, it brought with it a new landscape for assessment and testing. "High Stakes Testing," a term used to describe tests that would determine whether a student would be promoted to the next grade or receive a diploma, became part of the assessment language. In 2005 schools were required to assess students in math and reading in every grade 3-8 and once in grades 10-12. In 2007-2008, assessment in science was added.

### Each state makes the decision about:

- What kind of test?
- What format?
- What is the definition of proficiency?
- Who writes the questions?
- Who reviews test items?
- Will we have the required technology to test?
- When to test?
- Which test company to work with?

As states begin to implement Common Core State Standards, (CCSS) the testing landscape will change once again. One thing states must consider is how they will assess their students on the new standards. Two consortia were formed to focus on the assessment challenge of aligning the standards to the assessment. These two consortia, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced or SBAC) are multistate consortia that were awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Education to develop an assessment system based on the new CCSS.

### *There are several reasons for developing new tests:*

- 1 Revised standards require revised curriculum which in turn requires new tests.
- 2 The CCSS are often more rigorous than the state standards that were in place previously.
- 3 Technology advances enable more accurate assessment of student performance with quicker return of results.
- 4 High school assessments delivered at an exit level can identify those students who are and are not college ready based on the new standards.

Similar to the tests previously administered under the No Child Left Behind legislation, both PARCC and SBAC are designing tests for students in grades three through ten. A change from state-based systems, high school level tests include formative items for grades 9 through 11, with summative college readiness assessment in grade 11. Ninety-five percent of the student population at the grade level being assessed are expected to take the regular state assessments, some with accommodations or modifications.

Most students with special needs are assessed using the regular state assessment. Some require some type of accommodation, such as additional time. A small percent of students with special needs will take a state developed/approved alternate assessment. The assessment decision will be made by the student's IEP Committee and this decision may differ from subject to subject. Parents are an essential decision maker and vital part of that committee. Remember, in some places this may be the ARD, ARC, or Child Education Review Team. Don't let the name throw you. They all have the same purpose.

Every child in a bilingual program or English as a Second Language program, also sometimes called English for Speakers of Other Languages, will be assessed annually. Some states may assess students in their own language if they cannot test them in English. English language learners are phased in to the state assessment programs. Assessment decisions are made by the student's Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) unless the student is also a special needs student.

A Summative assessment evaluates to what degree students have acquired specific skills or concepts. Summative tests are frequently end-of-course or end-of-year but they may also include weekly, quarterly, or semester tests.

The difference between the two types of assessments is how the results are used.

*A formative test is an assessment that evaluates a student's current progress.*

*Results from formative tests are used to determine where gaps may exist and the course of action needed for remediation to address those gaps.*

## MCEC Tip #4

Know what your child is responsible for on the test and how well they have to perform on each test to pass. Encourage your child to strive for more than a "basic" level of proficiency.

As soon as you know you are moving, inquire about the required state tests that your child is responsible for. You can do this the first time you meet with your child's teacher. (See Parent –Teacher Conference Tips on page 12). If your student did well on their tests last year, it doesn't guarantee he will do well on his tests this year. For example, under the current system of state standards and assessment, a student who was proficient in grade 4 math in one state may or may not be proficient in grade 4 math in another state. This student could be behind before the school year even starts. This is a great example of an issue that should be alleviated with the implementation of CCSS—the standards for math are the same no matter where you live.

Ask your child's teacher(s) for information on state required assessments. Inquire about family nights that introduce the state assessment programs. Visit the State Education Resource Center at [www.SchoolQuest.org](http://www.SchoolQuest.org) and choose your state and category to learn about the test frameworks, test performance, and study resources provided by the state education agencies. Look for released versions of the tests; just make sure released versions are for the current assessment program.

## MCEC Tip #5

Parents of children who have unique learning challenges will want to know about accommodations and modifications for state assessments. When state assessments are not appropriate, know the options for alternative tests in order to make the best decision for your child.

Military parents must relearn the Special Needs identification process and assessment for each state they live in. This knowledge may result in speeding up the ARD or LPAC decision process. If your child was scheduled to receive accommodations or modifications on state assessments or take an alternative assessment at a previous school, make sure you bring your child's records with you and immediately inform your new school upon arrival. Quick decisions must still be correct decisions. You can find out more about accommodations and modifications for assessments through the MCEC Education Resource center on the SchoolQuest website ([www.SchoolQuest.org](http://www.SchoolQuest.org)). Look for "Special Education" or "Bilingual/ESL" for English as a Second Language (English Language Learners). You can also address specific questions to "Ask Aunt Peggie" at [Peggie.Watson@MilitaryChild.org](mailto:Peggie.Watson@MilitaryChild.org).

## MCEC Tip #6

Start looking for test format information through the SchoolQuest State Education Resource Center located in the SchoolQuest Library [www.schoolquest.org](http://www.schoolquest.org).

Look for words like “Exemplars” or “Sample Papers.” Also look for “Blueprints” which sometimes tell the number of each question type or objective. Don’t skip over the rubrics (a rubric tells you how tests are scored and what each point means to the scorer). It’s one thing to know an answer is wrong; to know why it is wrong so you don’t make the mistake again is much more helpful.

Don’t rely entirely on the format from the previous year to study for the test. The same concept can be tested many different ways.

Tests take many forms. They can be multiple-choice, short answer, filling in a grid with a student generated response, showing all your work or explaining how you came up with the solution. While only a few states publish the actual tests from previous years, most states have sample or released items.

One piece of “good news” for the mobile military-connected child is that the two consortia developing assessment programs for states that have adopted the CCSS have plans to develop common achievement standards that will enable student scores to be compared both among member states as well as between the two Consortia.



## MCEC Tip #7

Post test dates in your calendar and avoid scheduling medical, dental, or other appointments for your child during this time. Being aware of test dates does not mean you add extra stress or anxiety to your child’s life by continually reminding them of the upcoming tests. Your child probably knows all too well when the tests are scheduled. If you have to move after the school year starts, especially in the spring time, check out the new schools website for the test calendar so you are prepared.

*Mobile students may test twice in one year since testing calendars are different in each state. Your child could enroll one day and test the next.*

Keep in mind testing changes associated with the implementation of CCSS will not be fully operational until 2014-2015, but some states may begin pilot tests during the 2012-13 school year and there should be large pilot programs during the 2013-14 school year. Technology will play a large role with much assessment expected to be delivered on line. Computer adaptive testing could lead to better identified learning levels. Look for more student open response items and student work.

Assume your child will be tested even if you move in the week before the test. This is true even for students with special needs or English language learners. Some states have specific test dates; others have windows for assessment time. You should be able to access the dates for testing by visiting the new school district’s or campus’s website.

# Parent Teacher Conferences

## A Successful Journey Requires Teamwork

One of the most important things you can do whether your child is moving to a new school or just starting a new school year is arrange for a face-to-face conference with your child's teacher(s). Do not wait until the end of the first nine weeks of school when many schools have traditionally held parent teacher conferences. A conference early in the school year, followed up at the nine week mark or more frequently if needed, will set your child up for success.

### Plan for a productive conference by following these tips:

- 1 Write down any question you may have prior to the conference. This will help keep the conference focused.
- 2 Ask your child what she would like you to talk about with her teacher. Are there any concerns she has related to the new school, her class or the new school year?
- 3 Be on time and stay on track. Be respectful of the teacher's time and do not go off on a tangent unrelated to the purpose of the conference.
- 4 If you have a portfolio of your child's work, take it with you. This is a good way for you to let the teacher know what "right" looks like for your child. If your child has already completed work for his new teacher, ask to see a sample of this work and discuss with the teacher if his work is on track, how it could improve and what you can do at home to support learning.
- 5 Ask about school and class policies regarding absences, make-up work, how and how often students are tested. Is there a student handbook?
- 6 Be sure and find out the best way to communicate with the teacher in the future. Does he prefer email or phone calls, for example. Does the teacher have a website?
- 7 After the conference, share the information with your child. Let her know that you and her teacher are a team with a common goal-her academic success.



*Schools frequently have back to school nights or open houses at the beginning of the year. This is a great opportunity to meet your child's teachers but not the time for you to have a personal conversation with the teacher about your child. Schedule a time through the school office for a personal conference.*

# Glossary of terms used in education

## Accommodations

Provisions made for a student to allow them equal access to education programs, activities, or services.

## Block scheduling

Scheduling at high school may be block, alternating block or traditional. Block schedules are sometimes referred to as accelerated or four-by-four block schedule; students take four, 90-minute classes a day, every day, for one semester. The alternating or alternative block is where students have an extended time in each class, usually 90 minutes, and go to four classes on one day, and four other classes on the alternating day. The days are frequently identified as A/B days or two colors such as Black/Gold days. In a traditional schedule students take six to eight classes for the entire year.

## Core academics

The subjects or classes that all students are required to take. English, Math, Social Studies (History) and Science are most frequently considered core academic subjects.

## Charter school

Charter schools are publicly funded elementary or secondary schools but do not have to follow all of the rules, regulations, and statutes that apply to other public schools. A Charter school is accountable for producing certain results which are set forth in each school's charter. They may be run by groups of teachers, parents, and/or private foundations.

## Criterion referenced test

A test that measures how well a student has learned a specific body of knowledge and skills. The goal is typically to have every student attain a passing mark, not to compare students to each other.

## Highly qualified teachers

Teachers who are fully certified and licensed to teach in the state where they teach.

## Impact Aid

A federally funded program that provides a portion of the education costs of federally connected students. It is designed to help offset the loss of property tax revenue specifically for students who live on federal property (military installation) where there is no property tax, but schools receive impact aid if a student has a parent that works on federal property.

## Inclusion

Also referred to as mainstreaming is the practice of placing a special needs student in a regular classroom environment.

## Norm referenced test

An assessment in which an individual or group's performance is compared with a larger group. Usually the larger group is representative of a cross-section of all US students.

## Portfolio

A collection of various samples of a students' work throughout the school year.

## Pull-out program

Instruction in small groups outside of the classroom. Pull-out programs are common as instructional programs for gifted or talented students or English Language Learners.

## Title One

A federal program that provides funds to improve the academic achievement for educationally disadvantaged students.

## Rubric

A rubric is a set of standards that is used to score subjective responses on an assessment. A rubric would be used to score an essay or writing question.

Here is a list of **all the websites** mentioned in this publication as well as some other **helpful** and **informative** website resources:

## The Military Child Education Coalition

[www.militarychild.org](http://www.militarychild.org)

The MCEC website will keep you updated on the programs and services available to you and your child. The website includes a link to Ask Aunt Peggie, your personal researcher who can answer questions about education and transition. You can also link to SchoolQuest from the MCEC website.

## SchoolQuest

[www.SchoolQuest.org](http://www.SchoolQuest.org)

SchoolQuest is your online academic resource. It is a free and secure resource center that helps you find information about schools when you are moving. You and your student can store a profile of his academic achievements and plans, find information on colleges and scholarships, and link to your state's education resources. It even includes a blog where you can catch up on the latest news and post your comments.

## The Common Core State Standards

[www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

You can find the information and news about the implementation of CCSS as well as the grade by grade standards for math and English language arts.

## The Interstate Compact on Education

**Opportunities for Military Children** [www.mic3.net](http://www.mic3.net)

The MIC3 website allows you to view the compact document and has the contact information for your state's Compact Commissioner.

**National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities** [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

This website provides information for parents who have children with special needs. It includes easy to read information about The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and resource information for each state that will help you connect to available programs and services.

## The National PTA

[www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)

The National PTA website has resources to help parents. You can find downloadable brochures about CCSS for each grade under Parent Involvement or by linking directly to <http://www.pta.org/4446.htm>.

**The U.S. Department of Education** [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

This site includes information about the Department's offices, programs, information and assistance services, funding opportunities, and education statistics.



## A Military Parent's Guide to School Policies & Transitions

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