



A MILITARY FAMILY'S GUIDE TO THE SCHOOL LIAISON PROGRAM

Each military service has a dedicated set of civilians who serve as liaisons between families, individual schools and installation leadership — School Liaisons, which are sometimes called School Liaison Officers. One of the top concerns that military families raise when receiving new orders that require relocation is ensuring a quality K-12 education for their children. School Liaisons can play an important role in guiding military families to essential resources and helping them transition from one community to another. While School Liaisons serve as facilitators between school districts, military installations and families, there can be confusion or frustration when requests fall outside the scope of their role.

Working with the School Liaison leadership across military services, Military Families for High Standards has created a short guide to what School Liaisons can do for families as they move into a new community. The information was gleaned from a detailed questionnaire we provided to senior School Liaison leaders in the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. We hope it is helpful for families in transition.



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF SCHOOL LIAISONS?

Depending on the number of families assigned to a given installation, the number of full or part-time School Liaisons available may vary. In many cases, a single School Liaison can represent several schools and many families.

Typically, School Liaisons assist with transitions associated with military life and facilitate communication among schools, parents and installation leaders. They educate local schools on the challenges faced by military-connected students and work to connect military families with community and education resources. School Liaisons advocate on behalf of their families to school and district administrators. They also educate commanders on issues (and sometimes act on the commander's behalf) that need elevating to the school-board level. School Liaisons do not have the capacity to address all of a family's education-related challenges, but they can provide military families with information and link them with individuals or groups who can appropriately address the issue.

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School Liaison Directories by Service

[Army School Liaison Directory](#)

[Marine Corps School Liaisons Directory](#)

[Navy School Liaison Directory](#)

[Air Force School Liaison Directory](#)

[Coast Guard School Deployment and the Military Child brochure](#)



HOW DO SCHOOL LIAISONS SERVE FAMILIES AND WHAT TYPES OF CHALLENGES CAN THEY ADDRESS?

The greatest value is in the name, "liaison." Though School Liaisons often have a large caseload, they work on the behalf of students and their families by advocating to the base command and school district administrators and educators. A major advocacy focus for any School Liaison office is ensuring that local school districts follow the [Interstate Compact on Education Opportunities for Military Children](#). The compact lays out for schools how they are supposed to make transitions smoother for military-connected students. It provides guidelines on enrollment, placement and graduation requirements, which School Liaisons then work to ensure that schools meet and communicate to families.

Additionally, they often provide information or support to address challenges with extracurricular eligibility, testing, Honors and AP course eligibility, scholarship access, social and emotional resources, after-school programs, accessing special education resources and homeschool requirements and regulations.



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So, for a military family that has received orders to move locations, the School Liaison should be an important stop when both departing and arriving locations. As families set their transition plans in action, School Liaisons can provide key information and assistance for becoming acclimated into a new educational environment. If a military family has a particular problem, for example, in transferring a child's Individual Education Plan or Honors credits from one school district to another, the School Liaison should be able to point the parent to helpful resources or the right administrators to contact.



HOW DO I GET CONNECTED WITH A SCHOOL LIAISON?

There are a couple of ways to best reach School Liaisons in your area. The [DoDEA website](#) maintains a School Liaison directory for each military branch that you can access. Also, you can contact the nearest installation or visit your family service support webpage, as well as local social media pages established for individual military installations. Lastly, your local school district's website can also be a helpful resource when navigating your transition.



WHAT IF I AM NOT STATIONED NEAR AN INSTALLATION?

School Liaisons, across services, are trained to provide support for families, even if they are not near an installation. It is recommended that the family contact the nearest school liaison (refer to [DoDEA directory](#)) so they are connected to the appropriate resources and supports they need as their children transition to a new school.



SOME BOTTOM-LINE POINTS

- ✓ Families often misunderstand what the School Liaison's role is or expect individualized problem solving. They are encouraged to consider their School Liaison as a coordinator and facilitator to connect with local resources.
- ✓ School Liaisons often receive requests to act beyond the scope of their role to facilitate change. For example, they do not influence local legislation or address school boards.
- ✓ Families can contact the nearest School Liaison regardless of their military service affiliation.

Additional Information and Resources

- [Military Parent Technical Assistance Center's interactive maps for locating military installations, Exceptional Family Member Program Family Support, and School Liaison Officers](#)
- [A Military Family's Guide to School Transitions](#)
- [Military Families for High Standards](#)