



Frequently Asked Questions Suggested Use for Military Student Identifier Code

With the adoption of the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**, military-connected students are now recognized as a distinct subgroup, including students with a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces (defined in section 101(a)(1)(4) of title 10, United States Code) on active duty (as defined in section 101(d)(5) of such title). Over 80% of military-connected pupils attend U.S. public schools. Students with parents/guardians who serve full-time in the military move and change schools frequently. In addition, they experience separations from a parent/guardian due to their parents' service to the U.S. military. **The Military Student Identifier (MSI)** provides educators with critical information to personalize attention to military dependent children. This document responds to frequently asked questions about the MSI and provides examples of effective implementation for state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs).

What is the purpose of this FAQ on the Military Student Identifier (MSI) Code?

- To restate the ESSA definition of a military-connected student.
- To describe a school's responsibility to collect MSI information upon student enrollment.
- To provide examples of appropriate collection methods.
- To summarize procedures.
- To provide examples of constructive uses of MSI information.
- To provide the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) description of the MSI.

What is the definition of a military connected student as required by ESSA?

The Military Student Identifier Code (as it is commonly referred to in the field) indicates a student with a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces (defined in section 101(a)(1)(4) of title 10, United States Code) on active duty (as defined in section 101(d)(5) of such title).

What about students of National Guard parents?

Students of parents who serve on full-time National Guard duty, where "armed forces," "active duty," and "full-time National Guard duty" have the same meanings given them in 10 U.S.C. 101(a)(4), 101(d)(1), and 101(d)(5) are also provided with an MSI code.

"National Guard" means a member of the Army National Guard of the United States or the Air National Guard of the United States in the member's status as a member of the National Guard of a state or territory, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the District of Columbia.

What are a school's obligations for collecting MSI data?

- For example, schools (LEAs and public charters) must include the MSI question in their student enrollment procedures.
- Each state or LEA will determine additional collection and reporting requirements related to their pupil management systems policies and processes.



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How should a school ask the MSI question in an easy-to-understand way?

- A straightforward way to ask the question is to break it into parts:
 - Is the student a dependent of a member of the United States military service in the Active Duty Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard?
Check “yes,” “no,” or decline to answer.
 - Is the student a dependent of a fulltime member of the National Guard or Reserve force of the United States military (Army, Navy, Marine Corps or Air Force)?
Check “yes,” “no,” or decline to answer.
 - Is the student a dependent of a member of the National Guard or Reserve force of the United States military (Army, Navy, Marine Corps or Air Force)?
Check “yes,” “no,” or decline to answer.

What if a parent or guardian declines to provide the requested information?

- Parents/guardians may decline to respond to this voluntary question. If a parent declines, the answer is reflected as “no.”
- No parent/guardian should be asked to verify their military status by showing a military identification or other DOD documentation. Verification of military membership may be required if the school has a special program for which eligibility is a requirement, such as state-funded prekindergarten.

How can this data be used?

- ESSA regulations (section 200.2) require states to be able to disaggregate assessment results within each LEA and school by “Status as a student with a parent who is a member of the armed forces on active duty or serves on full-time National Guard duty, where “Armed Forces,” “active duty,” and “full-time National Guard duty” have the same meanings given them in 10 U.S.C. 101(a)(4), 101(d)(1), and 101(d)(5).”
- States (SEAs) may choose to require LEAs or public charters to include this information in their school report cards.
- Schools regularly disaggregate student demographic and performance data to determine program effectiveness to identify areas requiring attention or resources and to detect students in need of specific academic assistance. MSI data provide an additional dimension that more finely attunes the schools’ programs to respond to the needs of children.
- The MSI is essential to improve and personalize academic and social/emotional responses for the unique military student population which is highly likely to move and frequently change schools during their K-12 education years.
- Just as schools consistently concentrate on the unique needs of all students (e.g., English language needs, learning disabilities, economically disadvantaged), they can now add another unique group of students to consider in their planning, programming, and curriculum design.
- For example, schools can review their welcoming practices, transition planning, and need for enrichment or additional catch-up tutoring for mobile military-connected students.
- By effectively using MSI, schools can also consider programs that recognize contributions of the military to their community as they do for other groups.



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Can schools get these data from the military rather than having to ask parents/guardians at registration?

- No. There is no current process available to connect students enrolled in schools and districts with their military parents. As you may expect, there are privacy and permission as well as national security implications associated with sharing data among governmental agencies.

Is the MSI designation connected to Impact Aid eligibility?

- No. The MSI has a separate and distinct purpose from Impact Aid. Just as identifying a subgroup of students as economically disadvantaged is separate from student groups such as ethnicity, gender or special programs, the purpose of the MSI is to provide local educators with quality, actionable data concerning their military-connected students.
- See ESSA Title VIII, SEC. 7003. PAYMENTS FOR ELIGIBLE FEDERALLY CONNECTED CHILDREN. (20U.S.C. 7703) for definitions of students identified for Federal Impact Aid. Several different criteria are used in this process. Federal Impact Aid encompasses military, Native American, and civilians working on federal installations, making it difficult to accurately determine eligible students from only military student identifier codes.
- For more information about Impact Aid, go to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Impact Aid Programs at <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/impactaid/index.html>. Email address: ImpactAid@ed.gov

What is an example of a school’s MSI data collection form?

- See the example below for how one Texas public school district asks for MSI information:

Please fill out the following form, sign, and return to the campus for your KG-12th grade student.	
Military-connected Student	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student is a dependent of a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps or Coast Guard on Active Duty
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student is a dependent of a member of the Texas National Guard (Army, Air Guard, or State Guard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student is a dependent of a member of a reserve force in the United States military (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps or Coast Guard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	None of the above



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Is there a Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) data definition for the military student identifier?

- Yes. The CEDS includes the definition below for military-connected students in the national standards.
<https://ceds.ed.gov/elementsCEDS.aspx>

Military Connected Student Indicator (Updated)

Definition:

An indication that the student’s parent or guardian is on Active Duty, in the National Guard, or in the Reserve components of the United States military services.

Option Set:

Description	Definition	Code
Not Military-connected	Student is not military-connected	NotMilitaryConnected
Active Duty	Student is a dependent of a member of the Active Duty Force (full-time) Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard or is a dependent of a member on Full-Time National Guard Duty.	ActiveDuty
National Guard or Reserve	Student is a dependent of a member of the National Guard (not full-time duty) or Reserve Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard).	NationalGuardOrReserve
Unknown	It is unknown whether or not the student is military-connected	Unknown

You may explore the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34 § 200.2, State responsibilities for assessment here:

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/section-200.2>

C.F.R. § 200.2(b)(1)(ii)(D) (2022)

C.F.R. § 200.2(b)(1)(i)(I) (2022)