



State of Arizona

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Governor Jan Brewer Establishes Panel to Help Meet Unique Education Needs of Children in Military Families

Group to Focus on Assisting with Classroom Issues Associated with Deployments, Transfers

PHOENIX – It's the eve of the start of another school year, and that can mean plenty of anxiety and sleepless nights for students preparing for class in a different school. The unfamiliar setting. New teachers. Different classmates.

Now, imagine going through that stress and worry every few years. That's the reality for thousands of Arizona children who have one or more parents in the Armed Forces. Due to regular deployments, transfers and other unique stresses of the mobile military lifestyle, these children face special challenges in their education.

To help meet these challenges, Governor Jan Brewer today signed an Executive Order establishing a State Council on the Education for Military Children. The Council will provide a forum for these families to discuss their needs, and will offer recommendations to the Governor on steps the State of Arizona can take to assist military families in minimizing the educational disruption to children during deployment and relocation. Currently, an estimated 9,890 children from military families attend Arizona K-12 schools

"I'm proud that Arizona has a strong military community, with installations employing more than 83,000 active-duty personnel, reservists and civilians across our State," said Governor Brewer. "But I also recognize that children in these households may face unique academic challenges, especially due to their frequent relocation. Through the work of this Council, the State of Arizona can take the actions necessary to minimize disruptions so that these children receive the education they deserve while their parents serve our Nation."

The average military family moves three times more often than its civilian counterpart. As a result, it is estimated that most military children will enroll in six to nine different school systems between Kindergarten and high school graduation. Every time a student transfers, they face not only the stress of making new friends and becoming accustomed to a new school, but also more mundane challenges associated with records transfer, variable academic and graduation requirements between schools, missed milestone assessments and other issues.

"The Department of Education has been representing Arizona on the Interstate Commission on Educational Opportunity for Military Children to address the unique needs of our state's military children," said Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal. "We are pleased the Governor has created this Advisory Council to help enhance our efforts."

The primary goal of the State Council on the Education for Military Children will be to provide a forum for the representatives of Arizona's military installations, school administrators and parents to present and find solutions to these unique challenges.

"The military families in the Yuma area appreciate the Governor's emphasis on addressing the unique needs of the military child. These young people are as dedicated to excellence as their parents," said Col. Robert Kuckuk, commanding officer for Marine Corps Air Station Yuma. "Support for the Interstate Compact for Military Children is vital to leveling the playing field for these highly-mobile children."

The panel will include, but not be limited to, the following members:

- State Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee
- A Superintendent of a School District with a high concentration of military children
- The Commander, or their designee, from each of the following military installations:
 - Davis-Monthan Air Force Base
 - Fort Huachuca
 - Luke Air Force Base
 - US Army Yuma Proving Ground
 - Marine Corps Air Station Yuma
- The Adjutant General or designee
- One representative from the Legislative Branch
- One representative from the Executive Branch

"Our Fort Huachuca Families and I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the State Council on the Education for Military Children," said Maj. Gen. Gregg Potter, commanding general of Fort Huachuca and the U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence. "Soldiers are the strength of our Army, and our families are the strength of our soldiers. Ensuring our military children have the best access to the best education is just one way we can strengthen our Army and our Nation. Ultimately, all of Arizona's children will benefit from the efforts of this Council to smooth student transitions associated with relocation."

Pursuant to A.R.S. §15-1911, the State Council on the Education for Military Children will function in compliance with the now 43-state Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children in removing educational barriers often imposed on Arizona's military families.

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