

Military Student Identifier Code, MSI
Partners in PROMISE Rough Transcript
October 8, 2025

00:00:02 Welcome everyone. I'm Trisha Ross, Director of Communications with Partners in Promise. Thank you for joining this session on the Military Student Identifier Code, called MSI. Today, we'll explore the purpose of MSI, what mandates the collection of MSI, why the data matters, and how each of us can advocate for proper use of MSI data to better support all of our military-connected students.

What is the Military Student Identifier? The Military Student Identifier, or MSI, was established under Section 101A4 of Title 10 United States Code in the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015. It created a subgroup for students with a parent serving in the Armed Forces. Military children were included as a vulnerable subgroup because frequent moves, on average six to nine times during a school career, disrupt learning and create social-emotional challenges.

00:00:39 How is MSI Collected? The MSI collection is mandatory for any state that accepts Every Student Succeeds Act grant funds. States are required to collect, disaggregate, and report on the achievements of military-connected students on academic assessments, in addition to other data points. They typically do this through school registration when military families self-report their military-connected status.

00:01:17 How MSI Can Help MSI data can be valuable and give insights about military-connected students to school personnel, administration leaders, state education departments, and even military families. MSI data identifies military-connected students and can alert school personnel to who these children are. Schools can track the performance of military-connected children to ensure they are staying on track, especially during challenging times like deployment. Schools may develop programs to specifically support these students in areas such as transitions, counseling, clubs, and special education. Parents can research potential schools and compare MSI data and other subgroup information, as it should be publicly available on local and state educational agency websites.

00:01:53 Challenges Remain on the Effectiveness of MSI Data Reporting is inconsistent across states and districts. Some states define "military-connected" differently. Additionally, some military families do not self-identify for operational security reasons, so the MSI data may not be accurate. Most importantly, it is impossible to separate the MSI for military students with disabilities. Until military students with disabilities is added as its own subgroup, there is not a clear way to determine how military children with disabilities are performing academically.

00:02:27 With frequent moves every two to three years, our data shows lengthy disruptions of IEP services for over four months.

00:02:58 Why It Matters When MSI data is accurate and separated, outcomes could be improved. Imagine all military-connected students, including those with special needs, benefiting from culturally competent counseling and transition support, targeted special education

services, welcoming extracurricular clubs and activities, all geared to the unique needs of military-connected students.

00:03:36 What Can Families and Advocates Do? Research MSI data prior to a PCS move. Always self-identify as military-connected on school forms. If you cannot find the MSI data on your school's website, ask where it is located. Pay it forward. Find out what programs your school offers specifically for military children and ask how they began and how they were funded. Lastly, advocate for the disaggregation of military-connected students with disabilities to ensure their performance is on track towards a standard high school diploma.

00:04:13 In Closing The Military Student Identifier is more than a checkbox. It's a tool for accountability, advocacy, and equity. Parents and schools can track the performance of military-connected students with the goal to support them better. The more we know, the more we can ensure our students do not fall through the cracks and continue to thrive.