

Frequently Asked Questions

Massachusetts Military Children's Identifier

In May 2012 Governor Patrick signed the VALOR Act, which strengthened services for veterans and their families in the Bay State. As a provision of the Act our state joined the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3). As a signatory of the MIC3 Compact, our state agrees to abide by special provisions involving the interstate transfer of school-aged children whose parents or guardians meet the following criteria:

- Active duty military personnel or National Guard or Reserve personnel serving on active duty
- Active duty military veterans who have been medically discharged or retired within one year
- Deceased while on active duty

At the urging of the military support community, the Mass. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) created a Student Information Management System (SIMS) category for "Military Family Status." This data will not be reported until the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

Following are answers to questions that have arisen in relation to the Military Children's Identifier.

1. How should school districts attempt to identify military children?

First of all, Military Family Status disclosure is strictly voluntary. Most families are proud of their loved ones' military service, but others choose not to disclose it, particularly if the head of the household is overseas or deployed to a confidential assignment. We recommend that school districts create a question on their enrollment forms asking if the student meets the MIC3 criteria. We also recommend that school districts add a question to the 2014-2015 school year Student Emergency Information Form asking parents or guardians if the student meets the MIC3 criteria for Military Family Status at the beginning of the school year. This becomes increasingly more important as we look ahead, because active duty status changes from year to year, particularly in the National Guard and Reserves.

2. Why does the state need to know if there are military children enrolled in a school?

There is no intent to monitor enrollment or compliance with MIC3 provisions, but there are many service providers who are eager to offer assistance for military children. Identification can help locate schools and districts that can benefit from these services. Among the Massachusetts agencies who offer services for military children:

Mass. National Guard Family Programs Office
Operation Military Kids
Home Base Program – Red Sox Foundation
Veterans Inc.

Military Child Education Coalition
Wheelock College – Center of Excellence for Military Children and Families
Military Friends Foundation

3. Why should schools be interested in a child's Military Family Status?

Studies have shown that the children of military personnel have unique needs. Children from military families are more likely to experience anxiety, fear of separation, behavioral issues, risk behaviors, and other emotional concerns, particularly if a parent is deployed in a combat zone or if there are frequent transitions. Guidance counselors, administrators, and teachers can offer more effective support and intervention if they're aware of the student's Military Family Status. In addition, schools can request special assistance from military children's support services on behalf of students who are in need.

4. Why aren't the children of veterans or National Guardsmen and reservists who aren't on active duty reported under Military Family Status?

Currently DESE has chosen to identify only those children who are eligible under the MIC3 criteria. When the MIC3 State Council convenes, it will consider a recommendation to expand the reporting criteria for Military Family Status.

5. Will there be negative consequences for school districts who report no military children?

Once again, identification of military children is strictly voluntary. We know that less than one percent of our nation's population serves on active duty in the armed forces. It is very likely that many Massachusetts cities and towns will not have any identified military children.

6. Where can I get further information?

The Military Children's Compact Commission has an excellent website. You can log on at:
<http://www.mic3.net>

For specific questions and concerns, please contact the Massachusetts MIC3 Commissioner:
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