

Arkansas is a member of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, found at Ark. Code Ann. §6-4-301 et seq. School districts and open-enrollment charter schools are reminded of the importance of compliance with the Military Interstate Compact. Information, rules, school and parent resources, and additional guidance are available on the Department's website at <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/legal/military-families>.

Military families are encouraged to provide advance notice to schools of enrollment of a military student. If a school receives notice from a military family with an order to transfer indicating the family anticipates residency in the district, the school should treat this notice as tentative enrollment, and provide families with counseling concerning courses, electives, sports, and other topics.

It is appropriate to ensure parents are given all forms and information the parent would ordinarily be given upon enrollment of their student, including pre-registration forms, course selection guides and materials, request for records forms, enrollment forms, home language surveys, and free or reduced school lunch paperwork. Schools should ensure the parent receives the Release of Information form that allows the sending school district to release the student's records to the receiving district. Timely exchange of information is crucial for smoothing the transition of military students between districts and to ensure proper accommodations, placements, and supports for students with disabilities.

Schools should consider the date anticipated for student enrollment and consider class size, course conflicts, and elective availability and should exercise existing protocols with regards to course waiting lists for course enrollment requests. Schools may pre-register students in anticipation of district residency by inputting required demographic information in e-School. This status will not include students in any state reporting. Schools may enter course requests for a given student based on transcript information received from the family of the entering student or the student's prior school. When the school has a waiting list for admission, military students should be placed on the waiting list as of the date they provide notice to the school of anticipated enrollment.

While encouraged to enter course requests, schools should not enter a class schedule for the student. Entering a class schedule will result in holding a seat for a student who has not yet arrived and may create inaccurate totals for class size, district size, and average daily membership (ADM). For questions related to demographic or course requests, contact Carmen Jordan at carmen.jordan@arkansas.gov

When warranted by the circumstances, schools districts may seek necessary waivers from the State Board of Education to facilitate the education of entering military students, including but not limited to a waiver to address class ratios.

Military students are entitled to equitable access to courses. When a course is not offered by the school, schools must attempt to align the student's prior courses with credit-bearing courses available at the school, as well as exploring digital options that might provide appropriate credit. Course credit should be in the best interest of the student transferring into the school. Schools should also consider options for personalized learning when students enroll after the start of the fall or spring semester to allow the student to catch up or receive support. For questions related to courses or graduation requirements, contact Suzanne Knowles at Suzanne.knowles@arkansas.gov.

Consistent messaging within the district aids military families in a smooth transition. Schools are encouraged to appoint a military liaison for the district to assist in schools in achieving consistent messaging with families. Districts that regularly receive many military students are encouraged to meet qualifications apply for the Arkansas Purple Star School Award. For more information, visit the Department's website at: http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/Legal/Purple_Star/2018_MIC3_Purple_Star_School_Program_Description_Sep_20.pdf.