



# MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COALITION®

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 9, 2015

## **Military Child Education Coalition Applauds Inclusion of Military Student Identifier in Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

**WASHINGTON** – The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) thanks and congratulates the members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives who voted in favor of the Every Student Succeeds Act, particularly Senators Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray and Representatives John Kline and Bobby Scott for their strong leadership on the issue. The legislation, which now goes to the President for signature, includes a military student data element that will enable military leaders, educators, and elected officials at all levels of government to understand how military-connected children are performing in school.

Today, nearly two million military-connected children and youth (birth through age 23) live with perpetual challenges presented by frequent moves, parental deployments, and a host of life transitions that include reintegration and dealing with profoundly changed parents. The well-being of these children depends heavily on a network of supportive adults who are trained to identify early signs of emotional or physical challenges. Although there are more than one million school-age military-connected students in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, the vast majority in public school classrooms, there was no reliable, consistent, school-based data on the academic health of these students. Once the Every Student Succeeds Act is signed into law that will finally change giving a voice to the children of those who serve us all.

“We have an all-volunteer force that has endured more than 14 years of war with frequent and repeated military parent deployments,” said Dr. Mary Keller, president and chief executive officer of MCEC. “We also know military-connected children move three times more often than their peers, creating the opportunity for disruptions, disconnects and gaps in education, in addition to the stress of having parents away from home for long periods of time.

Without the military student identifier, educators and policy leaders have no way of knowing whether these students are faring well, keeping pace, or falling behind. The identifier will provide data to inform both educators and policymakers, enabling them to adjust programs, direct resources and adopt strategies that support these students and their military families.”

The military student identifier in ESSA applies to students with a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces on active duty. The Military Child Education Coalition strongly supports the inclusion of students whose parents serve in the National Guard or Reserves as part of the ESSA reporting on military-connected students.

The 2014 Department of Defense Demographics Report indicates that there are more than 500,000 military-connected school-aged students of the National Guard and Reserve components. They reside within all fifty states, yet are almost hidden from public recognition as being from a military family.

The parents of these children deploy globally in response to our nation's call, just as the active duty service members do. Unintentionally, National Guard and Reserve component deployments are often conducted with less recognition and less local resource support for the family and children.

The National Guard routinely deploys within their respective state in response to state emergencies, directives or while in training. While not an overseas deployment, "gone is gone" for a child of the respective service member and regardless of the reason for parental absence, these children live with continual stressors and transition adjustments that their civilian classmates do not experience.

Teachers and school administrators are often unaware of military-connected children being within their schools and classrooms and therefore not attentive to not only the academic needs, but also the social and emotional well-being of these children. More accurate considerations of the amplified needs of these children would be possible via the military student data identifier.

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### **ABOUT THE MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COALITION**

Founded in 1998, the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) is a 501(c)(3) global nonprofit leadership and advocacy organization focused on ensuring quality educational opportunities for America's 4 million military and veteran-connected children affected by mobility, family separation and transition. For more information visit [www.MilitaryChild.org](http://www.MilitaryChild.org)