



Military Connected Youth Playbook

Unlocking Career Success for Special Populations



Playbook Introduction

Career-connected learning is an educational strategy that combines high-quality academic instruction, skill-based learning, and real-world experiences to prepare students with the knowledge and skills that they need to pursue their career goals. Career-connected learning can be delivered in a variety of ways, including in core content classes, through career and technical education (CTE) programs, in partnership with community and technical colleges, and through work-based learning experiences like internships, pre-apprenticeships, and registered apprenticeship programs. Career-connected learning is especially important for an often-overlooked group of students including military connected youth. In K-12, highly mobile youth refers to any planned or unplanned school or district change that occurs for reasons other than grade promotion during an academic year, which is often the case for students with family members in the military. Ensuring that student pathways are seamless and transferable, regardless of location is a priority for the Department of Education (Department). Review the Department's [Military Connected Youth Playbook](#) for more information.

A growing body of evidence indicates that participation in career-connected learning can promote strong attendance, engagement, and academic achievement for highly mobile students, including military-connected youth by helping students forge direct and durable linkages between what they are learning in school and their personal and professional interests and aspirations. For example:

1. [District of Columbia Public Schools'](#) high school students enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) courses during the 2022-23 school year attended nearly 13 more days of school than their peers who did not.
2. [New Hampshire's](#) 2023 Gallup poll surveying over 9,600 students in grades five through 12 found that students who participated in career-connected learning were more likely to be involved in and enthusiastic about school, (i.e., engagement) and to have positive ideas and energy for the future (i.e., hope).
3. Nationally, the average four-year graduation rate for the 2021-22 school year for CTE concentrators, (i.e., students who take multiple courses in one CTE program area) is 96% – 11 percentage points higher than the average rate for all students.

All young people deserve equitable access to career-connected learning that provides the opportunity to gain meaningful work experience, earn college credits, and work toward an industry credential before they graduate high school. Career-connected learning can support students to safely envision their future and who they want to become; build social capital and deepen school and community engagement; and master a strong foundation of both technical skills and academic knowledge that expands their horizons and postsecondary options.



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Unlocking Career Success

[Unlocking Career Success](#) is one of the priority initiatives within Secretary Cardona's Raise the Bar initiative, and it is an interagency program that reimagines how our nation's high schools prepare all students to thrive in their future education and careers. The initiative blurs the lines between high school, college, and career to provide students with accelerated and innovative opportunities to earn college credits and gain real-world career experiences. This joint effort across the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, and Commerce supports public and private sector leaders, government agencies, and other community-based organizations to help students earn postsecondary degrees and industry-recognized credentials that our employers need, and our economy demands. Unlocking Career Success seeks to strengthen systems of multiple pathways to success, fulfilling the promise of education as the key to economic and social mobility and providing our students with rewarding, joyful, and purposeful college and career pathways that lead them to reach their endless potential.



Actions

Stakeholders can increase career-connected pathways for military-connected youth by taking steps to:

1. Understand the key governing policies for military-connected youth worldwide.

- **The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)** - Military-connected students, predominately with parents serving active duty, move approximately six to nine times from kindergarten to their high school graduation. The ESEA requires schools to report on the achievement of military-connected students on the State reading/language arts, mathematics, and science assessments administered annually. This must include students with parents on “active service,” include individuals on active duty, full-time or part-time National Guard duty, and full-time or part-time Reserve status. It would not include students with a parent who is a retiree, a veteran, or in the Retired Reserves or students with a family member (e.g., sibling or grandparent). The identifier is intended to allow educators, parents, and military leaders to track the achievement of military-connected students across multiple schools.
- **MIC3** - The [Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission \(MIC3\)](#) is the governing body of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children or ICEOMC. The collaborative’s mission: ease the educational transitions of school-aged, military and uniform-connected students attending public schools and to include Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools worldwide. The administrative mechanism allows interstate collaboration to resolve complex policy challenges while retaining their state sovereignty. It addresses key issues encountered by military families: eligibility, enrollment, placement, and graduation. The Compact provides for a detailed governance structure at both the state and national levels with built-in enforcement and compliance mechanisms. The goal of the Compact is to replace the widely varying policies affecting transitioning military students.
- **DoDEA** - The [Department of Defense Education Activity \(DoDEA\)](#) is the umbrella organization that unites efforts to provide quality educational opportunities and services to military dependents around the globe. DoDEA plans, directs, coordinates, and manages the education programs for Department of Defense (DoD) dependents who would otherwise not have access to a high-quality public education. It operates 161 schools in 9 districts located in 11 foreign countries, 7 states, and 2 territories across 10 time zones. There are nearly 900,000 military-connected children of all ages worldwide, of which more than 66,000 are enrolled in DoDEA schools and served by more than 8,000 educators.

2. Leverage federal funds and legislation to support military-connected youth.

- **Perkins V** - Signed into law on July 31, 2018, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Educational Act of 2006 (Perkins V) provides roughly \$1.4 billion dollars annually in State formula grant funds for the development and implementation of CTE programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Commonly referred to as Perkins V, the law encourages States to



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promote equity in CTE through data analysis, funding, technical assistance, professional development, and regular engagement of stakeholders representing students with [special population status](#)—which includes students experiencing [foster care](#) and [homelessness](#) and students of [military, and migrant and immigrant](#) families.

- Perkins V also requires secondary and postsecondary institutions to conduct a [comprehensive local needs assessment](#) (CLNA) to identify and address underlying issues that pose barriers to students who are members of special populations to access and be successful in CTE. The CLNA can be used to direct local funds and help to make the benefits of CTE more visible to students and families who are members of special populations, including directed supports for military connected youth.

3. Identify Promising Practices and Exemplars.

- Leverage resources from the MIC3. [MIC3 has a Guide for Parents, School Officials, and Public Administrators](#) that outlines the policy areas that are governed by the MIC3 compact including transfer, course sequencing, and graduation requirements.
- Pay careful attention to policies and practices related to [accountability, assessment and course placement, graduation requirements, credit accrual, CTE, work-based learning, dual enrollment](#), and [college admissions requirements](#). Collectively, these policies and practices shape the educational experiences and trajectories of highly mobile students—and are the change levers for accelerating access and success.
 - **Transitions** -the State of [New Hampshire](#) requires districts that host CTE programs to align their calendars to help standardize the programs and has the potential to support smoother transitions for highly mobile students.
 - **Staffing** - In [Texas](#), Northside Independent School District's Guidance and Counseling Department works to help ease the challenges that students living with a parent on active military duty face due to deployment and relocation. The Department formed a task force of school counselors who meet several times a year to share resources and strategies, including parent engagement and support, improving access to career-connected learning, and counseling for academic, emotional, and personal development.
 - **New programs** - [Massachusetts'](#) Perkins V plan includes efforts to create early college programs for highly mobile students, including students experiencing foster care, homelessness, and military-connected students. These early college programs will include advising, work-based learning, postsecondary linkages, integrated instruction, credential attainment, and alignment with labor market data.
 - **Asset-mapping** - [Rhode Island](#) conducted a comprehensive asset map to identify all relevant funding and work streams in the state and strategies to improve access to career-connected learning. The report includes a thorough assessment of systemic barriers and gaps that prevent the state's education and workforce development system from increasing access to career-connected learning.



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Additional Resources

- Advance CTE developed an [overview](#) of federal funding streams that can be blended or braided to develop and sustain a more integrated career-connected learning ecosystem.
- The [Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State](#) developed online learning modules for school personnel to increase understanding and awareness related to the unique challenges faced by military-connected students and families, and to provide school personnel with strategies and resources to support military-connected students.
- The Department of Education maintains a webpage of [Resources for Caregiving Veteran Families](#).
- Since May 2021, the Joining Forces Interagency Policy Committee has been an important forum for advancing cross-agency priorities related to the families of service members and Veterans, caregivers, and survivors. Federal agencies have made commitments in the [Strengthening America's Military Families](#) report in support of the [Joining Forces](#). This webpage provides resources to assist educators at all levels in better understanding and supporting the approximately 2.3 million children under the age of 18 living with a disabled Veteran and whose personal needs may compete with the caregiving tasks they perform for their Veteran parent.
- [Military OneSource](#) is a resource hosted by the Defense Department for service members and military families that includes information on a wide array of topics, comprehensive resources, and confidential help through online chat, phone, and in-person appointments.
- The U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs runs the [Veterans Day National Committee](#), responsible for planning Veteran's Day events, selecting a national poster, and developing [educator resources](#).
- In 2011, First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden came together to launch [Joining Forces](#), a nationwide initiative calling all Americans to rally around service members, veterans, and their families and support them through wellness, education, and employment opportunities. Joining Forces works hand in hand with the public and private sector to ensure that service members, veterans, and their families have the tools they need to succeed throughout their lives.
- The [Military Child Education Coalition \(MSEC\)](#) helps children growing up in military families by providing them, their parents, and professionals with programs, resources, and guidance—helping the child stay on course academically, socially, and emotionally.

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