



Although there are many areas for improvement for this important Department of Defense (DoD) EFMP, I am hopeful that we are making progress on identifying those knowledge and implementation gaps to better support our most vulnerable military families. Below are well-established recommendations that examine the top three EFMP areas of improvement for short-term improvement:

1. **Ease PCS transitions for EFMP family members who have IEPs.**
2. **Increase transparency and accountability of EFMP standardization processes across service branches.**
3. **Allow all eligible military dependents who qualify for EFMP to enroll, regardless of their gender identity.**
4. **Involve EFMP families in changes to EFM Programming**

EASE PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION (PCS) TRANSITIONS FOR EFMP FAMILY MEMBERS WHO HAVE AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP).

Recommendation: Ensuring advanced/remote school enrollment for military dependents with existing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and allowing active duty military dependents to maintain IEPs at a new duty station after a PCS for up to six months. Suggested language for the 2022 NDAA below.

Impact Aid/Additional Amount

Of the amount authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2022 pursuant to section xxx and available for operation and maintenance for Defense-wide activities as specified in the funding table in section xxx, \$xxx shall be available for use by the Secretary of Defense to make payment to local educational agencies determined by the Secretary to have higher concentrations of military children with severe disabilities. Local Educational Agencies (LEA) receiving these funds are required to:

(a) allow a family with permanent change of station orders and a child who is eligible for special education and related services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to enroll the military-connected student in the school district in advance of arrival to the receiving duty station, a process often referred to as remote enrollment;

(b) provide an acknowledgment of receipt of the enrollment to the Parents within seven (7) calendar days;

(c) review the military-connected student's 504 Plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP) and provide a written implementation plan to the family within four (4) weeks of receiving the document; and

(d) the military-connected student's 504 or IEP Plan must be implemented for at least 120 days post-enrollment (when school is in session) or from the date the student begins to attend school unless the parent/guardian consent to an amended or new IEP prior to 120 days.

(e) Reporting. The LEA shall submit a report annually to DoD on July 1. The report will include the number of military families who participated in advanced enrollment, service branch, type of plan (504/IEP), date of first 504/IEP meeting, and date of 504/IEP change initiated by the parent/guardian.

(f) **Military Family Survey.** DoD will send a survey to all military families enrolled in EFMP stationed in the school districts that received this additional funding. The survey will determine the military family's satisfaction with their PCS transitions and their child's education process at the LEA. DoD shall submit a report annually to the Committee on July 1.

(g) **Definitions.** A written implementation plan will consist of a list of goals, accommodations, services, and placement that are in the student's most recent effective IEP/504 Plan, and a statement as to how the receiving school district will implement them, to include a description of the proposed schools that will meet the student's needs.

- The data shows exceptional military students lack continuity of education that has led to lost instruction, regression, and overwhelming stress for our military families. (See one-pager attached from Partners in PROMISE sent to the SASC earlier this year).
- This is a national security issue as it impacts military readiness. In previous discussions with SASC staff, we have suggested language that will target our EFMP-centric regions by allowing for remote/advanced enrollment and for students to stay on their IEP from their previous school district for up to six (6) months. This was something promised by the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission, but families have reported is not a reality.

INCREASE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF DOD OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN EFMP STANDARDIZATION PROCESSES AMONG ALL SERVICE BRANCHES.

Recommendation: Ensure a military family member with a child(ren) with special needs and are enrolled in EFMP is included as a major stakeholder in any meetings, task forces, and legislation. Additionally, clarify the intent of the 2021 NDAA provision specific to special education attorneys.

- An EFMP Advisory Council increases military family representation in decision making as a major stakeholder. (See attached House Bill (include number here) that will be introducing the EFMP Advisory Council next week.
- The 2021 NDAA provision for civilian special education attorneys has not been implemented in EFMP-centric installations. Service branches JAGS have been assigned this role who may or may not have the required expertise needed to assist families.
 - All service branches should ensure that the provisions are implemented as directed and are audited for compliance.
 - Information on how they are communicating this new benefit with EFMP families as well as outlining benchmarks on how data should be reported.
 - A streamlined process would help ensure that all EFMP families know what resources are available to them. This should also address if/how families whose children in DoDEA schools can benefit from this service. (See attached recommended language for this provision.)

ALLOW ALL ELIGIBLE MILITARY DEPENDENTS TO ENROLL IN EFMP, REGARDLESS OF THEIR GENDER IDENTITY.

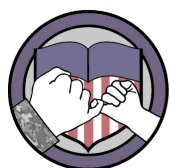
- Although service branches allow military dependents who are transgender the ability to enroll in EFMP, due to specialized medical care, there are inconsistencies within each service branch. Therefore, oversight and effectiveness are nearly impossible to assess. Secondly, there are no provisions to safeguard transgender dependents when states put forth and pass anti-transgender legislation. Furthermore, we know that families are being denied basic health care simply for being gender diverse.
- Representative Panetta (D-CA) plans to announce the attached House Bill. We strongly recommend full support of the “Armed Forces Transgender Dependent Protection Act”

We are incredibly grateful for your time and consideration of our recommendations.

Sincerely,

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CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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