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## **Mitigating the Impact of School Mobility: An Effective Practices Model and Guide for Educators**

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# MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL MOBILITY

An Effective Practices Model and Guide  
for Educators

**CPRL**

Columbia University Center for  
Public Research and Leadership



## About the

# CENTER FOR PUBLIC RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP (CPRL) AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Center for Public Research and Leadership (CPRL) is a partnership of university-based professional schools that works to revitalize public education while reinventing professional education. CPRL provides talented education, law, management, and policy students with rigorous coursework and skill training and engages them in research and consulting projects to ready them for challenging careers enhancing the education sector's capacity to improve the outcomes and life chances of all children, particularly those of color, from low-income household, or otherwise traditionally underserved. To date, CPRL has completed more than 100 research and consulting projects and prepared more than 300 students.

**ELIZABETH DANIEL** is a director of legal strategy and policy at CPRL. Through her work at CPRL, Daniel has managed projects involving legal, political, and policy considerations in educational equity, as well as the MCEC project on student mobility. Before joining CPRL, she was an attorney for civil rights and public interest organizations. Early in her professional career, she was a newspaper reporter, covering education, crime, and local government, among other things. She earned her J.D. from Columbia Law School and her A.B. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**MEGHAN SNYDER** is a fellow at CPRL and has worked on the MCEC project since the Fall of 2017 when she was a graduate student at Teachers College, Columbia University. She received her M.A. in the Sociology of Education from Teacher's College, where her research focused on correctional education, the community-to-prison pipeline, mobile student populations, and civic and political participation and activism. Before joining CPRL, she worked as an adult educator in Prague, Washington, D.C., and New York City.

## About the

# MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COALITION (MCEC)

Established in 1998, MCEC is a nonprofit organization that solely exists to help the military-connected child and youth thrive. The MCEC mission is to ensure inclusive educational opportunities for all military-connected children affected by mobility, family separations and transition.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project has been made possible by a grant from the [CHAN ZUCKERBERG INITIATIVE DAF](#), a donor advised fund of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation.

Our work would not have been possible without the time and commitment of the dedicated education professionals who generously shared their knowledge, expertise, and attention to help us better understand how public schools can best serve military children. They were inspiring collaborators during two workshops and in providing follow-up feedback during the first half of 2018 as we developed, revised, and refined the mobility mitigation Model and tools that make up this Guide.

**THE MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COALITION** was a wonderful and essential partner in organizing and running the workshops, reaching out to participants, and deepening our understanding of military families and their children. They represent the animating spirit behind this Guide and the Model. Wayne Boggs, of MCEC, was a generous thought partner throughout this project.

We also want to highlight the CPRL students whose vision, creativity, and hard work provided the foundation for the Guide and Model:

**FALL 2017** | Maria Jose Meza Cuadra Bedoya, Meredith N. Roy, Billy Sahachartsiri, and Meghan Snyder.

**SPRING 2018** | Dana Aminetzah, Wolete Moko, Renee Sanjuan, Chloe Eubee Song, and Kavita Venkateswar.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CPRL and MCEC, with the support of a grant from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, are pleased to introduce “Mitigating the Impact of School Mobility: An Effective Practices Model and Guide for Educators.” This work represents the culmination of a year-long project in which CPRL created a model of practices that U.S. public schools could implement to mitigate the potential harmful impact of frequent school transitions as

experienced by military-connected and other highly mobile students.

This Guide is the response to an [EXPLORATION](#) of the challenges faced by highly mobile, military-connected students in their multiple school transitions, their families, and the public schools that serve them. [THAT RESEARCH](#) yielded an understanding that transferring

students often arrive at their new schools as near “complete unknowns” and that schools regularly find themselves in a reaction mode, yet there appeared to be patterns in these transitions and the schools’ processes around them. If schools, districts, and even states could discern these patterns, they could then develop consistent practices to better meet the needs of mobile students. These consistent practices – a set of systems – would help prepare the school and district to better serve mobile children with fewer challenges.

With this Guide, CPRL collaborated with more than a hundred stakeholders to produce such a system. Developed and refined through intensive research, interviews, and workshops, the Guide includes a summary of [BACKGROUND RESEARCH](#), a [MOBILITY MITIGATION MODEL](#), and a [TOOLKIT](#) for practitioners. The background material discusses the impact of student mobility on military-connected and other highly mobile populations of students and a review of recommended approaches. The Guide then introduces the Mobility Mitigation Model, designed to help educators at all levels of school systems and others who work with highly mobile students better understand the processes by which they can help these students through their school transitions. This Model considers the four stages of a student’s transition (Before a Move, During a Move, Introductory Phase, After a Move) and describes supports which can be provided at each stage, differentiating these supports by educators’ roles. To support the implementation of the Mobility Mitigation Model, the Guide then includes a Toolkit of strategies, templates, and checklists—practical tools—developed to help teachers, principals, counselors, and district and state personnel more effectively serve transitioning mobile students. The tools are designed to support

schools in better understanding patterns in the transition process and then help them develop and implement consistent practices. The Toolkit covers a continuum of supports, beginning with a school or district’s self-assessment, and covering the range of the four transition stages and many of the supports within each stage suggested by the Model.

The Model and Toolkit were created with the assistance and input of educators from around the country who have deep experience supporting military student populations in a public school context. Although the focus throughout this research has been on military-connected children, specifically, those in grades 6-12 in public school, our Model and Tool are designed to apply to the support of any population of mobile students.

These products are designed to be explicitly practical: They offer resources that can be used immediately but which also leave room for customization. Ideally, the Model and the Toolkit will be adapted by practitioners to fit the context of their schools or districts. The Toolkit is presented in a way that invites practitioners at all levels to choose which tools are relevant and modify them according to local needs. The Model and Tools should also spark conversations about the needs of highly mobile children and the preparation and practices of institutions that serve them, prompting reflection, communication, and the creation of coherent, effective practices. Indeed, it is our hope that these products will support a process of continuing communication about how to develop a consistent set of practices across schools, districts, and even states to better serve mobile military-connected students and other highly mobile students.

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

On any given day, there are more than 700,000 military-connected students enrolled in U.S. public schools. Many of these students have recently transferred schools and can anticipate additional moves during their K-12 school career because frequent moves are a fact of life for most children who have a parent in the military. They change schools about three times more often than civilian children – and by the time they finish high school, it is common for them to have experienced 6-9 non-promotional school changes. Other highly mobile students – children of migrant workers, those experiencing homelessness or other unstable family structures or circumstances, and refugees, for instance – also experience frequent and destabilizing school transitions.

Although the full effects of school mobility on students are not well understood, there is little question that mobility can significantly hamper students' academic

and socioemotional development. Professionals who work with highly mobile students have witnessed and documented a cascade of effects from frequent moves, though data on the types, causes and frequency of these effects are lacking – in part because the students are hard to track; they're too mobile.<sup>1</sup> There is an increasing awareness among researchers and educators that mobility, this hidden inequity, presents unique academic and social challenges.

Indeed, high mobility among students also puts stress on teachers and administrators in a school or district as they devote resources and attention – typically, unexpected and unplanned for – to incorporating new students into classrooms. Education professionals have noted that mobility inhibits their knowledge of and connection to the students, both of which burden their ability to meet the children's needs. Because of the mobility they experience, these students rarely receive sustained

<sup>1</sup>Authority for the impact of school transitions, effective practices, and other propositions is provided in Appendices A, B, and C where these issues are discussed in more detail.

academic intervention. Meanwhile, the students who remain in a classroom and school across the academic year and years also may suffer from the disruptions, particularly in schools with extremely high mobility or “churn,” as it is sometimes called.

Additionally, the fact that public education in the U.S. is a very local affair exacerbates an already challenging circumstance – good practices in one district might never be learned of elsewhere. Even within a school or district, an effective practice may not be formalized but remain the individualized work of a single strong counselor, registrar, or other educator.

substantial numbers of students from other mobile populations.

Although a key focus of the research underlying the Guide has been military-connected children, particularly those in grades 6-12, our Model and tools are designed to support all categories of and individual mobile students. Throughout, the Guide notes when to modify Models and Tools to meet specific needs of different mobile populations. APPENDIX A directly addresses a number of other mobile populations.

“Some of our counselors know exactly what to do with a mobile military student,” one district administrator said. “Others ... well ... if you’re a new student and that’s who you’re assigned, ‘good luck.’”<sup>2</sup>

This Guide responds directly to these challenges and the previous absence of a publicly available, consistent framework of supports for highly mobile students. Developed through intensive research, interviews, and workshops with administrators, counselors, and educators, the Model presented here is designed to help educators and others who work with highly mobile students better understand the processes by which they can help mobile students through school transitions and make their own processes more efficient and effective for all students and school staff. The accompanying Toolkit of templates, strategies, and checklists identifies specific actions teachers, principals, counselors, and district and state personnel can take at every stage of the transition process to support transitioning mobile students.

This Guide – a document intended for practical use – has been developed with the assistance and input of educators from around the country who have extensive experience supporting military student populations in a public school context; many of them also serve

This Guide begins with an **OVERVIEW** of its contents, its **INTENDED AUDIENCE**, and **HOW USERS CAN GET THE MOST OUT OF IT**. The introductory section also explains how the mobility mitigation Model and associated Tools were developed and provides a description of the **HARMS** students may experience from school mobility and an inventory of **EFFECTIVE PRACTICES** to mitigate those potential harms.

The next section lays out the mitigation **MODEL** itself, which is designed to help all concerned school system actors – state and district leaders, instructional staff, counselors and other student and family support personnel, registrars and line administrators – anticipate the needs of and support mobile students. The mobility mitigation **TOOLKIT** begins with a **PRE-IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT** of schools’ and districts’ current capacity to respond effectively to mobile students. The Model and Tools are designed as templates, intended to be changed and adapted by practitioners to fit their local needs and context, and to prompt continuing collaboration within and across schools, districts, and states to develop a coherent set of practices for effectively serving mobile military-connected and other highly mobile students.

<sup>2</sup> District Administrator in Virginia, personal communication with CPRL, March 2018.

# HOW CAN THIS RESOURCE GUIDE HELP YOUR SCHOOL/ DISTRICT MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF HIGH MOBILITY?

This guide aims to help schools or districts:

1

Understand the academic and socioemotional impacts of high mobility on students

Become familiar with research on effective practices for schools seeking to mitigate the impacts of high mobility

2

3

Self-assess strengths and areas of growth in relation to supporting highly mobile students and families

4

Set goals for and plan new supportive practices for highly mobile families

5

Implement and assess the effectiveness of new supportive strategies and practices



The guide also informs and advises state departments of education on some state-level tools for supporting mobile students and for encouraging and helping schools or districts to develop and assess the effectiveness of mobility-mitigation practices.

# A THEORY OF ACTION

## FOR SUPPORTING MOBILE STUDENTS

This Guide and Toolkit are premised on the following theory of action.

IF SCHOOLS OR DISTRICTS...	cooperate to streamline and standardize administrative practices for transfer and enrollment between and within schools;
	implement a standardized system of academic and socioemotional practices that provide consistent support for students and families in transition;
	educate staff, faculty, and families on both research-supported effective practices and legal or administrative protections for mobile students;
THEN...	student transfer will occur more quickly and seamlessly, expediting enrollment and integration into school life;
	staff and faculty will be better equipped to address fully the academic and socioemotional needs of highly mobile students and families;
	families and school personnel will share a common understanding of effective practices for mitigating the impact of mobility; and
OVER TIME...	highly mobile students will receive the support necessary to achieve their full academic and socioemotional potential; and

other student populations, educators, and other school staff will also benefit

# WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS GUIDE?

To support schools or districts in meeting the objectives listed above, this Guide includes resources to provide a conceptual foundation and practical support for improving practices to support mobile students.

This Guide is organized into five sections.

## □ IMPACTS OF SCHOOL MOBILITY

a summary of research findings on the academic and socioemotional risks of high mobility for military-connected and other highly mobile populations.

## □ EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS

a summary of research findings on effective practices to mitigate the risks of high mobility

## □ GUIDING MODEL

Mobility Mitigation Model that provides a systemic overview of the kinds of practices needed to serve mobile students

## □ TOOLKIT

a set of adaptable tools and resources to support schools or districts in implementing the Mobility Mitigation Model

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Schools or districts come to this work with different student populations, legal requirements, strengths, areas for growth, local cultures, and available resources. As such, it is important for them to contextualize and customize all of the resources and tools contained in this Guide to fit their particular needs. Schools or districts also must choose whether to use versions of all of the suggested strategies and tools in developing a fully integrated mobility-mitigation program or whether to select from among the tools those needed to supplement existing supports.

# HOW WAS THE GUIDE CREATED?

The resources here represent the culmination of an 18-month effort to understand school mobility among military children and to develop a Model for how schools or districts can help mitigate the impact of frequent school changes on students.

## SPRING 2017

RESEARCH ON IMPACTS  
AND EFFECTIVE  
PRACTICES

In Spring 2017, MCEC commissioned CPRL to document how military-connected children experience multiple school transitions and what is currently known about the negative academic and socioemotional impacts of those transitions and about effective practices for moderating the impacts. Based on a comprehensive literature review, interviews, focus groups, and a site visit, CPRL's report, linked [HERE](#) and [HERE](#) on MCEC's and CPRL's websites, describes the challenges facing mobile families and children as well as the schools or districts that serve them. It also describes some promising practices encountered in the research and offers initial suggestions for systemic improvement. Overall, the report concludes that schools or districts nationwide would benefit from a flexible Model and a compendium of strategies, practices, and tools for mitigating the negative impact of mobility on children.

## FALL 2017

REVIEW OF THE  
RESEARCH AND MODEL  
PROTOTYPING

In Fall 2017, CPRL began to envision an effective district and school support structure for mitigating the common impacts of frequent school transition. Based on its prior research, CPRL inventoried the potential harms from school transition, catalogued effective responsive practices, and sought to organize the wealth of tacit and often undocumented craft knowledge of these effective practices. CPRL then conceptualized and drafted several prototypes of mobility-mitigation Models, and consolidated them into a single version for consideration by key practitioners.

## SPRING 2018

MODEL ADAPTATION  
AND TESTING

In Spring 2018, CPRL shared the draft Model with a working group of school-, district-, and state-level practitioners and MCEC staff with significant school-based experience all of whom are knowledgeable about mobile military-connected students. Through an iterative feedback process, CPRL and the working group revised the content and form of the Model to align more closely to practitioners' experiences and needs. CPRL and the working group of practitioners also identified a set of needed mitigation tools, which CPRL undertook to design and submit to short-cycle testing by the practitioners.

## SUMMER 2018

MODEL FINALIZATION

During Summer 2018, CPRL developed and refined a number of mobility-mitigation tools through a process of short-cycle testing with practitioners followed by indicated adjustments. Many of those tools are included in this Toolkit. The short-cycle testing and feedback process also resulted in important modifications to the Model itself.

# WHO SHOULD USE THE GUIDE?

The Model and Tools included in this Guide are designed primarily for adaptation and use by school- and district-level personnel responsible for supporting highly mobile student populations. The Guide will also be helpful to state department of education personnel seeking to devise state-level supports for mobile students and to assist districts and schools in designing and implementing their supports.

Additionally, while this Guide was developed primarily with military-connected students in mind and with the help of schools or districts that serve military-connected populations, its Model and tools were designed to be easily adapted to other highly mobile populations. Suggested adaptations are described throughout the Guide, and [APPENDIX A](#) directly addresses a number of other highly mobile populations.

Throughout, the Guide references different [SCHOOL OR DISTRICT ROLES](#) and the [ASSOCIATED PERSONNEL](#) who may perform those roles. It is understood that a single user at a school may fulfill multiple roles and that schools or districts may assign personnel differently from how positions are imagined here. Users should identify all roles described here that are encompassed by their day-to-day responsibilities and consider all of the tools described here that are aligned with those roles.

For example, District A has enough students to employ a dedicated Family Support Specialist. That person would likely benefit most from referring to the resources identified for Family Support Staff. District B, on the other hand, is a fairly small district, in which counselors act as both student advisors and family liaisons. A counselor in District B should

review resources identified for both Student Support Staff and Family Support Staff.

ROLES	ASSOCIATED PERSONNEL
School and District Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Superintendents and assistant superintendents</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Board members</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> District-level administrators</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Principals and vice principals</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> School and district department heads, deans, and lead teachers</li></ul>

<b>Counselors and Student Support Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Counselors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Guidance counselors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School psychologists and other mental health professionals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Case workers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> College and career advisors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Special needs coordinators</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mobile student support specialists</li> </ul>
<b>Faculty and Instructional Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teachers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Specialists</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Classroom assistants</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum specialists</li> </ul>
<b>Registrars and Administrative Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Registrars</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Administrative assistants</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Secretaries</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Receptionists</li> </ul>
<b>Family Support Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Family/parent outreach staff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Communications staff</li> </ul>

A number of the resources included in the Guide – including a separate iteration of **THE MODEL** – are specifically intended for distribution to parents and families. These resources, however, may need to be adjusted to align to the needs of different educational communities.

# SECONDARY USERS: BEYOND THE SCHOOLHOUSE DOOR

Other actors not mentioned above – including state-level actors, policy-makers, military-affiliated personnel, and community partners – may also find value in the included resources.

State-Level Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Mobile student specialists</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Counseling specialists</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum and credit specialists</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Military Interstate Compact commissioners</li></ul>
Military-Connected Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> School liaison officers</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Installation leadership</li></ul>
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Social service agencies</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Mental health agencies</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Faith-based community</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Housing liaisons</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Youth support organizations</li></ul>



## KEY TERMS

Throughout the Guide, the following key terms are used and have the following definitions:

- ❑ **THE COMPACT, MILITARY INTERSTATE COMPACT, or THE MIC3**, which are shorthand for **THE INTERSTATE COMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MILITARY CHILDREN**: An agreement among the 50 states and the District of Columbia that addresses key educational transition issues encountered by military-connected students including enrollment, placement, attendance, and graduation. It seeks to ensure consistency in the transition process
- ❑ **CURRICULUM DISCREPANCIES**: Differences in pacing, timing, and content in course and curriculum delivery among schools. These differences can complicate course placement, the award of credits, and eligibility to graduate. They also create barriers to smooth integration of students who may be out of sync with the course level or content even when apparently placed in the proper class
- ❑ **FAMILY SUPPORT STAFF**: Staff designated for outreach to and coordination with families in a school community. In some school systems, this function belongs to a dedicated staff member. In others, the work is distributed among staff members with other responsibilities
- ❑ **MOBILITY-MITIGATION MODEL or THE MODEL**: A collection of practices that school, district, and state personnel can implement to help mitigate the impact of school mobility on students. The Model is organized around key actors and stages in the transition process and is expressed graphically with the intention of helping these key actors organize and coordinate their individual and institutional processes for supporting mobile students
- ❑ **RECEIVING SCHOOL**: The school in which the student plans to enroll in or is newly enrolled
- ❑ **SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICER (OR SLO)**: A civilian employee of the military who serves as a liaison between the military installation, including the service members, and the local school system. The SLO can provide school transition assistance and family support during deployments. Some SLOs serve as an additional resource for families navigating the special education system. The responsibilities and expectations of SLOs vary based on the branch of service
- ❑ **SENDING SCHOOL**: The school from which the student is withdrawing or has just withdrawn
- ❑ **STAGES OF TRANSITION**: Common temporal stages in the school transition cycle for mobile students.
- ❑ **TRANSCRIPT INTERPRETATION**: The act of understanding a student's transcript from a different district; awarding commensurate credits to the student under the receiving school's rubric and requirements; and placing the student in appropriate classes or other settings. Interpreting transcripts often is difficult as a result of unexplained abbreviations, unusual course names, the absence of course descriptions, unclear information about the number of hours devoted to courses, and the omission of other information needed to award credits and place the student in appropriate classes or other settings

# THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL MOBILITY

## WHAT TYPES OF MOBILITY HARMS DOES THIS GUIDE SEEK TO MITIGATE?

An understanding of the potential harms from frequent school transitions is critical to educators' efforts to help mobile students and develop systems to make those

efforts a consistent school or inter-school practice. This section provides a summary of the common challenges associated with school mobility, organized by academic

and socioemotional impact. It is intended to provide school, district, and state personnel with an overview of the education-related harms students who change schools frequently face. For a more in-depth discussion of these research findings, including citations of research, please refer to **APPENDIX B**.

It is important to note that not all school mobility is negative and that many children not only exhibit remarkable resilience as they move from school to school but are an asset to the school culture. Researchers have found that school transitions that result in an improved educational setting are often positive for mobile children, even if the change is initially disruptive. Some children are strengthened by the social competencies they develop to excel at entering and thriving in new situations. Additionally, many educators have found that even though mobile children may initially add some administrative and instructional burdens for the school (particularly when the move is

mid-year), they also bring new ideas and new skills and cultural diversity.

Finally, while it is necessary to lay out the potential harms and the areas of risk for triggering these academic and socioemotional harms, much still is not understood about links between mobility and educational struggle.<sup>3</sup> For many mobile students, it is difficult to disaggregate the challenges linked with mobility from the other significant challenges they may face, such as housing and family instability, poverty, and language challenges, among others. For military-connected students, collecting data on their educational profile has been difficult, but it is hoped that the more widespread use of the Military Student Identifier (MSI) will provide data for a better understanding of their school performance, challenges, and strengths. Similarly, for students experiencing homelessness and migrant students, recent changes in federal reporting laws could lead to an improved understanding.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix B for citations to authority relating to the impact of mobility. But, on the lack of strong academic research and data see generally, Daarel Burnette II, *Student Mobility Takes an Academic Toll. But Why?* *Education Week*, June 6, 2017 (available at

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/06/07/student-mobility-a-black-box-for-scholars.html>).



# ACADEMIC IMPACT

Frequent school transitions may place military-connected and other mobile children at risk of increased academic struggle and reduced academic achievement. Transferring schools disrupts student learning, and it is widely believed that this mobility undermines students' academic progress. This section discusses the risks to mobile students' academic progress organized around common areas of challenge and disruption.

This work relies on academic research and the input of practitioners to set out an overview of the types of harms potentially suffered by mobile students. Appendix B provides a more in-depth catalogue of these harms and presents the academic research on which this discussion is based.

## Curriculum Discrepancies and Other Challenges

Across schools, districts, and states, academic standards vary, curricula are not standard, and content is paced differently both within and between courses and grades. Programs and course offerings differ. For highly mobile children, this creates an educational environment of unpredictability and uncertainty that puts them at an increased risk of academic underperformance and may disrupt their academic paths. Researchers have found that the impact cascades with multiple moves, particularly when the moves are mid-year.

Students may struggle to keep up – or stay engaged – because of the differences in the curriculum pacing between schools. Even though courses may have the same names and appear to have similar content these discrepancies in the timing of delivery of content may result in educational gaps and leave students struggling to meet the learning outcomes in their new school. Students may spend valuable instructional time in their new school on programs that repeat content and do not enhance their skills. They may become bored or disaffected – and miss important opportunities to make progress in areas of struggle. As one highly mobile student shared with the CPRL team, she'd been assigned one book three times in three different schools.

Students who are struggling may miss standard opportunities to receive consistent supports because their remedial needs are masked by the transition needs or they simply fall through the cracks as they move from school to school. Students who have pursued specialized

Student mobility can also disrupt the classroom and learning for stable students. Teachers report that it is a strain to repeatedly incorporate new students into the classroom and determine how to serve them. The non-mobile students may experience a slower pace of instruction as teachers modify their delivery to support new students. There are also administrative costs for the schools. The Model and Tools recognize these systemic challenges as part of the overall challenge – better serving mobile students benefits not just the mobile student but also the

courses and classes are not available in new schools.

## Transcript and Credit Challenges

Schools may struggle to translate another school's transcript and credits to fit their courses and, importantly, their state graduation requirements. Some students may find themselves surprised by a credit deficit when they move because states require different numbers of credits for certain types of required classes or receiving high schools are not allowed to recognize certain credits that were recognized at the previous school. As a result, mobile students may find themselves either repeating coursework or facing a credit deficiency as they approach anticipated graduation.

While, for military-connected students, the Compact ideally addresses some of these barriers to credit awards for graduation, (e.g. suggesting schools waive certain courses required for graduation if similar coursework was completed in the sending school), students and school personnel may find the path to graduation more complicated than expected. Students may need to repeat course content in order to ensure they have the right credits to meet state requirements. As explained by one student interviewed by CPRL, "[The school] saw that I took U.S. history instead of American history. I had to retake that," due to the specific graduation requirements in one state.

Students who move frequently are often forced to forego pursuing courses that they prefer in a scramble to meet unexpected requirements. They may also be denied access to certain upper level courses because

their transcripts do not reflect certain technical prerequisites. Others may struggle in classes they are not prepared for because their transcript does not reflect differences in curriculum pacing.

## Scheduling and Administrative Challenges

Differences in enrollment practices, calendars, schedules, and special program admission complicate academic transitions. These administrative issues can have an academic impact when students enroll in school late, miss school time, are placed in the wrong class, or are denied academic opportunity.

Schools occasionally refuse to enroll or place students until formal transcripts arrive, even though the Military Interstate Compact requires the acceptance of unofficial records for transferring military students; the McKinney-Vento Act similarly requires that students who qualify for its protections must be enrolled even if they lack formal documents. The demand for official transcripts can delay enrollment and lead to improper class placement by weeks, complicating academic and social transitions. Other complicated or obscure enrollment requirements also trip up mobile students. The delays add up and interfere with a smooth academic transition with potentially significant consequences.

Calendar and schedule differences often burden the mobile student's academic transition. Across the country, schools start and end at different times – some varying by a month. Transferring students sometimes miss weeks of school because of unforeseen calendar differences – and thus start the school year behind.

Additionally, transitions between schools with different types of schedules (e.g. traditional vs. “4x4” scheduling) can give rise to a variety of academic complications – pacing challenges, course placement, and credit awards. Some of the challenges are similar to those related to the curriculum differences in that mobile students are likely to be off-pace with the content of the course. Others present credit and class placement challenges. For instance, when students move mid-year, they may not receive credit for the partial year because of conflicts between types of school schedules.

Application deadlines and other administrative requirements, such as testing requirements and class-size limits, may bar mobile students from participating in special programs such as magnet programs, gifted and talented, and specialized vocational programs.

“[The school] saw that I took U.S. history instead of American history. I had to retake that...”

*Mobile Student*

## Special Needs

Academic stress may be increased further based on students' individual circumstances. School transitions may be particularly challenging for students with special needs because they may experience more dramatic changes in their services, the quality of instruction, or access to programs and curricula when they relocate. Though federal law guarantees services (a free and appropriate education) for students who have been identified as having special needs, how those services are defined and delivered can vary greatly from state to state (and even district to district). Each move for a special needs student can be particularly disruptive.

## Mobility-Related Challenges to Post-Secondary Opportunity

Frequent transitions may pose an array of challenges to mobile students' college application efforts as well as access to other post-secondary opportunities. For instance, issues with credit recovery and transfer may make timely completion of college applications more difficult. Mobile students may find it challenging to meet certain specific college requirements because they were unable to complete a course of study – or may be less competitive because they can't show completion of higher level academic work. They may be further challenged by an inability to build stable relationships with counseling staff, who are critical to the post-secondary process. Counselors may find it difficult to recommend tailored colleges and other post-secondary opportunities that fit the mobile student because they simply do not know the student well enough.

# SOCIOEMOTIONAL IMPACT

When mobile children transition to new communities and schools, they may encounter challenges that put them at risk of significant socioemotional harms. Almost all aspects of the transition and the school experience have an impact on the student's socioemotional condition. And, research suggests this added social and emotional stress can hinder a child's connection to the new school environment and exacerbate the potential negative impact on the child's academic performance.

For military-connected children, parental deployment presents special challenges and, particularly when coupled with moving, may put children at an elevated risk of socioemotional struggles. Research suggests that having a parent deployed in conjunction with a transition may lead to increased depression and anxiety, sleeping and eating difficulties, and disconnection from adults and peers.

In interviews, some mobile, military-connected students described feelings of intense nervousness because of each move. They described how that anxiety evolved into a kind of disaffection. "I'm going to move again, so why bother," one student said of her own efforts to make friends. With each move, students reflected on their experience of "floating" between schools, leading

students to choose to have superficial instead of close friendships due to the anticipation of future moves. Simply adjusting to each new school environment and culture can be stressful for mobile students. For many students, lunch period – and other unstructured times – can be a time of particular anxiety.

Because mobile children may move in the middle of the school year, they may face the added stressors of acclimating and assimilating into the school and already-established social groups.

With each school transition, mobile students also encounter challenges in their eligibility and participation in athletics and extracurricular activities at their new school. Pre-season tryouts, other deadlines and prerequisites, and participant caps create barriers to the mobile student's participation. These barriers to participation carry added impact because the activities are areas where the student may feel comfortable and competent while they are also structured forums for the student to make new social connections.

While the socioemotional harms caused by high mobility may be even harder to quantify than the academic challenges, school personnel often speak of the risk of

those harms as the most concerning and the most difficult to address.

## OTHER MOBILE POPULATIONS

Although our work has focused on military-connected children, most of the research on academic risk in school mobility involves the general population. Indeed, other highly mobile populations - such as children who are experiencing homelessness, have parents who are migrant workers, are justice-involved, living in foster care, or recently immigrated – face significant educational instability and, as such, experience both academic and socioemotional challenges related to their mobility. The literature indicates that these highly mobile students also face significant emotional challenges related to their mobility, that often include anxiety, low self-esteem, anger, embarrassment, and depression. These challenges can then cause major disruptions to their academic progress which can, in turn, lead to further self-isolating or disruptive behavior.

These mobile populations also face external difficulties that compound their academic and socioemotional challenges in school. For example, compared to military-connected students, children who experience homelessness may be more likely to experience hunger or sleep difficulties. There is often greater family instability as well as deep poverty. Research also indicates that that other highly mobile populations may be more susceptible to domestic, physical, and sexual violence and experience a higher rate of physical health problems. All of these external issues have a significant impact on a child's educational experience and achievement.

For a more detailed description of the impact of mobility on other mobile populations, see APPENDIX A.

## EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Educators and administrators have a number of tools or practices they can use to ease the challenges faced by military-connected and other mobile children linked to frequent school transitions. CPRL has compiled a catalogue of effective practices based on previous MCEC reports, the Military Interstate Compact, academic research, practitioner and student interviews, and workshop brainstorming and testing.

This section serves as an overview and kind of clearinghouse of practical, feasible ways to mitigate the challenges of high mobility. Teachers and administrators can help ease the transition to the new school by taking recommended actions before, during, and after the new student's arrival. A number of tools in the Toolkit are implementable versions of or suggestions for some of these practices that were honed with practitioners in our workshops and short-cycle tests.

A complete list of the recommended practices and citations of sources is in [APPENDIX C](#). Key practices are highlighted below and instances where this Guide includes a tool it is hyperlinked.

## Streamlining Record-Keeping Procedures

One way to ease the many administrative obstacles students can encounter when starting at a new school ([ENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWAL CHECKLIST](#)) is streamlining record-keeping procedures. Schools and/or parents should maintain a detailed [PORTFOLIO](#) for each student including transcripts, representative student work, sending school contact information, notes or assessments about the student by teachers and counselors, and a sending school curriculum summary so the receiving school can easily identify curriculum discrepancies ([TRANSCRIPT COVER LETTER](#)).

## Welcoming Practices

Schools should plan an onboarding process through a [WELCOMING PROTOCOL](#) for mobile students to make them feel welcome. Having a staff member and/or student ambassador greet new students individually on the first day, provide them with a school-branded shirt or notebook, give a tour of the school, and initiate introductions to students can help students acclimate. MCEC's Student-2-Student® program illustrates this practice and has been implemented in many schools with great success. Schools should also be sure to train and support front-line administrative staff to be welcoming, particularly to new families.

## Intra-School Communication Protocols

Schools should also develop an [INTRA-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL](#) to ensure everyone involved with the mobile child's education, from the administrative assistants through the principal, understands the importance of communicating critical information about the student – such as the student's arrival and interests – to other personnel so that they can better support the transition process.

## Consistent High-Quality Professional Development

School and districts should provide consistent high-quality professional development on topics important to better supporting the different instructional and socioemotional needs often presented by mobile students. This training should include information on regulations – such as the Military Interstate Compact – that affect the education of mobile students.

## Data Collection

Schools should use the Military Student Identifier and other means of identifying mobile students to develop a better understanding of schools' own mobile student populations. They should also determine whether there are patterns of transition (such as common sending or receiving schools or common times of year to expect transitions) that could help educators better understand and support their mobile students.

## Coordinated Parental Support

Throughout the transition cycle, parents of mobile students need specialized support. Schools should arrange regular meetings, either in person or by phone, with parents of mobile students beyond the typically scheduled schoolwide parent-teacher conferences. Parents should have a point of contact at the school whom they can reach with concerns, updates, and for general communication about the child. For schools with a significant population of military-connected families, it may be useful to have a designated military family room or resource area to help families adjust to their new community.

## Flexibility Around Requirements

Registrars, guidance counselors, club advisors, and sports coaches can also ease the transition process by being appropriately flexible with credit transfers, placing students in appropriate courses, and allowing late tryouts for extracurricular activities. Doing so can help students meet graduation requirements on schedule, ensure students are in the correct courses and receiving the proper level of academic rigor and supports, and aid social integration and emotional continuity by allowing them to participate in the activities that engage them.

# OTHER MOBILE POPULATIONS

Many of the strategies to help mitigate mobility risks for military-connected students can also be applied to support other highly mobile populations. Teachers and administrators can help ease the transition to the new school by taking recommended actions before, during, and after the new student's arrival. For example, schools can implement welcoming practices that ensure new students have a peer contact, adult mentor, and an introduction to the school. Additionally, for other highly mobile students, staff should take extra care to check-in to see how the students are adjusting academically and socially and if they need further supports; the school should be sure arrange for these additional supports by offering tutoring or review time to help students stay on pace with the material. However, unlike with military-connected children, for whom their military connection may often be a source of pride, the school must be careful not to make other mobile populations feel singled out due to their circumstances, which often carry stigma among adolescent peers. For example, while a school may have appreciation days for military-connected families, this would not be an appropriate practice when working with either homeless or justice-involved youth.

There may be extra supports that other mobile populations require in addition to those developed for military-connected students, particularly those who are facing extreme poverty, family dissolution, and other stressors that are experienced by highly mobile students. For example, the teachers must work with these students to provide necessary counseling and emotional support to develop counter-narratives of success in light of the isolation and, often, trauma experienced by other mobile students. There may be need for robust summer school or afterschool programming for students who may have been out of school for an extended period of time. Additionally, the school may need to provide or connect these students to resources for healthcare or coordinating services across governmental agencies such as housing or social services.

For a more detailed description of the impact of mobility on other mobile populations, see [APPENDIX A](#).

## NEXT STEPS

The efforts by CPRL, MCEC, and the participating school, district, and state educators over the past eighteen months have helped amass research, practical knowledge, and new resources — such as the Model and Toolkit presented here. The Model and Tools provide a working set of adaptable responses to many of the challenges highly mobile students and the schools serving them face. There remain key areas about which the field needs more information and which our Model does not yet adequately address. Overall, it is hoped that this Model and the Tools will continue to be revised and improved by users who share their experiences with us and others.

Some of these areas include:

- ❑ **SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS:** Although some of our tools will provide support for families with children who have special needs, the legal and regulatory framework combined with the specialized nature of some of the needs suggest that more targeted tools and a specific Model for this population is needed.
- ❑ **POST-SECONDARY PLANNING:** Our tools include some support for post-secondary planning but mobile students need an explicit and sophisticated set of supports to make up for the inconsistency of school- and

community-based supports they will likely experience as they move from place to place, particularly if they cross state lines.

- **EXTREMELY MOBILE STUDENTS:** A better understanding of the needs of students who move with extreme frequency and schools with an exorbitantly high “churn” rate: Students who move frequently within the school year and schools that have substantially large numbers of students moving in and out during school year are likely to present greater and possibly different challenges and likely will warrant further research and even greater support.
- Districts hosting large populations of extremely mobile students are often in urban, high-poverty areas, but are also prevalent in certain other districts, such as rural districts with a substantial migrant population, and some military-related districts.
- **MORE DATA AND BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF EXISTING DATA:** With the extra requirements from the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), such as the reporting requirements with the Military Student Identifier and reporting of homeless students, schools or districts and states will soon have access to information they can use to better understand their mobile student populations. They should develop tools to use that information.

# MOBILITY MITIGATION MODEL

The most effective schools or districts do not look at mobility support practices in isolation. Instead, they understand that fully providing support requires a web of systemic interventions across the school and district environment. This Model was developed upon that foundation and grew out of an iterative process of revision and refinement in collaboration with our working group of practitioners.

In two complementary parts—the **LINEAR OVERVIEW** and the **PROCESS GUIDE**—the Model provides a conceptual and practical overview of what a system-wide, consistent mobility support structure might look like. Both parts of the mitigation Model are designed to help practitioners organize their thinking about how they and their institutions could more consistently support mobile students.

As with all other resources provided in this Guide, the Model should be used as a template and contextualized to meet the needs of different schools or districts.

## LINEAR OVERVIEW

The first part of the Mobility Mitigation Model, the Linear Overview, gives a bird’s eye view of effective practices that sending and receiving school personnel can use to streamline a student’s transition between schools. It is intended to help schools organize their strategies for supporting mobile students at a systemic level.

**ON THE HORIZONTAL AXIS**, the Linear Overview breaks down the student transition cycle into four common stages of transition. Note that while the Linear Overview divides stages of transition cleanly, in practice the time boundaries of these stages are fairly fluid and may also differ somewhat from transfer to transfer.

**BEFORE MOVE:** The period when the child or family learns of the move and begins the withdrawal process. For military families, this usually begins when the service member is notified of orders to relocate (often called “permanent change of station” or “PCS” orders).

**DURING MOVE:** The period of time from when the child has withdrawn from one school but before he or she enrolls in another. This phase usually overlaps with the family’s physical move from one location to another. Ideally this period occurs over a summer or winter break, but for many mobile families may take place during the school year.

**INTRODUCTORY PHASE:** The period when the child is newly enrolled at the “receiving school.” Sometimes referred to by researchers and practitioners as the “Fragile First” – a short period of time, approximately two weeks, seen as critical to the student’s integration into the new school.

**AFTER MOVE:** The period after the child has moved past the introductory period at the receiving school. This typically begins when the child’s school schedule becomes settled and ends when the student’s family learns they will move again. This period may last anywhere from several months to years depending on the timing of the parent’s next PCS or other move.

**ON THE VERTICAL AXIS**, the Linear Overview delineates the key school staff roles that contribute to a smooth transition at the sending and receiving schools. Each row of the Linear Overview identifies a general mitigation practice that personnel in

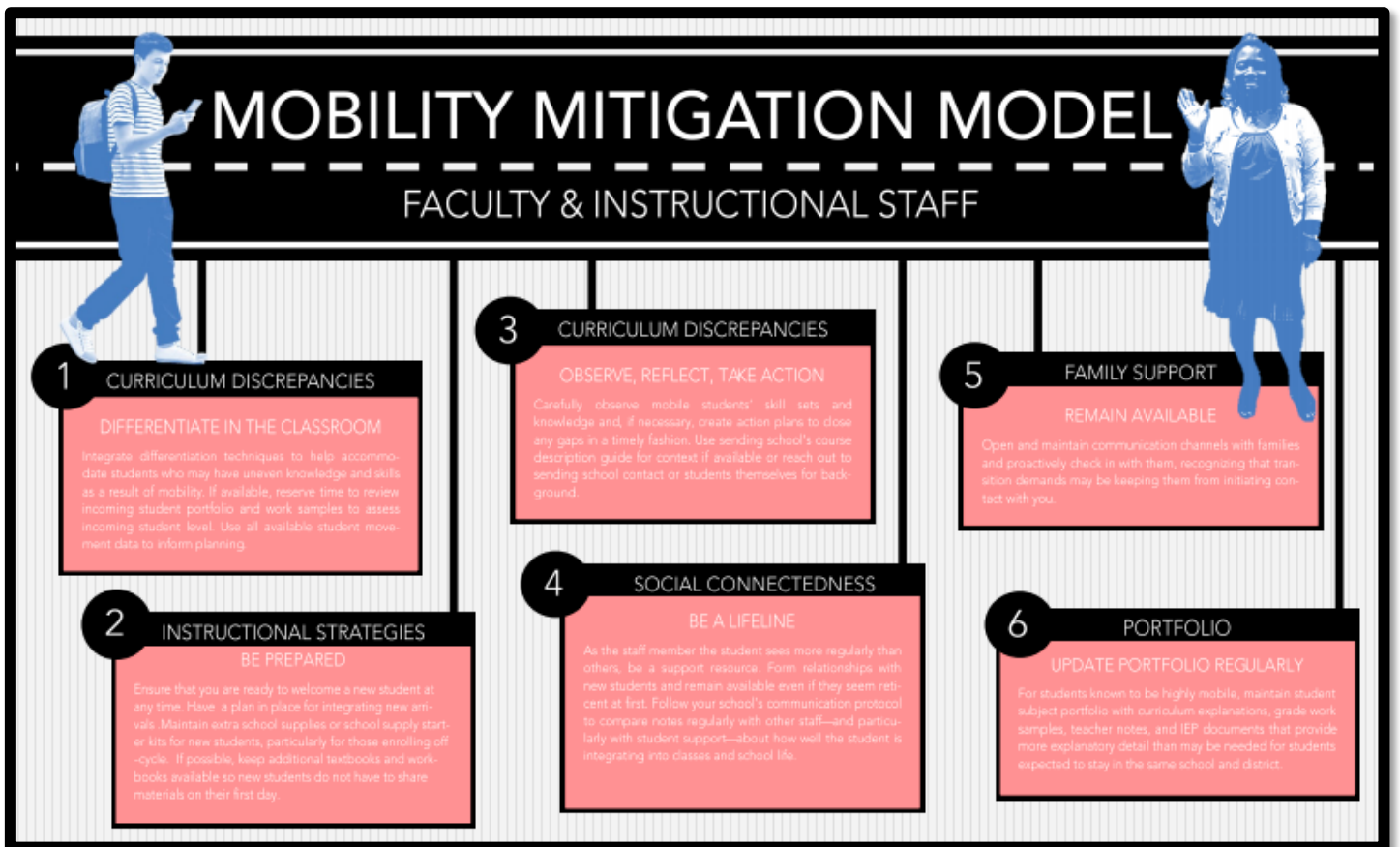


the aligned role might take at different phases of the transition process. As has been outlined in greater detail in previous sections of this Guide, individual school personnel may find that they are asked to fulfill the duties of multiple identified roles.

When viewed holistically, the Linear Overview offers sending and receiving school staff a high-level view of the processes that would be in play at both schools during each stage of an effective student transfer. More broadly, the Linear Overview may help conceptually organize a set of interconnecting processes which, while complex, should remain relatively consistent from transfer to transfer.



# THE PROCESS GUIDE



The second part of the Mobility Mitigation Model, the **PROCESS GUIDE**, serves as a visual representation of how school or district personnel can support mobile students. The Process Guide is organized by role and presents specific activities that individuals in these roles (or with the responsibilities and authority common to these roles) can undertake to provide support for highly mobile students.

The numbered activities on each page are aligned with the effective practice categories represented on the Linear Overview. For example, the Linear Overview suggests that Faculty and Instructional Staff should be

aware of and generally plan to address Curriculum Discrepancies both when sending and receiving a new student. On the Process Guide page for Faculty and Instructional Staff (see above), steps 1 and 3 set out substantive suggestions for how the Curriculum Discrepancies might be addressed through explicit practices, such as differentiating instruction, reviewing incoming student work, and using student movement data when available to guide classroom guidance.

Note that the **TOOLKIT** provides additional support and more explicit guidance for implementing the steps identified in the Process Guide.



# THE TOOLKIT

## HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

The Toolkit is organized into four overlapping sections: **PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES**, **DURING MOVE**, **INTRODUCTORY PHASE**, and **AFTER MOVE**.

The **PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES** section includes tools that schools or districts can use to develop their systems to

better support mobile students. After the Preparatory Activities section, the tools are organized in alignment with phases of the Mobility Mitigation Model, generally following a student’s typical transition path.

Tools in the **DURING MOVE** section are generally targeted to Counselors and Student Support Staff and primarily address school withdrawal and enrollment activities. The **INTRODUCTORY PHASE** tools involve all levels of school personnel and focus techniques to welcome and

integrate the new students quickly and consistently. Finally, the **AFTER MOVE** Tools suggest ways to continue supporting the new students and to provide school personnel with information to better serve the new students.

For each tool, there is an introduction which explains the need for the tool, a description, a list of the intended primary users, and an implementation checklist.

	TOOL	TARGET USER(S)
<b>PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES</b>	A. Pre-Implementation Assessment	School or District Leadership
	B. Tool Implementation Planning Worksheet	School or District Leadership
	C. MIC3 Training and Package and Protocol	School or District Leadership, State Leadership, Counselors, Parents/Families
	D. Memorandum of Understanding	School or District Leadership, State Leadership
	E. Website Layout	School or District Leadership
<b>DURING MOVE</b>	F. Transcript Cover Letter	Counselors & Student Support Staff
	G. Withdrawal/Enrollment Checklist	Counselors & Student Support Staff
<b>INTRODUCTORY PHASE</b>	H. Communication Protocol Brainstorming Framework	All
	I. Welcoming Practices Packet	School or District Leadership, Counselors & Student Support Staff, Family Support Staff
	J. Student Questionnaire	Counselors & Student Support Staff
<b>AFTER MOVE</b>	K. Portfolio Checklist	All
	L. Identifying Transition Pathways	School or District Leadership, State Leadership; Counselors; School or District Leadership; Data Specialists

Because schools or districts are complex systems with unique contexts and methods of operation, the tools provided here should not be understood as “quick-fix,” one-size-fits-all solutions to the challenges of mobility, even if those challenges are ubiquitous and common across school and district

environments. And, too, the challenges faced by highly mobile students are complex; even in one school or district, a web of strategies which are consistently assessed and improved, rather than a one-time silver bullet, is needed to support highly mobile students effectively.

# TOOLKIT PRE-IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT & TOOL IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING WORKSHEET

Before using any of the tools that follow, we recommend that school and district leaders evaluate their current system of supports for highly mobile students. To assist in such efforts, the Toolkit begins with a **PRE-IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT** intended to help schools or districts identify local areas of strength and growth. School and district personnel should then use

this assessment to identify which tools might be immediately useful as is, which might be useful if first adapted to local settings, which might align with longer term goals for supporting highly mobile students but are not immediately useful, and which are not applicable.

State departments of education can also use this pre-implementation assessment to develop an overview of practices to suggest in their districts. Similarly, the assessment may serve as catalyst for additional, new ideas for supportive practices.

After completing the pre-implementation assessment, schools or districts will have identified strengths and areas for growth and will be able to identify suggested tools to use, either as is or after customization. The

implementation of any new practice, however, is most effective when it is preceded by a thorough planning process; as such, the Toolkit includes a **TOOL IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING WORKSHEET** aimed at supporting schools and district leaders as they think through new strategies for supporting highly mobile populations, by helping them map out specific objectives, potential roadblocks, and begin thinking about measurement and adaptation strategies.

# A.

MOB

## THE NEED

Before schools or districts implement any practices, programming, or strategies, it is important that they understand the quality and reach of support they already provide for highly mobile youth and families, identifying both strengths and gaps. This tool guides schools or districts in a review to develop a clear sense of their current state.

## TOOL DESCRIPTION

The Pre-Implementation Assessment is intended to help schools or districts identify areas of strength and growth and guide goal-setting, resource allocation, and outcome measurement. School and district leadership should complete the assessment honestly, inviting the input of key school personnel and other stakeholders. Upon completion, convening to review results and map priorities and goals is recommended.

# PRIMARY USERS

School and District leadership

## MOBILITY SUPPORT PRE-IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT

Before taking steps to implement supportive tools, it is recommended that schools or districts complete a pre-implementation assessment to understand the quality and reach of support they already provide for highly mobile youth and families. This assessment will help identify areas of strength and growth and guide goal-setting, resource allocation, and outcome measurement.

<b>1</b> NEVER / NO PRACTICE IN PLACE	<b>2</b> SOMETIMES	<b>3</b> MOST OF THE TIME	<b>4</b> ALWAYS
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For each section in the assessment, read the statements and rank your school or district using the scores above. The statements in each category are broken into two subsections: action steps and continuous improvement steps. Action steps are practices or protocols in each category that support students or families. Continuous improvement steps are processes that help schools or districts use data and feedback to strengthen the supportive practices listed in the action steps subsection.

In each section, there is also space included for open-ended reflection on current practices and gaps in service.

Some practices included in the survey may not be feasible for all schools or districts either due to available resources or rules or restrictions in place. In that case, note the barrier and think through how the practice could be adapted in the context of your school or district.

After completing each section, tally the score, divide by the number of questions in the section, and list the percentage in this chart. Sections with lower scores are areas that need strategic focus for improvement.

<p><b>A.</b> PORTFOLIO</p>		<p><b>E.</b> FAMILY AND PARENTAL SUPPORT</p>	
<p><b>B.</b> COUNSELING AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT</p>		<p><b>F.</b> ENROLLMENT AND WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES</p>	
<p><b>C.</b> SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS</p>		<p><b>G.</b> GRADUATION BARRIERS MITIGATION</p>	
<p><b>D.</b> CURRICULUM ISSUES &amp; COURSE PLACEMENT</p>		<p><b>H.</b> INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES</p>	

# A. PORTFOLIO

## ACTION STEPS

School or district collects relevant student academic data and documentation—academic assessments, IEPs/504s, and transcripts—in a student portfolio that is easily accessible and transferable either to families or a receiving school.	1	2	3	4
School or district collects representative academic samples, such as writing and classwork, in a student portfolio that is easily accessible and transferable to both families and a receiving school.	1	2	3	4
School district collects relevant, non-sensitive socio-emotional notes and extracurricular information in a student portfolio that is easily accessible and transferable to both families and a receiving school.	1	2	3	4
School or district leadership provides sufficient resources to support the upkeep of the portfolio system.	1	2	3	4
School or district follows a consistent protocol that prompts faculty and staff who work most closely with a student to update portfolios in a timely manner.	1	2	3	4
Portfolios are regularly audited, and incomplete portfolios are flagged for completion by appropriate staff.	1	2	3	4

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STEPS

School or district leadership conducts a review of the portfolio system annually, asking faculty and staff for feedback on protocols and format. Leadership meaningfully considers suggestions and implements improvements as appropriate.	1	2	3	4
School or district conducts a mental and emotional health screening for all incoming students upon arrival.	1	2	3	4

In what ways could your school or district improve in this category?



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If your school or district does not engage in practices listed above, why not? What barriers to implementation exist? How could they be mitigated with support from school, district, or state leadership?

## B. COUNSELING AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

### ACTION STEPS

School or district assigns all incoming students a primary counselor and communicates direct contact information with family.

1 2 3 4

School or district conducts a mental and emotional health screening for all incoming students upon arrival.

1 2 3 4

School or district has a protocol that triggers a counseling follow-up with any students flagged for support by intake screening administrator.	1	2	3	4
School or district has a standardized practice of communicating school and community mental health resources to incoming families, regardless of immediate need.	1	2	3	4
School or district has strong ties with mental health care providers in the community and a standardized process for referrals to those external providers.	1	2	3	4
School or district has a standardized process for following up on referrals to external providers.	1	2	3	4
School or district has military-connected crisis counselors (or appropriately trained crisis counselors for other relevant mobile student populations) available for emotional support on campus and notifies all incoming families, regardless of immediate need of availability of these counselors.	1	2	3	4
Within the bounds of privacy regulations, school or district has a protocol for communicating appropriate mental health information with staff and faculty who interact with the student and may be able to provide emotional support.	1	2	3	4

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STEPS

School or district leadership regularly conducts a review of counseling and emotional support protocol, asking faculty and staff for feedback. Suggestions are meaningfully considered and implemented as appropriate.	1	2	3	4
Students and family who use school mental health resources are surveyed and asked for feedback. Suggestions are meaningfully considered and implemented as appropriate.	1	2	3	4
Partner and referral organizations are surveyed and asked for feedback. Suggestions are meaningfully considered and implemented as appropriate.	1	2	3	4
School or district collects data on referrals and identifies and fills gaps in service.	1	2	3	4

In what ways could your school or district improve in this category?

If your school or district does not engage in practices listed above, why not? What barriers to implementation could be mitigated with robust support from school, district, or state leadership?

## C. SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

### ACTION STEPS

School or district seeks to hire staff members who have similar backgrounds to highly mobile student populations.	1	2	3	4
School or district conducts a new student orientation at the beginning of each school year or at other high volume transfer periods. To the extent possible, orientation activities are broken out by grade.	1	2	3	4
School or district has a standardized welcoming practices protocol for use by all school personnel.	1	2	3	4
School or district has a standardized student interest questionnaire and an interview protocol to guide staff through intake interviews or survey administration.	1	2	3	4
Results of student interest questionnaire are used to proactively connect students with appropriate clubs, organizations, and teams and/or potential staff mentors.	1	2	3	4

School or district has a Student2Student® club or other peer group organization that welcomes new students and continues support after initial welcoming period.	1	2	3	4
Student2Student® club, other peer group organization, or school itself has an established lunchtime buddy system to implement when new students arrive.	1	2	3	4
All new students are given first-day tours and a welcoming resource packet.	1	2	3	4
All new students are connected with a staff member who acts as a point person during the introductory period and, if needed, continues as a resource and mentor throughout the student’s tenure at the school.	1	2	3	4
School or district proactively orders and keeps extra academic and extracurricular supplies and school-year mementos (e.g., sports equipment, textbooks, school t-shirts, yearbooks, etc.) on hand for new students.	1	2	3	4
As often as possible, counselors assign highly mobile students to at least one repeat teacher from year to year to allow for looping.	1	2	3	4

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STEPS

School or district leadership regularly conducts a review of welcoming practices and protocol, asking participating students, faculty, and staff for feedback. Suggestions are meaningfully considered and implemented as appropriate.	1	2	3	4
Highly mobile students and families are surveyed on their satisfaction with welcoming practices. School or district leadership meaningfully considers suggestions and implements improvements as appropriate.	1	2	3	4

In what ways could your school/ district improve in this category?

If your school or district does not engage in practices listed above, why not? What barriers to implementation could be mitigated with robust support from school, district, or state leadership?

## D. CURRICULUM ISSUES AND COURSE PLACEMENT

### ACTION STEPS

School or district provides high quality professional development for counseling staff on MIC3 requirements relating to credit award and course placement and other regulatory guidelines for mobile students.

1 2 3 4

School or district has a detailed course description guide available online that receiving school counselors and incoming families can easily reference.

1 2 3 4

Upon receipt of official or unofficial transcripts, counseling staff uses all available resources (e.g. transcript cover letter, curriculum descriptions, outreach to sending school contacts, student portfolio, discussions with students and parents, etc.) to assess transcript quickly, identify potential curriculum/course differences, identify appropriate placements and supports, and create permanent student schedules.

1 2 3 4

When counseling students on class placement, counselors provide information to students and parents/guardians on which courses may be site specific and unavailable at future schools.

1 2 3 4

If student wishes to pursue classes or courses of study that may not be available at future schools (i.e. advanced placement courses, less popular languages, etc.) counselors proactively assess potential workarounds to implement in the event of a future mid-year move, including asking school leadership and instructional staff about the possibility of an individualized distance-learning program.

1 2 3 4

<p>If a student wishes to continue a class or course of study from the sending school that is not available at the receiving school, counselors attempt to find a workaround, such as classes at a local community college, online courses, or discussing distance-learning options with sending school.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4</p>
<p>School or district has protocols to support counseling and instructional staff as they work to quickly recognize student knowledge and skill gaps or areas where the student is ahead and create appropriate action plans.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4</p>
<p>Upon student withdrawal and relocation, staff and faculty have a protocol in place to facilitate communication with families and new receiving school staff, who may have questions regarding course or program placement and potential curriculum discrepancies.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4</p>

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STEPS

<p>School or district leadership regularly conducts a review of class placement and curriculum communication practices asking faculty and staff for feedback. Suggestions are meaningfully considered and implemented as appropriate.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4</p>
<p>School or district collects data on sending and receiving schools and where there is a sufficient consistency of transfer points, notes recurring curriculum discrepancies and skill and knowledge gaps. Aggregated data and recommendations from data collection are made available to counseling and instructional staff.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4</p>
<p>Highly mobile students and families are surveyed on their satisfaction with course supports and class placement. School or district leadership meaningfully considers suggestions and implements improvements as appropriate.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4</p>

In what ways could your school or district improve in this category?

If your school or district does not engage in practices listed above, why not? What barriers to implementation could be mitigated with robust support from school, district, or state leadership?

## E. FAMILY and PARENTAL SUPPORT

### ACTION STEPS

Family support staff have been trained on and are knowledgeable about federal and state supports for highly mobile families, including MIC3.	1	2	3	4
School or district has a family orientation day at the beginning of each new school year and at other high volume transfer periods.	1	2	3	4
School or district has up-to-date contact information (email and phone numbers) for staff members deeply involved in student transfers clearly and prominently displayed on website.	1	2	3	4
If email on school "Contact" webpage leads to a general email (i.e. info@GreatHS.com), inbox is checked daily, emails from parents/families are responded to within two business days, and parents/families of highly mobile children are connected with appropriate school or district personnel.	1	2	3	4
School or district has a protocol to organize consistent initial staff communication with the families of incoming students.	1	2	3	4
Whenever possible, school or district initiates communication with families before their first day of school.	1	2	3	4
School or district has a protocol to organize consistent follow-up communication and check-in with new families via phone, text, or email.	1	2	3	4
Follow-up communication is initiated with all families by the school, regardless of whether or not the family proactively reaches out to school staff.	1	2	3	4

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STEPS

School or district regularly surveys parents and families to assess quality of school support. School or district leadership meaningfully considers suggestions and implements improvements as appropriate.	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

Highly mobile students and families are surveyed on their satisfaction with school or district support. School or district leadership meaningfully considers suggestions and implements improvements as appropriate.

1 2 3 4

In what ways could your school or district improve in this category?

If your school or district does not engage in practices listed above, why not? What barriers to implementation could be mitigated with robust support from school, district, or state leadership?



## F. ENROLLMENT AND WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

### ACTION STEPS

School or district provides high quality professional development for counseling and administrative staff on MIC3 requirements and best practices for highly mobile student populations.

1 2 3 4

### ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

School has a designated mobile student point of contact (POC) whose information is clearly accessible on the district website.

1 2 3 4

POC is on call during summer months to field questions and requests from incoming families.

1 2 3 4

School or district publicizes and hosts enrollment fair during the summer, taking care to choose a host location that brings the school or district to families (i.e. military base, local shelters, community centers, designated disaster relief areas).

1 2 3 4

Incoming families are greeted warmly when they arrive in school administrative offices or classrooms.

1 2 3 4

School or district has a warm and engaging area designated for welcoming new families. This space includes clear written instructions for enrollment, is staffed by knowledgeable personnel and hosts a variety of resources to connect families to their new school and community.

1 2 3 4

Enrollment procedures are standardized and communicated clearly and consistently with incoming families by all staff members.

1 2 3 4

Enrollment and withdrawal procedures and forms—including a checklist of required information—are available and easily found on school or district website.

1 2 3 4

School or district has a process for families to begin enrollment/registration online.

1 2 3 4

When official transcripts or IEPs are not immediately available, counseling and intake staff honor hand-carried records when determining initial course placement, gifted and talented, or special needs supports.

1 2 3 4

At intake, school or district staff request family's military status both for the purpose of the Military Student Identifier and to communicate to the appropriate school staff.

1 2 3 4

School's/district's enrollment forms include questions regarding military affiliation or other high-mobility status.

1 2 3 4

School or district enrollment procedures include steps to assess and implement IEP/504 supports as required by law. School or district has clear protocols to guide outreach to sending school if incoming IEP/504 is unclear.

1 2 3 4

## WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

Throughout a family's time at the school, school or district works proactively to educate parents on withdrawal expectations, including the importance of promptly informing the school of relocation plans, while maintaining a welcoming atmosphere.	1	2	3	4
School or district provides withdrawal checklist and documentation to families upon departure, including specific information for summer or vacation contacts at sending school.	1	2	3	4
Counseling staff completes a transcript cover letter that includes a POC, links to a curriculum guide, and any other relevant student information.	1	2	3	4
School or district responds within 10 days to information requests from receiving school.	1	2	3	4
Parents/guardians receive information upon withdrawal about the MIC3 protections for children of active duty military and others covered by the MIC3.	1	2	3	4

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STEPS

School or district regularly surveys staff, parents and families, to assess the enrollment and withdrawal processes. School or district leadership meaningfully considers suggestions and implements improvements as appropriate.	1	2	3	4
School or district collects and documents feedback from families about enrollment and withdrawal procedures and adapts protocols as necessary.	1	2	3	4
Highly mobile families are asked to self-identify upon enrollment. Data collected from such identification is aggregated and used to guide school and district programming and familial/student support efforts.	1	2	3	4

In what ways could your school or district improve in this category?

---

If your school or district does not engage in practices listed above, why not? What barriers to implementation could be mitigated with robust support from school, district, or state leadership?

## **G. MITIGATION OF GRADUATION BARRIERS**

### **ACTION STEPS**

School or district has a protocol for determining and allowing equivalencies as permitted by state law and the MIC3 and regulatory frameworks relating to other mobile students on testing and graduation requirements.	1	2	3	4
When applicable, school or district works with state administrators to waive select graduation course requirements for students transferring during their senior year.	1	2	3	4
School or district is flexible regarding graduation for highly mobile students who have moved during their senior year, including identifying alternative forms of credit awards and working with sending school, to ensure that student will be able to graduate.	1	2	3	4
When necessary, sending school or district allows students who have moved during their senior year to receive a diploma from the sending school.	1	2	3	4
School or district allows students who have moved during their senior year and graduated from a receiving institution to return and unofficially walk in graduation with their friends and classmates if desired.	1	2	3	4

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STEPS

School or district leadership regularly surveys counselor and instructional staff on common barriers to graduation and adopts policies to address such obstacles.	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

In what ways could your school or district or district improve in this category?



---

If your school or district does not engage in practices listed above, why not? What barriers to implementation could be mitigated with robust support from school, district, or state leadership?

## H. INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

### ACTION STEPS

At regular intervals, teachers receive high-quality professional development on instructional strategies geared to supporting highly mobile student populations.

1 2 3 4

Teachers use differentiation techniques and scaffolding in the classroom with particular awareness of support for mobile students who may have been exposed to different curricula.

1 2 3 4

Instructional observation protocols include explicit measurement of techniques supportive of highly mobile populations.	1	2	3	4
Teachers are provided with enough resources to keep extra textbooks and materials available for new transfer students throughout the year.	1	2	3	4
Counselors provide instructors with information about new students' previous coursework in a timely fashion.	1	2	3	4
School or district has a protocol to support communication between teachers and student support staff regarding new students' progress in the classroom.	1	2	3	4
Teachers proactively schedule check-ins with the parents/guardians of new students.	1	2	3	4

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STEPS

School or district regularly surveys teachers to assess instructional practices and classroom issues relating to mobile students. School or district leadership meaningfully considers suggestions and implements improvements as appropriate.	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---

In what ways could your school or district improve in this category?

---

If your school or district does not engage in practices listed above, why not? What barriers to implementation could be mitigated with robust support from school, district, or state leadership?

## B.

# TOOL IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING WORKSHEET

### THE NEED

Because schools or districts across the United States vary tremendously, any tool provided in this planning Guide will need modification before it is suited for use in a particular context. Tools should be systematically evaluated before implementation and adjusted to fit

the context-specific needs of students, families, and staff.

## TOOL DESCRIPTION

The Tool Implementation Planning Worksheet provides school or district leadership with a customizable template to plan for the implementation and continuous improvement of tools. The Planning

Worksheet may be used in a variety of ways, including as an agenda outline for a working group meeting, a worksheet for individual school leaders, or as a rough brainstorming template. Regardless of the selected mode of use, the themes and questions raised by the guide are essential considerations before the use of any new tool from this Toolkit.

## PRIMARY USERS

School or district leadership



# TOOL IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING GUIDE

TOOL OR PRACTICE:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

IMPLEMENTATION  
DATE:


1. **RATIONALE:** Describe why you are choosing to implement this tool.

--

2. **ADAPTATIONS:** If you are considering a pre-designed tool or template, what adaptations will you make to fit your local context and ensure that your students are effectively supported?

--

3. **VISIONING:** How will you know that your tool is working? What result would you consider “success”?

--

4. **GOALS & OUTCOMES:** In the table below, set two measurable goals for the implementation of your tool. Then, think through a plan for how you will tackle accomplishing those goals.

GOALS	OUTCOME	MEASUREMENT TOOL & PLAN	IMPLEMENTATION	ACCOUNTABILITY & OVERSIGHT
What are you aiming to achieve through the implementation of this tool or practice?	What will indicate success?	How will you measure your outcomes and progress towards your goals?	Who will own designing and implementing the tool and what deadlines should they meet?	Who will own the measurement process, report findings to leadership and other staff, and help design adaptations to your tool or practice?

5. **KEY ACTORS:** In the table below, plan out the key responsibilities different staff will assume when you implement this tool during different stages of a student's transfer. Reference to the **MOBILITY MITIGATION MODEL** may help organize this process.

	BEFORE A STUDENT MOVES	DURING THE STUDENT'S MOVE	INTRODUCTORY PHASE	AFTER THE STUDENT MOVES
STATE LEADERSHIP				
SCHOOL OR DISTRICT LEADERSHIP				
INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF				
REGISTRARS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS				
STUDENT SUPPORT STAFF				
FAMILY SUPPORT STAFF				

## 6. FOUNDATIONAL CLIMATE AND PROCESSES

What foundational practices or resources need to be in place before you implement this tool?

What roadblocks can you anticipate encountering? What support will you need to mitigate those obstacles, and from whom?

What practices need to be in place to ensure active communication and partnership with families and students?

# C.

## MIC3 TRAINING PACKAGE and PROTOCOL

### THE NEED

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (“The Compact” or the “MIC3”) provides (1) a critical set of standards and protections for public school students whose parents are active duty military and (2) guidelines for the public schools that serve these students. Many public school personnel who serve these students are not familiar with the Compact and its provisions, particularly in school districts that do not have a substantial military-connected student population.

### PRIMARY USERS

State-level education officials who oversee military-connected student services and/or school counselors; district-level counseling staff; school counselors and school registrars; state and national associations of school counselors; state commissioners to Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission; others charged with delivering professional development to educators of military-connected children; Parents and families

### TOOL DESCRIPTION

This Training Package and Protocol provides states, districts, and schools with a customizable tool by which to train relevant personnel on key elements of Military Interstate Compact. The tool aims to support a more functional understanding and consistent implementation of the Compact among school counselors and other personnel by providing simple training tools and suggested effective implementation practices. Also included are examples of two presentations developed by state departments of education, which can be modified for local use. This tool was developed in response to requests from working group participants for more support on communicating about the Compact and was developed in collaboration with educators from the state and district levels.

### OTHER MOBILE POPULATIONS

The Military Interstate Compact applies only to children of active duty military and a few other mobile federal employees (for example, U.S. Coast Guard). THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT provides a similarly intended set of protections and mandates from the federal level and a well-developed support and enforcement process for children experiencing homelessness, including children whose parents are migrant workers and immigrant and refugee children, including those not accompanied by a parent or guardian. The children of migrant workers also have supports through the federal MIGRANT STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAM.

### TOOL IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

<p><b>PRE- IMPLEMENTATION</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify key areas of need (i.e. level of local knowledge about MIC3, mobile student population) and relevant audiences for training</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify resources (state DOE, counseling associations) to deliver or provide support for training</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Modify template to meet state rules and local needs</li></ul>
<p><b>DURING IMPLEMENTATION</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify state representatives to serve as POC on MIC3 training</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify local representatives to serve as MIC3 POC in relevant districts</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Revise training materials based on experience and feedback training</li></ul>

# MILITARY INTERSTATE COMPACT

# TRAINING PACKAGE AND PROTOCOL

This Military Interstate Children's Compact Training Protocol aims to enable states and school districts to develop and/or enhance their professional development and other training on the Compact, by providing with an effective practices checklist, resources, and suggestions on how to continue to improve the training process through feedback. This training package contains: (1) a checklist for training development; (2) informational resources; (3) and an example of two states' MIC3 slideshows, with suggestions for adapting.

## CHECKLIST

Use this following checklist as a guide for developing your MIC3 training.

- Identify target audience for training**
  - Counselors
  - School-level administrators
  - District-level administrators
  - State Department of Education personnel
  - Other potential audiences: education associations, counselor associations, etc.
  
- Identify and publicize geographic distribution of the students in your state or district who are covered by the Compact**
  - Confirm that your state adequately collects and stores data on the Military Student Identifier and federal Impact Aid
  - Confirm that your district adequately collects data on Military Student Identifier and knows where its military-connected students attend school
  
- Conduct preliminary outreach within the state or district to notify districts and schools of their military-connected student population and of the application of the Compact provisions to those students**
  
- Consult with local MILITARY SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICERS to identify issues common in your area or state and to help disseminate training information**
  - Be sure to include liaison officers in training efforts
  
- State-level: Identify and connect with current and previous state compact commissioners in order to develop relationship and deepen understanding of common state issues under the Compact**

## INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources will assist in the development of training and educational materials.

- MIC3 WEBSITE:** Includes a wealth of information, such as an interactive map with state commissioner contact information, compilation of links to state compact websites, and a guide for school officials and parents.
- IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERVIEW SLIDESHOW**
- RESOLUTION OF EDUCATION TRANSFERS SLIDESHOW** developed by the MIC3 with a national focus
- MCEC INFORMATION ON MIC3:** Implementation for school districts
- MCEC WEBINAR:** Know Your Rights, MIC3 Training for parents and families
- CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MILITARY READINESS ONLINE MODULES FOR EDUCATORS**
- MILITARY LIAISON OFFICERS BY BRANCH AND LOCATION**



## SAMPLE STATE SLIDESHOWS

Included below are presentations which have been independently developed in Virginia and Louisiana. Schools or districts may choose to use these as a frame for their own training materials.

- LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
- VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

To modify sample slide shows for your state or district:

- Identify state-specific contact information
- Review state-specific information on grading practices and credit recovery and create slide highlighting key issues for your state or district
- Review slides with relevant state or local personnel to help contextualize for your locale
- Create slide showing locations of military-connected children across the state, including a map if possible
- Identify key areas of confusion, misunderstanding, or conflict in your state and create slides to discuss and clarify
- Create slide listing local, state, and national resources
- Create slide with FAQ section relevant to your area

D.

## INTERDISTRICT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

### THE NEED

Schools or districts with substantial numbers of highly mobile students often struggle to provide continuity of educational opportunity to those students and their families. When those students and families frequently transfer among a common group of sending and receiving schools or districts, however, there is an opportunity for those schools or districts to improve communication and provide more consistency in key areas of the transition process.

pertinent connection to other schools or districts; the parents and students who transfer among those districts

### PRIMARY USERS

School and district personnel in districts that have identified a pattern in school transfers or other

## TOOL DESCRIPTION

The interdistrict Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) tool is a draft document that can be adapted by leaders of school districts that serve students who often transfer among a common group of sending and receiving schools. The MOU provides suggestions for how groups of school districts can improve the transition process by providing consistency in key practices and developing communication protocols that clearly identify points of contact. It can also serve as a tool for parents as they transfer among schools that have signed. The tool provided here sets out a plan for how to develop the MOU and a template of the agreement.

workshops that included several districts serving a collection of military installations that are part of the same command. Several districts understood that they shared a significant number of students as their families moved from one installation to another, and they shared an understanding that it would be helpful to the schools and the students/families if these districts worked together to develop consistent enrollment practices, identify points of contact, and work toward clarity on other common transition concerns such as credit transfers and graduation requirements.

The idea to address these issues through a “Memorandum of Understanding” grew out of

## IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

<b>PRE-IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify potential collaborative/partner districts by reviewing student transition patterns or other indicators of student overlap, such as knowledge of community links, shared industries</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct outreach with potential partners, discuss areas of opportunity, and identify concerns</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Survey parent and community groups within potential districts to identify areas of concern and potential support.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> For military-connected groups, reach out to school liaison officers and installation leadership to understand potential transition patterns and needs and to develop a partnership in outreach to other installations</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify key issues for effective agreement</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use template and examples to draft agreement</li></ul>
<b>DURING IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintain current contact information for each district or school contact</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a meeting plan and a protocol for creating the agreement</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop protocol for continuous review of agreement provisions</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop practice for gathering ongoing feedback from districts, schools, and (in the military context) school liaison officers and installation leadership</li></ul>

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING PLAN AND TEMPLATE

## HOW TO START

After you have determined that a memorandum of understanding or other agreement would help your district and others mitigate the impact of mobility:

- Determine which districts or schools should be involved
- Create a working group with a representative from each district or relevant school
- Consider how to involve outside stakeholders such as
  - School Liaison Officers (SLOs),
  - Installation leadership
  - Community leaders or advocates for the affected population
  - Parents or family advocates
- Create a structure for levels of responsibility, identifying and assigning roles
- Clarify who needs to approve the process for each participant
  - School Board
  - Superintendent
  - Other
- Identify key areas for working group to address

## ELEMENTS OF THE AGREEMENT

The working group should develop the terms of the agreement, likely covering the following topics:

- Consistent and clearly articulated practices on enrollment/withdrawal
  - Consider developing a uniform, on-line process if state and local law allows
- Communication protocols
  - Identify methods and frequency of communication practices
  - Establish general check-ins
  - Establish specific protocols for communication at high need times
  - Establish common guidelines for communicating with mobile families
- Point of contact for mobile families and other schools/districts
  - Clearly identify a point of contact on public materials such as web pages and directories
  - Maintain current contact information
- Shared webpage
  - Develop a web page with contact, school calendar (start and end dates), and other key information for each participating school or district
  - Link or host the webpage on each district's site
- Special needs
  - Consider creating a special point of contact for special needs transfers and developing targeted protocols to promote the smooth transition of services
- Transcripts and credits
  - Develop guidelines for the smooth interpretation of transcripts and awarding for credits when students transfer
  - Implement a uniform transcript cover letter with working links to each participating district's curriculum guide or course descriptions
- Sports and Extracurricular
  - Develop guidelines for waiving deadlines and certain try out rules for highly mobile students, to the extent permitted
- Continuous Improvement Design
  - Adopt a method for continuous review and revision including assessments of what specific academic supports are often required

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

## PROPOSED DRAFT FOR WORKING GROUP

### INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) is to establish a set of principles and practices to support the smooth school transition of and reduce barriers to educational success for children of military personnel on the following installations:

[\_\_\_\_\_]

The MOU shall apply to the school districts serving the above installations. Families often transfer among these installations, creating the need to articulate a shared set of principles and practices among these districts for better serving our shared mobile students.

The MOU aims to create consistency among those districts and to reinforce the components of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (the “Compact” or “MIC3”).

This MOU represents a good faith agreement among the school districts to enhance educational opportunity for military-connected students.

### SCOPE

The MOU:

- is designed to bring agreement on key principles and practices;
- is designed to lay the foundation for ongoing work;
- is not intended to direct the substance of curriculum in any way;
- does not seek to or actually interfere with state requirements; and
- does not limit schools’ or districts’ implementation of other unique principles and practices.

## PRINCIPLES OF AGREEMENT

The districts agree to:

- Create and sustain a working group that will develop a joint agreement that documents and addresses:
  - Clear communication protocols
  - Information sharing protocols
  - Enrollment and withdrawal protocols
  - Support for students with special needs
  - Course/program placement and interpretation of curriculum requirements
  - Social emotional supports
- Identify a representative to serve on the working group;
- Create a joint document for families that identifies the district point of contact (“POC”) and contact information for each participating district, School Liaison Officers, school calendar and schedule information, and other contact information;
  - Make that document available on the district website and by other means of communication with families and share that document with their relevant School Liaison Officer
- Clearly communicate in a publicly available format information on each district’s:
  - High school graduation requirements
  - Testing requirements and dates
  - Alternative options for earning graduation credits
  - Application requirements for special programs and extracurricular activities
- Update information as needed, including when state requirements, such as testing mandates and graduation requirements, change.
- Provide professional development, possibly working across districts, to key staff members on the core components of the Interstate Compact and other specialized aspects of serving military-connected students, particularly on the data- and practice-sharing components of the MOU.

## COMMITMENT

The signatory leaders commit to continue developing and implementing best and promising practices that will assist the transitioning military-connected student, as defined and articulated above.

*Be it resolved, therefore, that the following school system signatories enter into this agreement on behalf of their organizations.*

Superintendent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

School System: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Superintendent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## EXAMPLE AGREEMENTS

**THE INTERSTATE COMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MILITARY CHILDREN (MIC3)** is an agreement between all 50 states and the District of Columbia on key educational transition issues.

**TEXAS MIGRANT INTERSTATE PROGRAM (INTERSTATE MIGRANT STUDENT COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT)** includes an agreement with 19 states that often receive migrant students from Texas for at least part of the school year that allows those states to administer all Texas mandated assessments. This agreement prevents students from losing advancement opportunities in their Texas school because of their migrant status.

**CROSS-BORDER PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, THE MEXICAN CONSULATE, AND THE BAJA CALIFORNIA (MEXICO) SCHOOLS** is an agreement among the three agencies to provide educational resources and support for students and their families as they move back and forth across the border. The resource includes cross-border curriculum support, U.S.- Mexico teacher collaborations, new arrivals student mentorship and welcome programs, parent workshops, and cross-border instructional visits.

F.

TRANSCRIPT COVER LETTER

## THE NEED

Curricula, GPA practices, credit requirements, course notations, schedules, and transcript layout often vary widely from school to school, making the process of interpreting transcripts and placing new students into appropriate classes difficult, potentially inaccurate, and time-consuming. Further, counselors report that it is frequently unclear which staff at a sending school should be contacted with questions or how to reach knowledgeable staff during critical school breaks when students may often be transitioning between schools.

## TOOL DESCRIPTION

The Transcript Cover Letter provides a standardized template through which schools can communicate helpful descriptive information about curriculum, student level, and staff contact.

The tool was developed in collaboration with counselors at schools with mobile student populations and refined following a pilot of mock transfers where counselors used the cover letter to help place “new” students.

## PRIMARY USERS

Counselors and student support staff; instructional staff

## IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

<b>PRE-IMPLEMENTATION</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Counselors customize the Transcript Cover Letter template to include school-specific information that will remain constant for each student</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Customized Transcript Cover Letter template is made available to all counseling and administrative staff</li></ul>
<b>BEFORE MOVE</b>	Sending School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Student’s primary counselor fills in student specific data and updated contact information on Transcript Cover Letter template</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Primary counselor contacts instructional staff to clarify any curricular questions, such as student progress for mid-term transfer or unclear course content</li></ul>



<b>DURING MOVE</b>	Sending School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Staff responsible for forwarding student documentation to receiving school includes Cover Letter in documentation packet</li> </ul>
	Receiving School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Staff responsible for receiving student documentation sends receipt of confirmation to sending school</li> <li>□ Counseling staff uses Cover Letter and transcripts to place student into appropriate classes, communicating with sending school contact about any questions</li> </ul>
<b>INTRODUCTORY PHASE</b>	Sending School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Primary counselor remains available to field questions from receiving school</li> </ul>

## TRANSCRIPT COVER LETTER TEMPLATES

The templates below provide examples of two types of cover letters: one, for districts/schools that have online accessible course description guides with information on scheduling and credit requirements; and two, for districts/schools that either do not have an online accessible course description guide or that have online guides that may be missing key information needed for receiving school enrollment.

**TEMPLATE 1**

[SCHOOL OR DISTRICT LETTERHEAD]

<b>TO:</b>	
<b>FROM:</b>	<i>Primary Contact Name</i>
Contact Phone:	<i>Primary Contact Phone</i>
Contact Email:	<i>Primary Contact Email</i>
School Name:	
Address:	
Phone Number:	<i>School Contact Phone, including extensions</i>
District Code:	
<b>RE:</b>	Transcript Information for <i>Student Name</i>

<b>STUDENT NAME:</b>	
<b>STUDENT BIRTHDATE:</b>	
<b>SPECIAL NEEDS (IEP OR 504 PLAN)</b>	Provide brief description

**HIGHLY MOBILE  
POPULATION?**

- Military-connected
- Migrant
- Foster child
- Experiencing homelessness
- Justice-system-involved

This memorandum accompanies the high school transcripts of a student transferring from a school in School District Name and is intended to support the rapid enrollment of that student into a new district. This document attests that Student Name attended School Name, located in City, State.

You can find an electronic copy of our district or school course description guide here:

Course Description Guide web link

If you have questions, please contact the school counselor: Counselor Name at Counselor Phone Number and Direct Email. If you are unable to reach the school counselor during the summer/school break, you may contact Summer/Break POC.

Sincerely,  
Signature  
Name and Job Title

**TEMPLATE 2**

[SCHOOL OR DISTRICT LETTERHEAD]

**TO:**

**FROM:**

*Primary Contact Name*

Contact Phone:

*Primary Contact Phone*

Contact Email:

*Primary Contact Email*

School Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

*School Contact Phone, including extensions*

District Code:

**RE:**

Transcript Information for *Student Name*

**STUDENT NAME:**

**STUDENT BIRTHDATE:**

**SPECIAL NEEDS  
(IEP OR 504 PLAN)**

Provide brief description

**HIGHLY MOBILE  
POPULATION?**

- Military-connected
- Migrant
- Foster child
- Experiencing homelessness

Justice-system-involved

This memorandum accompanies the high school transcripts of a student transferring from a school in **School District Name** and is intended to support the rapid enrollment of that student into a new district. This document attests that **Student Name** attended **School Name**, located in **City, State**.

In the table below, you can find information regarding course descriptions, credits, and grading policies:

<b>COURSE NAMES AND INTERPRETATION</b> (SHORT AND LONG NAMES OF COURSES, AS NEEDED)	Example: "Course 001 U.S. History" covers history of the U.S. from 1400 to 2000. By [month], instruction has typically reached [year].  Example: "Course 002 Pre-Algebra" covers concept x, y, and z. By [month], instruction has covered x and y and students are prepared to solve z equations.
<b>INSTRUCTIONAL SCHEDULE</b> (INCLUDE MINUTES PER CONTENT AREA PER WEEK)	
<b>MIDDLE SCHOOL CREDIT POLICY</b> DO MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES COUNT TOWARD GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS?	Example: "Middle-school completion of civics fulfills high school civics requirement"
<b>GRADING POLICIES AND WEIGHTS, INCLUDING GPA METHODOLOGY</b>	

If you have questions, please contact the school counselor: **Counselor Name** at **Counselor Phone Number and Direct Email**. If you are unable to reach the school counselor during the summer/school break, you may contact **Summer/Break POC**.

Sincerely,  
**Signature**  
**Name and Job Title**

# F.

## WITHDRAWAL/ENROLLMENT CHECKLIST

### THE NEED

Enrollment and withdrawal practices vary widely between schools. Uncertainty about the process among both parents and staff can complicate a school's ability to integrate a new student quickly and properly, sometimes delaying enrollment and proper course placement by days or weeks, resulting in students needlessly missing further instructional time and often switching classes and teachers within the new school, both of which exacerbate the harms associated with student mobility. The lack of clarity also burdens families as they scramble to complete the process properly, often uncertain of what is required and how they can support their children.

### TOOL DESCRIPTION

#### PRIMARY USERS

Registrars, counselors, and school or district administrators; parents and students.

**FOR SCHOOLS**, the checklist aims to guide schools as they reflect on and organize their own process and suggests that schools make these processes accessible and transparent for families and staff.

**FOR FAMILIES**, the checklist serves to help organize the information they should have available and the actions they can take to ease their child's transition into the new school.

Both checklists were developed following working group problem-solving sessions where educators expressed a need for a consistent and organized process and also expressed the desire for tool that parents could use to organize their participation in enrollment and withdrawal.

## IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

<p><b>PRE-IMPLEMENTATION</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review enrollment and withdrawal practices to identify areas of success and areas for improvement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop and publicize (on website) a clear enrollment process and withdrawal requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Name and publicly identify (on website, etc.) an enrollment and withdrawal point of contract, including naming an individual who is available during summer and vacation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop protocol to inform families consistently of the importance of notifying the school when withdrawing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a practice supporting all students, but particularly highly mobile students, in maintaining a <b>PORTFOLIO</b> of work and activities to assist student when transferring to new school</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide <b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b> to counselors and enrollment administrators such as registrars on the Military Interstate Compact and best practices for highly mobile children</li> </ul>	
<p><b>BEFORE MOVE</b></p>	<p>Sending School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If provided notice, reviews Withdrawal Checklist</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensures that student portfolio and other paperwork is up-to-date</li> </ul>
	<p>Receiving School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If provided notice, reviews Enrollment Checklist and begins implementation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> As relevant, begins intra-school communication protocol</li> </ul>
<p><b>DURING MOVE</b></p>	<p>Sending School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Remains available to provide information to receiving school, per Withdrawal Checklist and practices</li> </ul>
	<p>Receiving School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follows Enrollment Checklist protocol</li> </ul>
<p><b>INTRODUCTORY PHASE</b></p>	<p>Receiving School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Completes Enrollment Checklist protocol</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintains or creates <b>PORTFOLIO</b></li> </ul>

## AFTER MOVE

Receiving  
School

- Maintains portfolio
- Follows Enrollment/Withdrawal Checklist protocol

# SCHOOL WITHDRAWAL/ENROLLMENT CHECKLIST

This tool is intended to assist schools in streamlining their enrollment and withdrawal procedures in order to ease administrative obstacles and provide supports for new students and their families. Formalized and clear enrollment and withdrawal procedures can help organize the process for both families and school staff. The Checklist aims to guide schools as they reflect on and organize their own process and to suggest that the schools make these processes accessible and transparent for families and staff.

For military-connected students, an awareness of the enrollment-related components of the [MILITARY INTERSTATE COMPACT](#) is essential for school personnel handling registration and enrollment. Other mobile student populations have enrollment protections under federal law, such as the McKinney-Vento Act for students who are experiencing homelessness; relevant school personnel should also be familiar with these protections.

**Particularly pertinent for some mobile populations: Proof of U.S. Citizenship or legal residency may NOT be required for public school enrollment.** Further, any sort of intimation of this would run directly counter to the goal of helping highly mobile students feel welcome.

✓	WITHDRAWAL
	All families are <b>INFORMED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF NOTIFYING THE SCHOOL</b> immediately upon learning of likely withdrawal
	Upon receiving notice of withdrawal, school provides family with withdrawal plan, which includes dates that key documents will be provided to the family and a point of contact for the withdrawal process
	If the school has maintained a <b>STUDENT PORTFOLIO</b> , counselors conduct a final audit for completion and provide parents/family with a copy on a thumb drive or other secure portable method
	School provides <b>UNOFFICIAL COPIES OF ALL REQUESTED RECORDS</b> and includes <b>TRANSCRIPT COVER LETTER</b> , which will also be attached to official records
	School or district identifies a <b>POINT OF CONTACT</b> for families to remain available to provide necessary information after withdrawal and communicates that information to families.
	For families with students with special needs, IEP or other coordinator meets with family to ensure that all necessary information is ready to be transferred, including updates to IEPs or 504 plans, and that family has an up-to-date copy of to IEP or 504 plan

	School responds promptly to official transfer request from receiving school and includes transcript cover letter with records.
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✓	ENROLLMENT
	<p><b>ENROLLMENT FAIRS</b> before school starts are held on military installations or, as needed, at other locations serving mobile students, in order to enroll students earlier, allowing more advanced planning by families and by school staff and faculty</p>
	<p><b>ONLINE REGISTRATION INFORMATION</b>, including forms, materials, and requirements, are displayed clearly on district/school websites</p>
	<p><b>ONLINE REGISTRATION</b> process is available, where possible</p>
	<p><b>ENROLLMENT FORMS</b> clearly request information on military-connected status of family, other pertinent mobile student information, and information relating to previous schools attended</p>
	<p><b>NEW STUDENT CHECKLIST</b> is available on-line and clearly identified, listing all information and documentation needed for enrollment</p>
	<p><b>SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT PROCESSES AND ATTENDANCE ZONES</b> are clearly identified on district website</p>
	<p><b>POINTS OF CONTACT</b> for new students at district and, if appropriate, school are listed on website and all printed materials with up-to-date contact information, including information for summer and vacation contacts</p>
	<p><b>POINTS OF CONTACT</b> for military-connected students (and other mobile students) are clearly identified on website</p>
	<p>IF permitted by state and/or local law, school and district allow mobile student to <b>ENROLL WHERE FAMILY EXPECTS TO RESIDE LONGER TERM</b>, rather than requiring student to first enroll attend based on at residence of temporary address</p>
	<p>At enrollment, school or district staff request family's <b>MILITARY STATUS FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE MILITARY STUDENT IDENTIFIER</b> and in order to communicate military-connected status to the appropriate school staff</p>
	<p><b>UNOFFICIAL, "HAND CARRIED" RECORDS</b> are accepted for enrollment purposes, pending receipt of official records and all registration-involved personnel are trained in protocol requiring acceptance of hand carried records. Students experiencing homelessness must be enrolled regardless of what records they have available</p>
	<p><b>WELCOMING PROTOCOL</b> for incoming families is implemented at all staff levels</p>
	<p>Counselor or other appropriate student support staff <b>MEETS WITH NEW STUDENT AND FAMILY</b> as soon as possible after enrollment process begins</p>
	<p>In first meeting, counselor or other appropriate student support staff uses a new student <b>QUESTIONNAIRE</b> to learn more about the student</p>

	If the child has special needs, the <a href="#">SPECIAL NEEDS COORDINATOR MEETS WITH THE PARENT</a> and, where appropriate, the student at the start of the enrollment process to ensure smooth transition and timely, effective prevent gaps in services
	Information on special programs, extracurriculars, and sports is made available as soon as possible

# FAMILY WITHDRAWAL/ENROLLMENT CHECKLIST

This tool is intended to guide families through the withdrawal and enrollment process by providing suggested actions as well indicating documents and other resources that should be gathered in advance of a transfer. The Military Child Education Coalition provides a comprehensive checklist of documents that families should have in a portfolio [HERE](#) and our Toolkit also includes a [PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST](#). Other helpful online checklist resources for families who are in the process of or anticipating a school transition include a [PCS CHECKLIST](#) from the Military Family Association and [GUIDE TO SCHOOL TRANSITIONS](#) from Military Families for High Standards.

Although these checklists were developed for military-connected families, they can be helpful for other highly mobile families also. Additional resources for those families include a [PARENT PAMPHLET](#) created by the Home-School-Community Resource Team at Loyola University in Chicago.

✓	WITHDRAWAL
	Notify counselor and other school personnel of anticipated withdrawal as soon as PCS orders are received (or sooner if possible) or other notification of need to move
	Confirm that a <a href="#">STUDENT PORTFOLIO</a> has been maintained by student’s school and/or begin assembling documents for a portfolio; put portfolio information on thumb drive, secure cloud file, or in organized binder
	As needed, obtain official copy of birth certificate, immunization records, proof of residency, and proof of military orders <b>NOTE:</b> Public schools may not ask for or require proof of citizenship of students or their families at any point in the withdrawal or enrollment process
	Become knowledgeable about school options available near new installation or other location of move by researching online, contacting School Liaison Officer, and military family services
	Consult with counselor and School Liaison Officer to identify considerations for new school if options are available and to identify transition supports
	When possible, work proactively with counselor to identify credit or graduation issues that may arise during school transfer
	Where relevant, meet with the special needs coordinator and obtain the most recent IEP or 504 plan and, if possible, copies of the most recent evaluations and information about services provided

	Get contact information for a student's current special needs coordinator and ask that the coordinator be available to speak with coordinator at the new school
	If appropriate, contact the coordinator for the Exception Family Member Program (EFMP) at both the sending and receiving installations.
	As needed, contact new school/ district to identify special program, extracurricular, sports and other qualifying requirements and deadlines
	Obtain contact information for counselor and registrar, including summer and vacation contacts
✓	<b>ENROLLMENT</b>
	Obtain and review enrollment requirements and checklist for new district/school; most are available on website
	Become familiar with the relevant provisions of the Military Interstate Compact
	Clarify which school or schools are available, including any residency or specialized requirements, such as application deadlines; often, districts will have one or more schools serving the same residential zone as well as several "choice" options that have no residency requirements (either whole schools or programs within the district's schools that serve other zones), such as gifted, magnet, career and technical, charter, or other options
	Review and clarify requirements for proof of residency and obtain necessary documents
	Check website or call district office for enrollment sessions or fairs
	Make an appointment for enrollment, if required, and complete all required forms before appointment
	Bring all required documents, including an unofficial transcript and IEP, to the enrollment appointment
	Meet with school counselor and principal at time of or shortly after enrollment to establish relationship and begin resolving any special issues
	Give the counselor copies of your child's transcript, other information (including IEP), and the portfolio
	Closely review your child's initial class placements and make sure you know how to contact the counselor or other personnel with questions or concerns. If you think your child may have received an incorrect placement, do not wait and see - raise this right away! Often the best time to get this corrected is in advance, and waiting can create or exacerbates gaps that make later changes hard or not possible.

**E.**

## WEBSITE LAYOUT

## THE NEED

The online presence of a school or district is typically the first impression families will get of their future school home. Clear, welcoming, and instructive digital platforms can make the process of joining a new community much easier and also provide an effective platform for communicating critical information such as school zones, processes, deadlines, and requirements.

## PRIMARY USERS

- School or district leadership

## TOOL DESCRIPTION

This Website Layout tool provides easily implemented yet effective website practices and tips. The website layout practices are provided in a graphic format, which offers examples.

The tool was developed following brainstorming and prototyping at workshops with education professionals based on their own practices and expressed needs, as well as research into other effective practices.

## IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

<b>PRE-IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> School or district leadership lead website audit and re-design process</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> School or district leadership call for feedback from faculty, staff, and families on website re-design, incorporating feedback where appropriate</li></ul>
<b>DURING IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Website team maintains process for ongoing feedback</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Website team maintains process for keeping information current</li></ul>

# WEBSITE LAYOUT TIPS

## KEEP IT SIMPLE

The best school or district website designs are straightforward and simple, providing all families, particularly those new to the school and district, with a snapshot of the climate and the critical information and documents they need. Keep colors, fonts, and layout similar from page to page, and limit large blocks of text where possible, choosing instead to break ideas up into sections parents can easily skim.

## INCLUDE AN “FAQ FOR NEW FAMILIES” PAGE

A simple list of answers to frequently asked questions specifically geared toward new families can help new arrivals quickly find the information they need. Consider addressing questions about:

- Academics and Grading
- Board Policies and School Handbooks
- Community Resources
- Employment
- English Language Learners
- Extended School Day and Afterschool Programs
- Extracurricular and Athletics
- Gifted Education
- Graduation Requirements
- Immunizations/Health Records
- Lunch/Meals
- Military Family Issues, such as deployment and the Military Interstate Compact
- Registration and Enrollment
- Special Education
- School Assignment, including residential zones and choice in the District
- Transportation
- Testing
- Weather and Snow Day Information

Answers should be general enough that the page remains relevant and accurate but make sure that date- and staff-specific information is updated frequently. Link readers to more frequently updated pages as needed.

## TEST YOUR SITE ON MOBILE DEVICES

Many site visitors will visit your page on their phone or tablet. Be sure that you have beta-tested a mobile version of your site with multiple users on different devices.

## ELIMINATE OUTDATED INFORMATION AND DEADLINES

Dead links and outdated information on your website can quickly turn off new users, particularly when content is related to deadlines. To avoid this problem, centralize dates and deadlines in one section of your site, such as an Events and Important Dates Calendar and avoid posting any dates elsewhere. Another option is using social media as a hub for more time-contingent content. Employ Facebook for event notifications and calendars, Twitter to post news, and Instagram to feature regularly updated pictures and videos. Have posts from these sites featured (in moderation!) and links to view or follow the accounts on your website homepage.

## UPDATE CONTACT INFORMATION FREQUENTLY

Ensuring that families have access to the most up to date information on staff is perhaps the most essential job of your webpage. Make updating your contact pages and directory a step in your staff onboarding process to ensure that new families will always have accurate email contact information and assign responsibility for this to the most centralized

location for such information, such as your Human Resources department. Also consider including pictures of staff next to their names and contact information to help families orient themselves when they come to campus to enroll or for other reasons.

# EFFECTIVE WEBSITE LAYOUT

1

Include a "Parents" tab on your dashboard. Include an "Enrollment" and "Military Families" link near the top of the drop-down menu.

2

Prominently include a contact phone number on your dashboard. That number should link directly to a receptionist or staff member, even during summer months.

3

Limit your school or district to several key social media accounts and keep them updated and active with pictures, welcome videos, event information, and other posts that will give incoming families a sense of your school or district.

4

Prominently display the documents families will need to enroll their children at your school on your main enrollment page.

5

Make contact information for a primary point of contact easy to find. When listing contacts, include direct numbers and emails instead of general school accounts when possible.

6

Include a master document that includes all necessary enrollment paperwork for easy download.

The screenshot shows the Knob Noster Public Schools website dashboard. At the top, there is a navigation bar with "Select a School", "Language", "Login", and "Search...". Below this is the school logo and name, "KNOB NOSTER Public Schools", along with a phone number "(660) 563-3186" and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. A main navigation menu includes "HOME", "DISTRICT INFORMATION", "OUR SCHOOLS", "PARENTS", and "TEACHING AND LEARNING". A secondary menu below it lists "WORK WITH US", "Enroll in Knob Noster", "School Supplies List", "School Year Calendar", "School Bus Information", "Menus and Nutrition", "Student Health", "Athletic Schedules", "Stay Connected", "Emergency Preparedness Tips", "Parent Portal", "Student Technology", and "Volunteers". The "Enroll in Knob Noster" section is highlighted, showing a list of documents: "Immunization records", "Birth certificate", "Social Security Card", "Proof of residency\*", and "Unofficial transcript (for high school)". Below this, there is a section for "HELPFUL INFORMATION" and "REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT DOCUMENTS", which includes a link to "Knob Noster School District Enrollment Packet" and a list of forms: "Transcript/Records Request", "Student Registration Forms", "Federal Impact Aid Form", and "Health Assessment Form". At the bottom, there is contact information: "401 East Wimer Street, Knob Noster, MO 65336 | Phone (660) 563-3186 | Fax (660) 563-3026".



# H.

## COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

### BRAINSTORMING

#### THE NEED

One of the most significant barriers to seamless student integration into a new school is poor communication both between and within schools. Formalized communication protocols help reduce confusion for both staff and parents and streamline enrollment, integration, and withdrawal processes.

#### PRIMARY USERS

School or district leadership; counselors; Instructional staff; family support staff; registrars and administrative staff

#### TOOL DESCRIPTION

Because schools or districts operate differently from region to region, creating one uniform communication protocol is impractical. The Communication Protocol tool aims instead to guide leadership in the development of a protocol that will support improved and more consistent intra-school communication for use with supporting mobile students.

This tool was developed in response to persistently expressed concerns that key information about students and programs often fails to get the specific school personnel who need it to better serve mobile students. Other tools included in the Toolkit, like the **TRANSCRIPT COVER LETTER** and **WELCOMING PRACTICES PACKET**, and the **INTERDISTRICT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING** help address inter-school and school-parent communication.

#### IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

<b>PRE-IMPLEMENTATION</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School or district leadership convenes a meeting to review protocol brainstorming guide sheets and draft protocols</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School or district leadership sponsors training around protocols</li> </ul>
<b>DURING MOVE</b>	Sending School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify point of contact (POC) for communicating withdrawal information and requirements to families</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify point of contact (POC) to be available to answer questions from receiving school and gather information from other knowledgeable staff</li> </ul>
	Receiving School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify POC to communicate with sending school and new family as needed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make sure protocols are in place to communicate critical information to new family and to relevant school personnel</li> </ul>
<b>INTRODUCTORY PHASE</b>	Sending School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify POC to be available to answer questions from receiving school and gather information from other knowledgeable staff after student has enrolled in new school</li> </ul>
	Receiving School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make sure protocols are in place to communicate relevant information about student and family to appropriate personnel, such as teachers, coaches, administrators, and mentors</li> </ul>

# COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

## BRAINSTORMING

Review the topics listed below with an assembled group of relevant stakeholders, including leadership, faculty, staff, and parents. For each, think through how your school currently gets this information from new students, either through practices you already have in place or with those you are considering implementing, such as the [QUESTIONNAIRE](#). Then, think through which faculty and staff would benefit from receiving this information and how you can formalize a communication practice to loop interested parties into the process.

ISSUE	Who is the primary point of contact on this issue?	How does the primary point of contact currently communicate information about this issue to other staff? Who is informed?	How does your school or district currently document information about this issue?	How does your school communicate this information with the receiving school upon a student's relocation?	Are there any limitations to sharing this information?
INTENTION TO ENROLL					
INFORMATION ABOUT PREVIOUS SCHOOL					
PREVIOUS COURSEWORK					
MOBILITY STATUS					
HEALTH NEEDS PHYSICAL AND MENTAL					

<b>ACADEMIC NEEDS AND EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM SUPPORTS</b>					
<b>PREVIOUS EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT</b>					
<b>PREVIOUS SPORTS INVOLVEMENT</b>					
<b>SPECIAL TALENTS AND INTERESTS</b>					
<b>MOST RECENT COLLEGE AND CAREER PLANS</b>					
<b>FAMILY SITUATION, AS RELEVANT</b>					
<b>ISSUES INTEGRATING INTO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY</b>					

## NON-MILITARY POPULATIONS SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

When designing a communication protocol—particularly in districts/schools serving non-military, high-mobility populations—consider the importance of confidentiality and sensitivity. Asking students and families about their immigration status, for example, violates federal guidelines, may discourage enrollment, and can endanger students and their guardians. Similarly, some families and students may simply feel uncomfortable sharing details about the reasons they have moved widely with school staff. Court-involved students, for example, may prefer not to disclose





# WELCOMING PRACTICES PACKET

## THE NEED

Frequent relocation can make it difficult for families to integrate successfully into schools and communities. A warm welcome creates an immediate sense of inclusion, which can help support academic integration and socio-emotional stability for students and families. However, the sheer number of tasks that school staff must complete during high volume transfer periods—like the beginning of the school year—can make ensuring the consistency of welcoming practices difficult. A standardized welcoming practices protocol and materials packet offers a simple, low-cost approach to ensuring that all new families feel warmly supported as they join their new school.

## TOOL DESCRIPTION

The Welcoming Practices Packet includes a list of effective practices, along with descriptions and ideas for materials, to guide schools through the customization of their own process of greeting new families.

The tool was developed following brainstorming and prototyping at workshops with education professionals based on their own practices and expressed needs, as well as research into other effective practices.

## PRIMARY USERS

School or district leadership; counselors and student support staff; instructional staff; registrars and administrative staff; family support staff

## IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

### PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

- School or district leadership reviews list of welcoming practices and identifies those that already exist and can be incorporated into a Welcoming Practices Packet

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ School or district leadership reviews samples provided below and customizes based on their own needs and capacity</li> <li>❑ School or district leadership designs protocols for implementation of welcoming practices to ensure consistency and ensure staff training on welcoming practices</li> <li>❑ School or district leadership provides supportive resources as program is implemented, monitoring staff feedback and adjusting program as needed</li> <li>❑ School or district prepares supply of packets and other materials to keep on hand for new arrivals</li> </ul>
<b>DURING MOVE</b>	Receiving School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Staff implements chosen welcoming practices</li> </ul>
<b>AFTER MOVE</b>	Receiving School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Administrative staff reaches out to family with survey regarding welcoming practices</li> <li>❑ Leadership reviews feedback and integrates suggestions into practice</li> </ul>

# EFFECTIVE WELCOMING PRACTICES

<b>PRACTICES</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION AND EXAMPLES</b>
<b>WELCOMING BINDER OR PACKET</b>	While many schools or districts have moved to digital enrollment processes, having a packet of physical materials from your school can be a helpful touchpoint for families upon their first visit, especially since families may not have consistent internet access while resettling. This package might include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> a <b>WELCOME LETTER</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> student handbook and school FAQ</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> a school calendar, including dates for popular student events like a back-to-school party, extracurriculars fair, and homecoming celebrations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> a schedule of upcoming events for new families, including new family orientation, student info sessions, new parent and student mixers, and the new student breakfast</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> a staff directory, including a highlights of key contacts for the new family</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> a welcome letter and meeting/event schedule from the PTA and Military Parent’s Club or other relevant parent group</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> an area map and coupons from recommended restaurants, businesses, and local attractions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> a school t-shirt and planner</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACADEMIC INFORMATION</b></p>	<p>High school students often receive reading and assignments over the summer, but transferring students may not be in the loop about work they’re missing. Schools should consider keeping extra copies of summer books and homework packets on hand to pass along to incoming students.</p>
<p><b>VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON TOURS</b></p>	<p>Before students arrive, it can be helpful for them to get a sense of their new school through a virtual tour on the school or district website or social media platforms.</p> <p>Tours could be videos led by student or faculty leaders. Alternatively, if your school has an Instagram or Twitter page, you could let a student leader “take over” your feed for a period of time and post pictures and videos about their favorite spots on campus and in the community.</p> <p>When families arrive at your school, both parents and students should receive a tour of the campus led by staff or students.</p>
<p><b>WELCOME CENTER</b></p>	<p>Moving is often a chaotic and stressful process; having a calm and welcoming space for new families can be a critical support. Simple touches like fun posters, candy bowls, comfortable chairs, and friendly staff can make all the difference in making families feel at home. In buildings with limited space, even a dedicated corner of an office or dedicated bulletin board can be useful</p> <p>Large districts—and particularly those with multiple schools to choose from—may benefit from having a designated, centralized “one-stop-shop” where families can ask questions and enroll children of different ages simultaneously. If not at a district office, this Welcome Center might be located on the campus of one school, but should have staff who are familiar with a district’s full range of school and program options and enrollment practices at each.</p>
<p><b>WELCOME TABLE</b></p>	<p>Even if a school does not have the space or resources for a Welcome Center, a Welcome Table can serve the same purpose. Staffed by school personnel or parent or community volunteers, the Welcome Table can be a hub for all sorts of school visitors but particularly for incoming families. Training at such a station is essential: volunteers should be prepared to answer guest questions accurately and thoroughly, or have access to and be familiar with the contact information and office location of someone who can.</p>



<b>OPEN HOUSE</b>	Open houses offer students and families an opportunity to explore the campus; get a sense of typical coursework; meet faculty, staff, and students; and learn about extracurriculars. It is recommended that schools/districts with multiple high-volume transfer periods host open houses several times throughout the year to accommodate as many incoming families as possible.
<b>CLASSROOM VISITS FOR MID-YEAR TRANSFER STUDENTS</b>	While students transferring at the beginning of the year enter classes with students who are also acclimatizing to a new classroom environment, those who transfer mid-year often enter spaces with classmates who have already settled into a routine. Allowing mid-year transfers to preview classes before their first day of school can help them more fully anticipate what their day-to-day experience might be like.
<b>NEW STUDENT EVENTS</b>	Welcoming events, like a breakfast or mixer, can be a great way to link up new students. To make these events appealing to students, have your Student2Student® or other student group plan and attend them.
<b>NEW PARENT EVENTS</b>	Parents who relocate frequently benefit from networking events as much as students do. Offering both casual meet-ups and more formal school-sponsored events can help families connect.
<b>WELCOME POSTCARD</b>	If a student’s schedule is solidified before they begin classes, have one or several of their teachers send them a brief postcard—or even a personal email or text—welcoming them to the school. If a schedule is not yet created, a similar note from counseling staff or students can similarly welcome them.

## SAMPLE WELCOME LETTER

[SCHOOL OR DISTRICT LETTERHEAD]

SCHOOL NAME  
ADDRESS

Dear LAST NAME family,

I am writing to extend a warm welcome as you begin your academic journey with the SCHOOL NAME community! We are thrilled that you have chosen to join us at SCHOOL NAME and look forward to helping you get settled into our dynamic, supportive community.

We know that a move can be an incredibly busy and stressful time both for students and their families, so our goal at SCHOOL NAME during this time is to ensure that enrollment and your first days are as easy as possible for you. If you have any questions or concerns whatsoever throughout this process, please do not hesitate to reach out to your personal school contact, NAME [EMAIL ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER].

Enclosed in this Welcome Packet are a variety of resources, including:

- a student handbook and school FAQ
- a school calendar, including dates for popular student events like the Back-to-School Party, Extracurriculars Fair, and the Homecoming Celebrations

- a schedule of upcoming events for new families, including new family orientation, student info sessions, new parent and student mixers, and the new student breakfast
- a staff directory
- a welcome letter and meeting/event schedule from our PTA and Military Parent's Club
- an area map and coupons from recommended restaurants, businesses, and local attractions
- a school t-shirt and planner

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. **COUNSELOR NAME** can also be a great first stop for you. S/he can be reached by phone at **PHONE NUMBER** or **EMAIL ADDRESS**.

We are always trying to improve our support for you and others in a similar position. If, as you join our community and navigate your family's entry into our school, you think of ways we could better support incoming families, please let us know by either informing a staff member directly or filling out our anonymous feedback form at [TINYURL.CO/SURVEY](https://tinyurl.com/survey).

Again, we're so pleased to welcome you to our school and look forward to getting to know you!

Warmly,

**PRINCIPAL NAME**

**J.**

# STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

## THE NEED

Faculty and staff are best able to connect students with beneficial resources, activities, and supports when they know about students' interests, background, and goals for the future. For highly mobile students, the typical process of getting to know faculty and staff naturally over time is cut short or rushed. The typical set of transition documents usually sent with highly mobile students is unlikely to provide a full picture of the student or give the counselor a prompt to learn more about the student. A student questionnaire used during the enrollment or intake process addresses this gap and provides a prompt for a counselor to connect with the student.

## TOOL DESCRIPTION

The Student Questionnaire aims to help faculty and staff quickly get to know students better, while also providing a helpful prompt for the counselor to connect with the student. The questionnaire is designed as an entrance survey or interview that can be administered to all incoming students as a face-to-face interview during a meeting with a counselor. Once completed, the survey should be used to connect new students, according to their interest and with their permission, with faculty and staff, student clubs, and community resources that might support their goals and interests.

The questionnaire was developed in response to the need expressed by counselors and other professionals participating in workshops. It was refined with the collaboration of counselors and students who reviewed the questionnaire and provided feedback.

# PRIMARY USERS

Student support staff and counselors; instructional staff

## IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

<b>PRE-IMPLEMENTATION</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ Customize and/or draft new version of student questionnaire to give to incoming students</li><li>□ Review protocol with school staff to ensure successful implementation and follow through</li></ul>
<b>DURING MOVE</b>	Receiving School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ Administer student questionnaire to learn more about the student and their interests</li><li>□ As appropriate, distribute questionnaire results to relevant staff and connect student with staff and students</li></ul>
<b>AFTER MOVE</b>	Receiving School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ Conduct follow up to ensure that results were distributed and that relevant staff contacted student</li></ul>

## OTHER POPULATIONS SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

When implementing the communication protocol—particularly in districts/schools serving non-military, high-mobility populations—consider the importance of confidentiality and sensitivity. Think carefully about how you administer the survey and postpone questions that may be difficult for students until you have had a chance to gauge their comfort level.

# K.

## STUDENT PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

### THE NEED

Traditional transcripts rarely paint a full picture of a transferring student or his or her coursework and progress towards graduation requirements. With additional types of information that can be gleaned from academic samples, case notes, testing data, and entrance and exit questionnaires, schools can better and more quickly gain a more complete picture of who the student is, enroll him or her in appropriate classes, and connect him or her with resources to facilitate integration into school life. The additional information can make it less likely that mobile students will repeat course content and more likely that they have access to the opportunities and supports they want and need.

### TOOL DESCRIPTION

The Portfolio Checklist aims to guide schools in the creation of a Student Portfolio. Such a portfolio would be developed throughout a student's tenure at a school, requiring the input of instructional, counseling, extracurricular, and administrative staff. Ideally, when a family informed a school of their departure, the portfolio would be audited and subsequently provided either to the family or directly to the receiving school.

In the event that the implementation of a portfolio system is not immediately feasible at your school, consider adapting the Portfolio Checklist as a guide for parents to create their own portfolios for students.

The idea for the Portfolio Checklist arose out of workshop sessions with educators who expressed a desire for more information, organized succinctly, about a mobile student to better enable them to serve the whole child. The workshop participants developed prototype portfolios and guidelines for how to create and maintain the portfolios.

### PRIMARY USERS

School or district leadership; counselors and student support staff; instructional staff; registrars and administrative staff; parent support staff

# IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

<b>PRE-IMPLEMENTATION</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School or district leadership, in collaboration with a working group, decides on a template for portfolios and designs detailed protocols for the submission of documentation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School or district leadership designs protocols for storage of documentation, keeping in mind and ensuring compliance with student privacy regulations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School or district leadership trains staff on portfolio protocols</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School or district leadership provides supportive resources as portfolio protocols are implemented, monitoring staff feedback and adjusting program as needed</li> </ul>
<b>BEFORE MOVE</b>	Sending School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teachers, counselors, extracurricular staff, and administrators add documentation to Student Portfolio at intervals determined by protocol and as needed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Administrative staff (or other designated personnel) regularly audit portfolios according to protocol and request missing documentation as necessary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> When informed of a student's upcoming move, administrative staff completes thorough audit of individual portfolio and ensures that missing information is added</li> </ul>
<b>DURING MOVE</b>	Sending School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staff responsible for forwarding student documentation to receiving school sends Portfolio or gives to parents</li> </ul>
	Receiving School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If Portfolio is not included with transcript or other enrollment documentation from sending school, administrative or counseling staff reach out to sending school for Portfolio or missing information</li> </ul>
<b>INTRODUCTORY PHASE</b>	Sending School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Primary Portfolio point of contact (POC) remains available to field questions from receiving school</li> </ul>
	Receiving School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Counselors or other relevant personnel review Portfolio and ensure that relevant information is disseminated to appropriate staff</li> </ul>
<b>AFTER MOVE</b>	Sending School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Primary Portfolio POC remains available to field questions from receiving school</li> </ul>
	Receiving School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teachers, counselors, extracurricular staff, and administrators regularly add documentation to Portfolio</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Administrative staff (or other designated personnel) regularly audit portfolios, requesting missing documentation as necessary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> When informed of a student's upcoming move, administrative staff completes thorough audit of individual portfolio and ensures that missing information is added</li> </ul>

# STUDENT PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

This tool is intended as a customizable template for use by schools/districts considering the implementation or enhancement of a portfolio system. Schools/districts should adapt this checklist based on need and capacity. Once the checklist is customized, it is recommended that schools or districts thoughtfully design a portfolio completion and audit protocol in order to ensure that all essential information is regularly updated.

DOCUMENT	✓	NOTES
<b>Official/Unofficial Transcripts</b>		Include any transcripts you received from previous sending schools (even if your school or district's transcripts include comprehensive information) if you are the first school to create a portfolio for the student.
<b>Report Cards and Mid-semester Progress Reports</b>		If student is moving mid-semester, progress reports from the current semester are particularly important.
<b>Course Description List</b>		Course Description Guides (CDGs) should be referenced on the Transcript Cover Letter, but should be linked in the portfolio as well. Students may move several times throughout middle and high school, and schools beyond the immediate receiving institution may not receive your cover letter.
<b>Class Textbook List</b>		Add if not already included in CDG.
<b>Special Needs Evaluation and Assessments</b>		
<b>Gifted and Talented Assessment[s]</b>		
<b>State and District Standardized Testing Summaries</b>		
<b>Important School-Based Assessments</b>		
<b>Mathematics</b>		Work samples included in Portfolio should represent the typical work level of the student in each subject.
<b>English/Language Arts/Writing</b>		
<b>Science</b>		

<b>Social Studies/History</b>		
<b>Foreign Language</b>		
<b>Art/Design</b>		
<b>Other</b>		
<b>Instructional Case Notes</b>		Teachers and other instructional staff should note any particular academic strengths or needed supports.
<b>List of Extracurricular Activities</b>		
<b>Extracurricular Recommendations</b>		In the case a student moves mid-semester or mid-season, they may benefit from letters of recommendation or evidence of previous participation for try-out based extracurriculars, such as sports, band/orchestra, and debate.
<b>Counseling Case Notes</b>		If student has special emotional needs, counselors should include case notes and recommendations for support.
<b>PSAT/SAT/ACT Score Sheets</b>		If available, include score sheets for both practice and official tests.
<b>AP Score Sheets</b>		If available, include score sheets for both practice and official tests.
<b>Letter of Recommendation Reference Sheet</b>		Securing college or other recommendations may be a laborious process for students who have transferred several times throughout high school. Encouraging students to speak with teachers about recommendations and record their contact information on a reference sheet before they move can help ease stress as students apply for college or special opportunities.



# IDENTIFYING TRANSITION PATHWAYS PROTOCOL

## THE NEED

Although schools or districts may support a large number of highly mobile students, they often have not collected or reviewed data to better understand patterns among these students' transitions. Instead, when a student moves to a new school, the school must determine, based on the individual case details, how to place and support that student in classes, award credits for previous coursework, and provide socioemotional support. Often, each new student is treated as an entirely discrete "event," which makes enrolling and supporting the student less efficient for the school and possibly more complicated for the student. If schools or districts could track basic information about their highly mobile students to determine whether they often receive students from certain schools, districts, or states and/or that they often send students to certain districts, schools, or states, they may begin to identify patterns in the transitions and thus develop supports for the students, counselors, and instructional staff tailored to those common patterns.

This recommended protocol focuses on data collection and assessment, with the idea that by tracking certain characteristics of all the students who enroll or leave the school at non-standard times, patterns will start to emerge. Of course, any single student is a unique child with unique family and mobility circumstances. However, using data in this way will actually allow schools to better serve the individual needs of each child by making routine those things which can be systematized, allowing school and district staff to devote time, attention, and energy to the elements of a student's needs that are unique.

## PRIMARY USERS

District personnel; registrars; data and evaluation specialists; counselors

## IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

## TOOL DESCRIPTION

This recommended protocol provides a set of prompts and recommendations for how schools or districts can begin identifying transition patterns. It, then, provides suggestions on how the information could be used to support mobile students.

The tool was developed following brainstorming and prototyping at workshops with education professionals based on their own practices and expressed needs, as well as research into other effective practices.



<b>PRE-IMPLEMENTATION</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Student enrollment forms include data field on previous school, district, and state <input type="checkbox"/> Student withdrawal process includes collection and recording of data <input type="checkbox"/> Student information systems include searchable data on previous school or district/state and withdrawal data
<b>BEFORE MOVE</b>	Sending School	<input type="checkbox"/> Obtain and record information on location of new school, if available, in student information system
<b>DURING MOVE</b>	Sending School	<input type="checkbox"/> Obtain and record information on location of new school, if available and not previously provided, in student information system
	Receiving School	<input type="checkbox"/> During enrollment process, record information on previous school, district, and state
<b>INTRODUCTORY PHASE</b>	Sending School	<input type="checkbox"/> Obtain and record information on location of new school, if not previously recorded, in student information system <input type="checkbox"/> When official transcript request is received, confirm location of new school, district, state
	Receiving School	<input type="checkbox"/> During enrollment process, record information on previous school, district, and state <input type="checkbox"/> Use data to place student and provide proper academic supports
<b>AFTER MOVE</b>	Receiving School	<input type="checkbox"/> Collect data to identify academic transition patterns among students moving from same schools/districts/or state

# IDENTIFYING TRANSITION PATHWAYS

# A Recommended Protocol

In schools or districts with high mobility, the continual inflow and outflow of new students can strain the schools, the counselors, and instructional staff. Often each enrolling student is treated as an entirely “new event” even though the school or district may have worked with other new students from that sending school, district, or state numerous times in the past. If school or district personnel are able to identify common patterns, they may be able to better support mobile students and move through their own processes, by more effectively and efficiently interpreting transcripts and awarding credits, placing students in courses and programs, identifying and providing academic and socioemotional support needs.

This recommended protocol provides simple prompts for schools or districts to begin identifying transition patterns and then suggests ways to use that information. Because enrollment practices and student information systems vary widely across the country, the suggestions here, while based on interviews with school personnel from a number of districts of different sizes, should be customized to suit local policies and practices.

## 1) Identify moments in enrollment/withdrawal processes that could be systematized without sacrificing quality of support

- Identify what processes are conducted for all new students
  - Identify which documents all students (or families) need to complete, and what information is collected
  - Identify which types of students take longest to acclimate to your school or district and why
  - Identify what processes are conducted for all exiting students
  - What else?
- 

## 2) Identify and define what data you want to collect to facilitate more efficient supports for students and families?

- Determine whether you want information on a new student’s previous school, district, and state
- Assess whether you want to review historical data or only collect new data
- Identify the other information about the student that you would like to link with information on the previous school, district, or state, such as:
  - Grade level

### **3) Review your current data collection tools and compare them to the data you want to collect (school or district enrollment forms/ withdrawal forms and questionnaires, teachers' collection practices, etc.)**

- Review your enrollment forms to determine whether they request the information/data that you want to collect
- Consider whether your enrollment specialists (registrars, counselors, secretaries, others) have a protocol to confirm that the information is properly entered
- Determine whether your withdrawal forms collect information on the new school and family's new address
- Consider whether you have a practice in place to collect transfer information based on transcript requests from schools

### **4) Meet with your student information and/or information technology teams**

- Identify what information is currently available
  - Determine whether the school or district already collects information on previous school or district/state for new students
  - Determine whether that information collected or stored in a searchable format and whether it is consistently entered
  - If it is, identify a time period and obtain reports on student transitions

## **5) Bring together student information/technology teams, enrollment personnel, and instructional coordinators to review and analyze the information**

- Create general guidelines on how to define a pattern
- Review the collected information, if it already exists, to identify whether there are transition patterns
- Develop a protocol for reviewing information to update patterns

## **6) Meet with student support staff and instructional coordinators to review the collected information and evaluate how it can be used**

- Where patterns appear to exist:
  - Learn more about the emerging patterns: in what ways are they clear and in what ways do they reflect nuance?
    - Collaborate with instructional staff and student support staff to assess whether there are academic patterns or recognizable curriculum issues linked with the transition patterns
    - Collaborate with instructional staff, student support staff, and extracurricular staff to assess whether there are socio-emotional or cultural adjustment patterns linked with transition patterns
  - Consider how patterns illuminate a student's or the school's experience at various stages of the transition process
  - Formalize contacts and communication practices with common sending schools or districts, including informing them of the transition pattern



# APPENDICES

