Implications of School Achievement at a Junior High School that Serves Children of Military Parents: A Case Study

Martha H. Gabriel

Seton Hall University

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IMPLICATIONS OF SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT
AT A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL THAT SERVES CHILDREN
OF MILITARY PARENTS: A CASE STUDY

By

MARTHA R. GABRIEL

Dissertation Committee

John W. Collins, Jr., Ed.D., Mentor
James M. Czogiel, Ed.D.
Dyann Deckerico, Ed.D.
Victor S. Vance, Ph.D.

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Abstract

IMPPLICATIONS OF SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT AT A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL THAT SERVES CHILDREN OF MILITARY PARENTS

The purpose of this study was to identify and examine the influences that moving from one military installation to another has on the academic achievement of military dependents in a junior high school that serves children of military parents, after the first and second years of a permanent change of station (PCS). The researcher conducted a teacher focus group interview and utilized students’ cumulative records to gather the data. The data from the cumulative records were analyzed using the Independent t-test. Quantitative (to include descriptive and inferential statistics) and qualitative conclusions were presented and effective transition strategies were presented. Recommendations for the researcher then made practice, future research, and policy.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DEDICATION

For my husband and my son

Without whom, nothing.

And for my parents

You were never just my mom and dad

You were my shoulders to lean on

The gifts you gave me live in the spirit that guides me.

You made this possible!

Wade Hampton Huffstedler (1924-2000) and Alice Merrill Huffstedler (1926-2000)

Not a day goes by that I do not think about you!

I miss you and love you, Mom and Dad
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to quantify the significant advantages [of schools that serve children of military parents] bring to the equation of educating military children in time of mobilization and deployment to war. Frequently military children bear emotional burdens, and sometimes physical burdens, when one or more parents deploy to war. Teachers [of schools that serve children of military parents] do an exceptional job identifying and assisting children in need, and children at risk in deployment situations. Teachers [of schools that serve children of military parents] who are also military spouses are particularly sensitized to the challenges that military children face because they too may be facing the same challenges. Additionally, in large scale deployments, multiple children in a given classroom may have parents deployed which can change the entire dynamics of a classroom, and hence, change the teaching methodology altogether. Unless teachers, or administrators, understand the emotional dynamics unique to military children, they cannot fully or effectively meet student educational needs (Horst, K., personal communications, November 18, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

The central purpose of this study will be to identify and examine the influences that moving from one military installation to another has on the academic achievement of military dependents in a junior high school that serves children of military parents, after
The first and second years of a permanent change of station (PCS). Reading and mathematics scores on the TerraNova Achievement Test and grade point averages were used to indicate academic achievement.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the effects of mobility on the academic achievement of junior high school students?

2. What are the effects of mobility on TerraNova reading scores of junior high school students after the first and second years of a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move?

3. What are the effects of mobility on grade point averages (GPA’s) of junior high school students after the first and second years of a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move?

Statement of the Hypotheses

H0A. There is no difference in the reading scores on the TerraNova after the first and second years of a Permanent Change of Station (PCS).

H1A. There is a difference in the reading scores on the TerraNova after the first and second years of a PCS.

H0B. There is no difference in the mathematics scores on the TerraNova after the first and second years of a PCS.
H1B. There is a difference in the mathematics scores on the TerraNova after the first and second years of a PCS.

H0C. There is no difference in student grade point averages (GPA’s) after the first and second years of a PCS.

H1C. There is a difference in student grade point averages (GPA’s) after the first and second years of a PCS.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant in that it may demonstrate the impacts of mobility on student achievement. School districts that serve children of military parents face these academic and achievement problems, as well as many urban and rural school districts. Therefore, a study of school mobility would be beneficial for school districts to examine the relationship between student achievement and movement within and without the military school districts. This study will enable education leaders of schools that serve children of military parents, as well as other interested agencies, to recognize student mobility as a major factor.

The timeliness of this issue is even more apparent with the passage of the “No Child Left Behind Act”: The overall mission of the No Child Left Behind Act, which reauthorizes the “McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act’s Education for Homeless Children and Youth” (EHCY), is to ensure that every child in the United States is successful in school, and to close the achievement gap between highly mobile students and their nonmobile peers. To comply with the Act, states and districts must recognize student mobility as a barrier to success; understand how it impacts academic...
achievement; and understood its implications for schools, districts, transient students, and classmates. In addition, schools and districts must step up accountability for student achievement and learn ways to address the issue of student mobility [http://www.osrel.org/policy/pubs/num/mobile/into.htm](http://www.osrel.org/policy/pubs/num/mobile/into.htm). The increase of parental options included in the No Child Left Behind legislation may also contribute over time to increased mobility.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of the study was the limited amount of original research on the topic; therefore, this requires the writer to revisit and utilize older data. Although the research sample appears to be adequate in numbers and range of permanent change of station, it was taken from only one junior high school. The participants included in the study were seventh, eighth, and ninth graders attending school at a junior high school that serves children of military parents who had made a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) from another military installation.

Data concerning test scores and grade point averages of the research subjects were gathered from the students’ school records. The 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 TerraNova scores and the grade point averages for the same periods were analyzed. A teacher focus group interview was also conducted to ascertain effective classroom transition strategies. Seven teachers responded to a voluntary focus group. These teachers were from the three grade levels and their areas of certification varied. They were given a consent form (See Appendix A) prior to the interview. This teacher focus group interview was tape-recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriber.
The junior high school is a school that serves children of military parents that are part of the Army's force structure that continues to have a high operational tempo with deployments around the world. A tour of duty varies from a few months to several years. Some families remain only a short time, sometimes less than a year, while others stay on for several years. Families living on post have experienced a wide range of mobility. The number of moves depends upon their length of service, rank attained, specialty field, and extensions due to deployment and special exercises. Mobility rate will be examined; the mobility rate is a measure of how often students move in and out of a school during the school year. When examining mobility and the impact on children, frequency of moves is a key factor. High or frequent mobility is defined as 6-8 moves during a student's school years (Tucker, 1998; Wood, Halton, Scarlata, Newacheck, & Nessim, 1993). The military population is unique, as there is no unemployment or welfare, and there is minimal criminal or juvenile delinquency. Most families move to another military installation every three years, which means one third of the student population is new each year (Perillo, 2000).

Definition of Terms

The very nature of this dissertation involves a myriad of military terms, definitions, and acronyms. For succinctness, the following definitions were selected for this chapter, with the full cognizance that other terms may arise that the reader should have to reference for a full understanding of the term(s). See Appendix B for a more comprehensive review of military terminology.
Academic Achievement: Refers to actions, which have resulted in competence in school performance where public standards of excellence are applicable (Liebert and Wicks-Nelson, 1981). In this study, academic achievement is operationalized as students’ reading and mathematics scores on the TerraNova and students’ grade point averages (GPA’s).

Achievement Test: An assessment that measures how much a student has learned in various school subjects. These norm-referenced tests are intended to measure students’ achievement in the basic subjects found in most school districts’ curriculum and textbooks. Results are used to compare the scores of individual students and school with others, to include those in the area, across the state, and throughout the United States. (http://www.ascd.org/educationnews/letter/a.html).

Case study: A careful, in-depth study of a situation usually using qualitative research methods; in quantitative research, an application of treatment followed by observation and measurement (Krathwohl, 1998).

Dependent student: A student in a Department of Defense school for children of active duty military personnel (Stewart, 1991). Focus group: A panel, selected to be representative of a population, interviewed on a topic of interest. Probes determine the popularity of various comments and points of view and the depth of feeling toward them (Krathwohl, 1998).

Military Brat: The son or daughter of a member of the Armed Forces. Some military brats spend their entire childhood within the Continental United States (CONUS), while others spend many years overseas. http://www.tekwold.com/tck define.htm. They are the children of career military officers and enlisted, whose jobs
entailed their moving every two or three year, yet whose children have embraced a rootedness their parents never knew (http://www.tdo.com/features/families/stories/1111).

PCS: Acronym for permanent change of station (http://www.acronymfinder.com/af-query.asp?String=exact&Acronym=PCS&Find=Find); complete change of location, job position, family, and household.

Student Mobility: The practice of students making non-promotional school changes (Rumberger, 1999).

Organization of the Study

The framework of this study will consist of five chapters. Chapter I comprises an introduction which describes the regular movement of military families and presents the schools that serve children of military parents. In addition, the issue of mobility is presented as both questions and hypotheses. Chapter II divides the pertinent literature into topic areas that relate to the research study. Chapter III outlines the methodology used in analyzing student mobility: the reading and mathematics scores on the TerraNova achievement test and grade point averages after the first year of a permanent change of station (PCS) move versus the reading and mathematics scores on the TerraNova and grade point averages after the second year of a permanent change of station (PCS) move. The chapter follows the following format: Description of Research Methodology, Research Design, Selection of Participants, Data Collection and Recording, Instruments, and Data Treatment/Analysis. Chapter IV presents the findings of the study. The chapter encompasses hypotheses and questions followed by tables displaying results. Chapter V discusses the findings in Chapter IV and presents conclusions and areas needing further study.
CHAPTER II
Review of the Literature

The definitions of mobility are broad and diverse. Students can change residences but not schools or can change schools but not residences (Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1996). A study by the Office of Educational Research & Improvement (1991) identifies two types of student mobility: inner-city mobility caused by fluctuations in the job market and intra-city mobility, which may be caused by upward mobility or poverty and homelessness. Many educators believe that student mobility is an inevitable result of students changing residences. Data from the 2000 U.S. census show that 15% to 18% of school-age children moved in the previous year. Overall, 45.9% of the 262.4 million U.S. residents age 5 and older in 2000 had moved in the previous five years, according to the Census Bureau. Of that number, one-quarter moved to a new address in the same county. Communities near military bases and college towns have the highest proportion of movers (Armas, 2003).

A large volume of scholarship demonstrates "that student mobility is generally detrimental both to students and to the schools they attend" (Runzheimer + Larson, 1998, p.). Student mobility, also known as school transfers or changing schools, has been considered one of the most stressful and frequently occurring major life events children undergo (Coddington, 1972). Research conducted by Cardenas, Taylor, and Adelman (1993) states that
Youngsters entering a new school and neighborhood are confronted with multiple transition challenges. The challenges are compounded when the transition also involves recent arrival to a new country or culture. In the short run, failure to cope effectively with these challenges can result in major learning and behavior problems; in the long run, the psychological and social impacts may be devastating. (p. 203-210). Student mobility can occur in the following variety of ways:

1. A student may change residence without switching to a new school (remaining in district).

2. A student may change residence and subsequently change his/her school (moving into a new district).

3. Many residence and school changes that result from interstate or international relocation, as happened from 1999 through 2000 when more than 240,000 people moved to the Midwest from abroad (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001b).

4. With greater opportunities to exercise choice among public schools, a student may change his/her school without changing residence [http://www.ncrel.org/policy/gbs/mobility/under.html).

The research on mobility indicates that residential and school moves are associated with poor academic performance. Mobility has been linked to lower achievement, more grade retention, and higher drop-out rates (Benson, Haycraft, Steyaert, & Weigel, 1979; Brent & DiObida, 1993; Ingersoll, Scamman, & Eckerling, 1989; Mao & Whitsett & Mellor, 1998; Rumberger & Larson, 1998; U.S. Government Accounting Office, 1994). Although moving once or twice during the public school years may not be harmful, most research shows that high mobility lovers student achievement,
particularly when the students are from low-income, less-educated families (Sewell, 1982; Straits, 1987). Students who attend the same school for their whole career are most likely to graduate, whereas the most mobile of the school population, migrant student, has the highest rates of school failure and dropout (Lunin, 1986; Tobias, personal communication, June 1991). Leonard and Elias (as cited is Mehana, 1995) indicated that mobile students are prone to developmental problems such as low academic achievement. In the study by the New York State Education Department (1992), highly mobile students were more educationally at risk than their stable counterparts. Mobile students also experience more social and emotional problems (Tucker, Marx, & Long, 1998).

It was noted that when families change places of residence, children face problems of disruptions in school curricula, teachers, and social support systems. The mobility that results in a school change is the greatest threat to academic achievement and the school environment (Bierman + Jax, 2000). The wider school environment is affected in that school staff and resources must be marshaled to work with a steady stream of new students (Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990). Bruno and Isken (1996) summarized the opinions of teachers when stating that “nearly all classroom teachers reported that each time a new student arrived instruction time was lost” (p. 14) to review rules and routines, teach procedures, or make a child feel welcome. Additionally, they list other school site impacts caused by transient students, as reported by teachers, to be added clerical time processing paperwork, finding prior records of arriving students, additional testing and placement time, remediation needs, counseling students, teachers, and families. High student mobility places enormous stress on schools in making staffing and calendar decisions. Furthermore, attempts to monitor school performance become meaningless, if
the student population tested one year has largely changed by the next (Newman, 1988; Sewell, 1982). In a study of school mobility, schools having high levels of movement reported an average of one student transferring in and one student-transferring out per day (Nakagawa, Stafford, Fisher, & Matthews, 1999).

The depression of achievement associated with mobility may be compounded by other related factors: poverty, limited English fluency, poor housing, etc. Changes in family needs (less expensive or better housing), changes in employment, divorce, parent health problems) and problems with school (disagreements with the teacher, the desire to avoid discipline or retention, concerns about school quality or safety) are examples of the range of reasons for moving (Nakagawa, Stafford, & Shen). For example, an analysis of student mobility found that children living with one parent move twice as frequently as children living with two parents, and that children in one-parent families also had lower achievement than those in two-parent families (Sewell, 1982).

Some researchers argue that moving affects social relationships that are important to academic achievement (Prihesh + Downey, 1999). Nagay, Lare, Jefferys, and Leitzel (1998) researched the strengths and vulnerabilities of military adolescents and reported the findings from focus group interviews. Many of the adolescents' concerns about moving seemed centered around missing old friends and making new friends. They recommended giving attention to easing the transition from one social group to another and to facilitating adolescents' peer relations to whatever extent possible. Elkind (1981) identifies relocation, changing schools, school readjustment, and changing friends as important stressors for all children. His study used as an instrument for child stress measurement called the Child Stress Scale, which reported that school changes that
involve multiple social and emotional adjustments are major stressors. Humks and Schaefer (1995) indicated that “the more life stresses the child experiences, including relocation, the more likely there will be a negative outcome on the child’s adjustment” (p. 16).

In her book, *Swats*, Mary Truscott (1989) likens the military moves to those of migrant workers. She states, “In much the same way that migrant workers follow the crops, Navy families followed the fleet, Air Force families followed squadrons, and Army families followed the whims of the personnel system. Physical moves generally paralleled career moves, a promotion or demotion, an opportunity for general training, or a judge to put in retirement papers” (p. 27).

Frequent moves mean that children repeatedly must leave a familiar school and break off budding relationships with peers. They face the insecurity of settling into a new school or community. As children adjust to moving, parents and teachers may see behavior that is more regressive (Stars and Stripes, 1989. D. Agostino, 1989). School personnel need to realize and address the stress and anxiety that relocation creates for students and their families. Matter and Matter (1988) state:

These adults must further recognize that those children who will be left behind may also experience a sense of grief and loss at losing a friend. Once these facts are acknowledged, efforts can be made to minimize the traumatic effect of relocation. Both the relocating child and the child’s peers can be prepared for the move before it takes place. Counselors can help parents and teachers understand that children do not always view relocation in a positive manner. Children, however, may not be able to verbalize their negative feelings. (p.25)
Kealy (1982) suggests that teachers also need to be knowledgeable of student mobility, the extent to which it occurs, and the impact on the student, family, and educational process.

Highly mobile individuals can suffer from cumulative relocation fatigue. Mary Wertsch (1989) grew up in a military family and devoted five years to collecting information from adult children of military personnel and found that the average number of schools they attended through high school was almost ten. Military mobility is higher than in the general population. Only in the early development years do their mobility rates converge (Stanley, 1983). Patricia Nida (1983) states in her book, The Teenagers Survival Guide to Moving, that “it’s not unusual for a military family to move seventeen times during a twenty-year career in the service.” (p. 3) It is generally assumed that children of military families who face relocation as frequently as every three years are academically disadvantaged because transitions from one school to another may result in being retained in the same grade (Blakeman, 1993; Ortner & Bowen, 1990). In Truscott’s (1989) and Wertsch’s (1991) anecdotal accounts of military “brats,” frequent moves were stressful experiences that compromised academic achievement. Their anecdotal literature suggests that adolescent children of military personnel may be more vulnerable to poor academic achievement and antisocial behavior than their civilian counterparts.

Stewart (1991) states that often, the effects of relocation on military dependents are manifested in terms of low academic achievement, relationship problems, and extreme attitude changes. Regardless of a preference for or dislike of frequent changes of
residence and work places, mobility is a way of life for military families. In one way or another, mobility affects the well-being of each family member.

In a study by Paredes (1990), student achievement was compared on norm-referenced tests. The achievement measure was the reading portion of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) for grade 2, and the Norm-Referenced Assessment Program for Texas (NAPT) for grades 3-8. Student records over a period of 13 years were examined, and results of this study indicated that students with higher number of moves had lower mean grade equivalents (see Table 4). This study concluded that there is a relationship between student mobility and achievement, and it supports the idea that mobility is one factor in students’ lives that can negatively affect learning. A study of California achievement tests in reading showed that students who moved three or more times scored nearly 20 points lower than students who did not move. In addition, large numbers of transient students in a school can pull test scores down for the entire school (Fitchen, 1994).

Although little research has been conducted on the impact of student mobility on non-mobile students, schools with significant incidences of student mobility also report an impact on their non-mobile students, teachers, and overall student climate. A policy brief published in 1999 by Policy Analysis for California Education (Rumberger), found that California schools with high mobility rates (10 percent or higher), had test scores of non-mobile students that were considerably lower than those of students in schools with lower mobility rates. The findings support claims that continual student turnover is disruptive and keeps non-mobile students from moving ahead as teachers spend extra time helping newer students catch up. Some schools have attempted to alleviate this by
keeping highly mobile students (i.e., children of migrant workers) segregated from other classes, so that the continual arrival and departure of mobile students does not disrupt the education of other non-mobile students (Hartman, 2002).

Mobility is one of many issues school leaders need to look at as they work to raise student achievement. Changing schools for some children is almost certain to create some disjuncture in their learning experience (Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauer, 1996; Ingersoll et al., 1989; Kerbow, 1995).

The problems associated with mobility occur in urban and rural areas of the United States, as well as in other parts of the world. Urban school populations change as much as 100% a year (Office of Educational Research & Improvement, 1991). In the Passaic Public School district in Passaic, New Jersey, several schools have a complete change in student population during the school year, mobility being the key factor (Kienicki, 1999). In Chicago, thousands of children change schools every year, often in midyear, putting themselves at greater risk of failure. A new study by the Center for School Improvement at the University of Chicago and the Chicago Panel on School Policy found that only two in five Chicago students stay in the same school from 1st through 6th grade, not counting scheduled transitions from, for instance, a K-5 school to a middle school. Toni Wagner, a research scientist at the Illinois State Board of Education, stated that with the exceptions of some school districts with children of Air Force personnel or migrant workers, no other area suffers the mobility problems that Chicago does. (Williams, 1996) David Kerbow, who has studied mobility issues in Chicago, says a "highly mobile student", one who moves three or more times in a six-year period, falls behind three-quarters of a year, compared with a stable student with similar
characteristics. Although moving once or twice during the public school years may not
be harmful, most research shows that high mobility lowers student achievement,
particularly when the students are from low-income, less-educated families (Sewell,
1982; Strauss, 1987).

In Minneapolis, Minnesota, where mobility affects one in five students, the 1998
Kids Mobility Project Report determined that there are two main reasons families' move:
family instability and lack of available, safe, and affordable housing. (Varlas, 2002).
Experts state that there is a strong correlation between poverty and the risk of academic
failure, and a strong correlation between poverty and frequent mobility. "Families of
color are more likely to be living with poverty, so it's not surprising that these same
families are also the most mobile" (p. ) Kids Barbara Duffield of the National Coalition
for the Homeless. Again, studies in Minneapolis found that nearly one in three students
identified as African American, Hispanic, or Native American moved at least once within
a six-and-a-half month survey period.

Many initiatives are currently in place to lessen the negative effects of student
mobility on academic achievement. Minneapolis Public Schools attacked mobility at one
of its root causes: a lack of low-cost housing. The district joined with groups such as the
Family Housing Fund and launched the Kids Mobility Project. The research project
explored the effects of constant residential moves on student achievement. It produced a
report in 1998 that linked inadequate housing to student mobility, poor attendance, and
lower reading scores. Results were used to lobby the state legislature to increase the
budget for low-cost housing (Clark, 2003). The Kids Mobility Project strives to make
information available to parents and families through outreach, community forums,
workshops, printed information, and staff development. Attendance was identified as the strongest indicator of performance, and the district has incorporated strategies to improve attendance (Biernat & Jax, 2000). The Minneapolis school district has also adopted a districtwide curriculum to ensure that a child making frequent in-district moves will find his/her new classroom about the same as the ones he/she left (Stover, 2000).

In Indiana, the state general assembly adopted legislation in July 2000, which requires every school to include the mobility rate in their School Corporation Annual Performance Report. Fowler-Finn (2001) states that "...no matter how stable is the school population, increasing mobility has an impact on all students, teachers, and schools." (p.). He further asserts that "Student mobility is increasing, and the value society places upon offering choices to students and parents may be adding to this increase." (p.) Fowler-Finn's Fort Wayne, Indiana school district has implemented several practices to address the students' need for a stable, caring environment. These are:

1. **Families helping families**: At the elementary level, matching new families with volunteer partner families who have had children in that particular school for at least two years is bolstering more parent involvement, as well as giving families a sense of belonging.

2. **Keeping students in the same school**: No matter where a family moves within our district, every attempt is made to keep the children in the school from which they moved. Our commitment to school choice serves mobile families well. We provide the necessary transportation.
3. **Getting to know new families**: One elementary school has a parent/pal partner picnic during the summer, where the new students and their families have an opportunity to meet and get to know families of students at the school and school staff in an informal setting. Friendships are formed that ease the transitions into a new environment.

4. **Emphasizing teacher teams**: More and more of our elementary schools are offering multiage classes, as well as looping, where the same teacher stays with the class for two or three consecutive grades. This provides a sense of stability and continuity for all students and helps new students feel more a part of the class.

5. **Engaging the entire school staff**: At one elementary school, all students are encouraged to make visits to support personnel such as the school nurse, custodian, and secretary. The incentive to do this is a "coupon" received from each visit entitling the student to such fun things as a free lunch or a treat with that staff person. In this way, new students learn their way around the school and meet key staff without drawing attention as a newcomer. Another elementary school holds a scavenger hunt during Back to School Night.

6. **Creating a warm and friendly atmosphere**: To make new families feel welcome, many of our elementary schools make special school-wide announcements welcoming new students or post their photos and a biography. Staff makes personal visits to homes within the first two weeks of the student’s arrival in the school.

7. **Easing the transition**: Principals arrange get-togethers over coffee for newly arrived parents and small-group lunches for new students to assist in a smooth transition into the school culture.
8. **Planning the school day:** Middle schools and high schools are scheduling classes in blocks of time that mean fewer class changes during the day and a longer time period in class to encourage relationship-building between students and teachers.

9. **Keeping the student’s needs first:** Our schools are making more and more personal connections with students through individual mentor and tutor programs at all grade levels.

10. **Putting the right foot forward from the beginning:** The adage about first impressions goes for schools, too. But it can be difficult to make sure the school has everything in order when a new student arrives without notice. That’s why our principals limit a new student’s initial day at school to registering and perhaps a brief tour of the building. Meanwhile, staff can make the necessary preparations needed for the student. This ensures the student has a schedule, school materials, desk, locker, and a student “buddy” ready for that first full day of classes (Fowler-Finn, 2001).

   In 1994, Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland began allocating extra staff to schools based on mobility rates, poverty rates and the number of students speaking limited English (Clark, 2003). In 2002, the county revamped the program, taking mobility and language out of the equation, and focused on reducing class size at high-mobility schools. Frank Stetson, Community Superintendent for the school system states that “In an area where international professionals come and go regularly, mobility and language are not the best indicators of need. Poverty is. If we used mobility, we’d be sending resources to schools that didn’t need them.” (p. 4)

   In a study conducted by Russell W. Rumberger and Katherine A. Larson (1998) of the University of California-Santa Barbara, they note in the *American Journal of*
Education that our countrymen, and their children, are forever coming and going. Nearly 12 million children changed residence in 1999-2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001a). About one out of every six families move each year (U.S. Census Bureau, 1998), double the rate of Great Britain, Germany, and Japan, and triple that of Belgium and Ireland. By the time children reach the age of two in the United States, half of them will have moved at least once (Long, 1992; Wood et al., 1993). An estimated six million elementary school children change schools each year (Cornille, Boyce, & Smith, 1983; Schaller, 1975). One recent study found that more than 40% of all third graders had changed schools at least once since the first grade and another study found that half of American school children moved at least twice before reaching the age of 18; one in ten moved a mind-boggling six or more times. Their study showed the inverse relation of mobility and achievement and concluded that mobility was associated with an increased likelihood of dropping out of school.

In the United Kingdom, the Department for Education and Employment commissioned the Pupil Mobility in Schools project to produce an interim report on the nature and causes of pupil mobility in schools and the implications for national strategies to raise achievement. In this study by Dobson and Henthorpe (1999), it was found that the number of children under age 15 into and out of the UK over the last 20 years had totaled around a million and a half, with a relatively small net inflow. The main causes of this pupil mobility were categorized as follows: (a) *International migration*: labor/career movement, refugee families, people moving into/out of the UK for permanent settlement; students with children, and (b) *Internal migration*: labor/career movement, people moving at different stages in their lives (including family break-up, changing
relationships, escape from violence), moves for housing, environmental or schooling reasons, travelers.

1. **Institutional movement**: children permanently excluded, changing schools by choice, transferring between private and state or special and mainstream schools.

2. **Individual movement**: children in care, children moving between parents or others after family break-up, unaccompanied child refugees.

High mobility in the UK appeared to be associated with particular groups, situations, and areas. High mobility groups included travelers, refugees, and students from armed forces families. Examples of high mobility situations were social deprivation and family break-up; temporary accommodation, rented housing, refuge, rundown estates; and certain types of employment, especially seasonal work and the armed forces. High mobility areas were comprised of London and other cities and conurbations, particularly in the West Midlands and the north of England, coastal resorts, and the vicinity of armed forces bases.

In Scotland, mobility is a factor in both Gypsy Travellers and Occupational Travellers (i.e., circus, bargee and fairground, or Snow Travellers). Lack of a permanent address precludes easy access to services and social inclusion. All schools interviewed via an annual questionnaire reported the lack of progress of Gypsy/Traveller pupils and attributed their underachievement not to lack of ability but to lack of curriculum continuity and coherence in their education.

While America has long been a nation "on the move," today two types of student mobility stand out: (a) intra-city mobility, which is prompted largely by fluctuations in the job market; includes migrant families and follows a predictable pattern and (b) intra-
city mobility, which may be caused by upward mobility, on the one hand, or poverty and homelessness, on the other. This type includes mainly urban students with moves that are individualistic, and the pattern of movement tends to follow a monthly cycle, and re-enrollments are hard to predict. In fact, because of high rents, poor housing, and economic hardship, urban schools whose populations change as much as 100 percent a year are an increasing phenomenon (Schuler, 1990). Most moves are local (Melman, 1999). Even though children from both poor and advantaged families move frequently, it is important to take note of where families are moving. Limited-income families tend to move within districts and within city school systems, while high-income families tend to move out of city school districts (Wright, 1999).

The reasons vary as to why families move. There is upward mobility when moving is by choice and represents advancement in the job market, increased salaries, and the opportunity to move into better neighborhoods. (Brett, Stroh, & Reilly, 1993) Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2002) refer to “Tiebout” mobility as achievement-enhancing whom parents change districts in pursuit of higher quality schools or better matches for their children. For other families, downward mobility is the issue. Moving is by necessity. The U.S. job market is extremely transient in nature, constantly changing, downsizing, or outsourcing. For families affected by these changes, a move may represent a downward path into poorer, less safe neighborhoods, lower ranked schools, and fewer community supports and services (Mulroy & Lane, 1992).

Downward mobility is often characterized by poverty, shortage of affordable housing, and, in some cases, eviction. Renters move approximately three times more often than homeowners (Melman, 1999). For example, limited-income single parent
families who have trouble obtaining steady employment tend to have high mobility rates. A downward spiral may begin with a reduction in income due to a loss of employment (Long, 1992) or divorce (South, Crowder, & Trent, 1998). These factors combined with a shortage of affordable housing (Johnson & Sherraden, 1992; Mulroy & Lane, 1992) can result in eviction.

Family changes, such as divorce and remarriage, also impact mobility. Children who move because of divorce are likely to move to less advantaged neighborhoods and children whose parent remarries tend to move into more advantaged neighborhoods (South, Crowder, & Trent, 1998).

Homelessness is also a relevant mobility issue. There are an estimated nearly three-quarters of a million homeless children and youth, and perhaps 10 to 30 percent of homeless children, are not attending school. Homeless children may represent the population at greatest risk of school failure (Stronge, 1993).

A study by Melman (1995) on residential mobility found that members of minority groups have higher mobility rates than non-Hispanic whites. School districts with 25% or more minority enrollment have mobility rates twice that of districts with less than 10% minority enrollment (University of Missouri Outreach and Extension, 1998). These high mobility rates among ethnic and racial minorities may be attributed in part to low rates of homeownership (Melman, 1995) and to disproportionate rates of minorities with low incomes (U.S. Government Accounting Office, 1994).

The depression of achievement associated with mobility may be compounded by other related factors: poverty, limited English fluency, poor housing, etc. For example, analyses of student mobility found that children living with one parent move twice as
frequently as children living with two parents, and that children in one-parent families also had lower achievement than those in two-parent families (Newman, 1988; Sewell, 1982).

Biernat and Jax (2000) found that frequent relocation interrupted regular attendance, continuity of lesson content, and the development of relationships with teachers and peers. An additional risk, related to records transition, was inappropriate placement in a new school placement in programs for the gifted and talented or in remedial classes when neither was appropriate. The lack of prompt transfer of records is one of the biggest administrative, and therefore, pedagogical, problems with mobile students. Students may be given inappropriate placement, and even held back, while the receiving school waits three to five months for their records (Neuman, 1988; Sewell, 1982). In the interim, students in need of services or placement in programs are delayed. When records finally arrive and students are placed, the child is likely to move again (Vail, 1996).

These record-keeping problems have been most obvious with migrant students. More recently, homeless students have created an increase in record transfers, and districts have often been financially penalized for students who were counted absent when they were already enrolled in a different district. School choice, a new form of student mobility, will warrant future research, “especially since schools will have little reason on the surface to cooperate with competing schools by providing rapid record transfers” (Asher, 1991). Record-keeping problems have long occurred with many students less clearly designated as “transient.” Voluntary desegregation is well known for creating havoc with district record-keeping (Well, 1991).
In 1968, the Migrant Student Transfer System (MSTS) was instituted as part of Title I/Chapter I. The MSTS is an electronically-based record system in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, with both health and academic information on migrant secondary students. However, because some schools do not have computer terminals and much communication is still conducted by mail, the system is currently underutilized (Villarreal, 1989).

High mobility puts enormous stress on schools (Office of Educational Research & Improvement, 1991). Mobile students create logistical problems for teachers and administrators. New students coming into a school at times other than the beginning of the year create a need for teachers to re-teach material. New students also create management problems because they are not aware of classroom rules and procedures and cooperative learning efforts can be disrupted with the introduction of new students into learning groups. In addition, bookkeeping duties for teachers are increased due to entering and exiting students (Vail, 1990).

The issue of student mobility was one of 13 proposals submitted by local boards of education to the Delegate Assembly of the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) in November of 1990. Patti J. Pawling, NJSBA president states that, "Frequent changing of schools can indicate severe problems, such as poverty, family instability, parents' inability to maintain a home or job, and even drug use or child abuse." (p. 1). A 2001 NJSBA report cites research showing that children who change schools several times during the academic year are more likely to experience social and emotional problems and have lower grades on standardized tests. Student mobility can hinder a
child's education because it can be difficult for schools to obtain past records of highly mobile students, and therefore make it hard to address the specific needs of the child.

"Educators generally agree that when a school has a turnover rate of 20% or more, providing a quality education becomes difficult," (p. 1), explained Pawling. "When the mobility rate reaches 30%, student turnover has become a serious problem," affecting the functioning of the entire school. According to the state Department of Education, the average turnover rate in New Jersey in 1999-2000 was 13 percent. However, further analysis by the NJSBA showed that, in almost a quarter of the state schools, more than 20% of the student population changed in mid-year. Moreover, one out of ten of the state's elementary and high schools had mobility rates exceeding 30 percent. "We find these statistics alarming," said James Dougherty, chairman of NJSBA's Student Mobility Subcommittee. "Are we addressing the educational needs of the highly mobile student?" (New Jersey School Board Association, 2001, p. 1).

Schools in New Jersey with high mobility rates do not receive any funding to offset the costs of testing, support services or specialized materials for mobile students. According to a report (2001) presented to the NJSBA delegates, almost 11 percent of the state's elementary and high schools have student mobility rates exceeding 30 percent. In 24.2 percent of New Jersey schools, more than 20 percent of the population changes school in a year. Based on this 2001 report, the NJSBA delegates called on the State Board of Education to authorize a study into the causes of student mobility. The study would address:

1. Creation of a statewide database on mobile students.
2. Programming designed to help mobile students.
3. Reporting state test results separately for students enrolled in a school district less than two years.

4. The financial impact of high mobility on districts and creation of a new category of aid to assist these districts.

Retired United States General Gordon R. Sullivan, now President of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), states that:

Children of mobile American families face an 'uneven playing field': an educational environment predominantly designed and resourced for stationary populations. Unintended gaps in the mobile child's education occur despite the best efforts of educators and parents. He further states that these mobile children, including children of military families, deserve the same educational opportunities as their more stationary classmates (Sullivan, 2001, p. 2).

In a study by Marchant and Medway (1987), military children's academic achievement was examined in relation to several military stressors. They examined the effects of geographic mobility (periodic relocation) on military children's school achievement and social competence. Surprisingly, frequent relocation was not found to be detrimental, and there was a positive correlation with students' school achievement and social competence. In the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, Watanabe (1985) indicated that one reason many military dependent students' academic achievement remained relatively strong despite military-related stressors, to include mobility, was that most military families placed a high value on education. This emphasis on education was stronger than the negative effects of such factors as geographic mobility and parental absence.
A yearlong study by Smrekar (2001) to the National Education Goals Panel details how Department of Defense schools have high levels of student achievement. This Vanderbilt University study entitled "March Toward Excellence: School Success and Minority Student Achievement in Department of Defense Schools" was highlighted in such highly acclaimed publications as The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, The Seattle Times, The New York Post, Stars and Stripes, and Education Week. Both domestic and overseas schools scored at or near the top of all states in reading and writing on the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress. White, African-American, and Hispanic students scored well compared to their counterparts in other states, and the achievement gap between white students and that of African-American or Hispanic students was narrower than this gap in other states.

Factors that were found to be significant for high academic achievement include:

1. Centralized direction setting with local decision-making.
2. Policy coherence and regular data flow regarding instructional goals, assessments, accountability, and professional training and development.
3. Sufficient financial resources linked to instructionally relevant strategic goals.
4. Staff development that is job-embedded, intensive, sustained over time, relevant to school improvement goals and linked to student performance.
5. Small school size, conducive to trust, communication, and sense of community.
6. Academic focus and high expectations for all students.
7. Continuity of care for children in high quality pre-schools and after-school programs.

8. A "corporate commitment" to public education that is visible and responsive to parents within the school community.

Highlights of the study include:

1. Schools that serve children of military parents employ a Community Strategic Plan to set objectives for the system.

2. Schools that serve children of military parents assess every student with a standardized test. Educators use results to identify instructional strategies and to monitor and document changes in student performance.

3. There are high expectations throughout the system.

4. Competitive pay scales and access to integrated, extensive professional development opportunities have helped schools that serve children of military parents to attract and retain high quality teachers.

5. Schools that serve children of military parents are linked to an array of nationally recognized pre-school programs and after-school youth centers.

6. Overall a larger proportion of middle and high schools that serve children of military parents are small compared to other systems. This leads to more productive relationship between teachers and students and a greater focus on achievement and development.

7. The "corporate commitment" of the military is both material and symbolic. There is a commitment to promoting a parental role in their children's
education that surpasses the level of investment or involvement found in most mentoring/tutoring models.

Minority Student Achievement

March Toward Excellence highlighted the following in regards to minority achievement.

1. Students report that teachers have high expectations of all students. As an example, 85% of African-American and 93% of Hispanic students in schools that serve children of military parents report that their teachers have high expectations of them compared to 52% for African-American and 53% for Hispanics nationwide.

2. There is a sense of urgency among staff. With a mobility index of 35% and a normal tour of three years, teachers know that their time is short with each individual student.

Controlled discipline, appropriate schedules, heterogeneous grouping, student support, assessment, and academic rigor contribute to the high academic performance of students from schools that serve children of military parents.

Results from the 2003 TerraNova 2nd Edition standardized test revealed schools that serve children of military parents’ students in grade levels 3-11 scored higher than the national 50th percentile average in the United States. Test results showed students of schools that serve children of military parents consistently scored 10-20 points above the national average of 50% in 37 of the 45 subtests and 21-25 points higher in five subtests. They scored seven to nine points higher than the 50th percentile average in three subtests. In June of 2003, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released the results
of the National Assessment of Educational Progress reading assessment administered in the winter of 2002. (Federal Education Association, 2003). Minority students in schools that serve children of military parents scored at the top of the charts when compared with their counterparts. African-American and Hispanic students of schools that serve children of military parents in both the fourth and eighth grades ranked no lower than third in the nation on any one of the assessments. And in most cases, the students finished first or second, often with students of schools that serve children of military parents switching off between the top two spots, when compared to their peers nationwide.

In July of 2003, NCES released the writing results from the NAEP. (Ref., year). Eighth grade students of schools that serve children of military parents scored 164, which tied with Connecticut for the highest score in the nation. Schools that serve children of military parents additionally showed gains on both the verbal and math components of the 2003 SAT I. Results on the verbal test increased by five points from 504 in 2002, to 509 in 2003. Results on the math test showed a gain of one point from 497 in 2002, to 498 in 2003. While increasing scores on both tests, students maintained their high participation rate of 68% from the previous year. Students’ 2003 SAT I participation rate of 68% was substantially higher than the national participation rate of 48 percent.

Exemplary minority achievement was also evident in the SAT I results for students of schools that serve children of military parents. African-American students scored 31 points higher than their peers in the nation on the verbal test and 21 points higher in math in 2003. While the nation’s African-American students’ scores have remained static over the past three years, African-American students of schools that serve children of military parents have made a strong gain of 16 points on the verbal test and
raised the math score by 24 points from 2001. Hispanic students of schools that serve children of military parents outperformed their counterparts in 2003 by 23 points on the verbal test. Hispanic students increased their average math score by three points, just one point lower than the national average for Hispanic students.

The academic achievement of students of schools that serve children of military parents may be influenced by socioeconomic factors and a "common culture" engendered by military service. Education research has strongly associated student academic achievement with parental education, income levels, and family structure. An article written by Strobin and Salvaterra (2000) was part of a larger research project examining the characteristics, transitions, and school experiences of 6,382 children (ages 10 to 18) of military personnel from all four branches of the armed services, at installations in the United States and overseas. The project was sponsored by the Air Force Office of Scientific Research (Jeffreys, Leitzel, Cabral, Gunpert, Hartley, Lare, Nagy, O'Brien, Russo, Salvaterra, + Strobin, 1997). The article concludes that despite an average of five school transitions, adolescents reported average and above-average grades in classes, ample participation in extracurricular school activities, and the support of parents and teachers (Strobin + Salvaterra, 2000).

Military children are adaptive due to the frequent moves to new duty stations. Stephanie El Sayed, 1999 Wuerzburg (Germany) District Teacher of the Year (2000) says that one reason for the success of teaching military children is the teachers. For military students "it's not easy attending two or three different schools in the same school year, or moving four months before your high school graduation, but our military
children do it, and they do it successfully" (p.). There are positives related to relocation. Benefits from relocation include:

1. Military children get to experience firsthand much of what they read about in their social studies textbooks through their visits to different regions and countries.
2. Military children experience different schools and school systems. If they have difficulty in one school, they have an opportunity to go to another.
3. Military children make friends all over the world.
4. Military children may be fluent in several languages because of time spent in different countries.
5. Military children often become more responsible by having to deal with new situations in an adult way.

Because of the changes faced by the military family, family members are closer and depend more upon each other for safety, security, and companionship. Other positive aspects associated with being a military child are the ability to:

1. Be more open to those of different backgrounds and cultures;
2. Organize efficiently because of frequent moving experiences;
3. Make new friends quickly and easily, and
4. Learn to adapt and be flexible.

The results of this study could provide information that will be beneficial to administrators, teachers, parents, and students. In 1998, the Military Child Education Coalition was chartered as a nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation. (2002). This organization grew out of a national conference held in 1997 that discussed ways to support military children. One of the main goals established at the conference was the formation of an
alliance among school systems, military installations, and national organizations.

Currently, MCEC has more than 400 members worldwide and serves the 800,000 military-connected children through a network of school systems and military installations. MCEC is solely focused on improving predictability as these children transition from six to nine times in their kindergarten through graduation experience.

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) devoted its August 2002 articles in its official magazine, *On The Move*, to assist military-connected students make easier transitions from one school to another. Included were articles on new school hints, scholarship ideas and pointers, a memorandum of agreement map of the United States, the Transition Counselor Institute, facts about schools that serve children of military parents, as well as testimonials of the distinction of being a military child. The Military Child Education Coalition has the following as its guiding principles:

1. The military child is not a member of an underprivileged group, but is subjected to a variety of educational challenges not experienced by the general population.

2. MCEC serves as an advocate for all military and military related students in public/private/host nation and home schools.

3. MCEC must be attentive and informed regarding changes in educational philosophies and practices, and their effect on the transition of military students.

4. Professional development of staff and faculty must include training on the culture and unique challenges of the military child.

5. "Best practice" models must be developed and shared.
6. It is accepted that there will be great variations in policies and practices of supporting school systems, and that the military mission will require families to be routinely moved.

7. Feedback from affected constituencies (students, parents, school/military leaders) must be sought continuously.

8. Emerging technologies must be exploited in solving military student transition issues.

9. Partnerships between military installations and their supporting school systems at the local level are essential.

10. MCEC’s total effort is “for the sake of the child” (MCEC, 2002).

In MCEC’s strategic plan, the following were indicative challenges associated with K-12 school transitions:

1. Challenges related to the transfer and interpretation of school records.

2. Disparity as to the ways that schools and school systems organize time: the year-school calendars, and the school day-schedules.

3. Challenges related to: graduation requirements prerequisite requirements, grading variations, tiered diplomas, and state “high stakes” testing.

4. Access and opportunity to participate in extracurricular and enrichment programs.

5. Eligibility for special education programs and variations in program availability and content.

6. Consistent elementary and middle school opportunities for students to develop necessary academic concepts and skills.
7. Understanding by adults of the social and emotional needs of the student in transition or the military-connected student coping with separation from or deployment of a parent(s).

8. The reliable presence of a child-centered climate of understanding and acceptance supported by a strong and meaningful partnership between the installation and the supporting school system(s).

During the 2002 Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA) Army Family Action Plan Conference in Washington, D.C., two transition issues were presented. (Army Family Action Plan Conference Workbook, 2002). One issue dealt with moving in the middle of the school year. One disadvantage particularly to military children in high school is that they often encounter different curriculums, grading systems, school terms, and testing requirements. These disadvantages are more severe for students who transfer in the middle of the school year, than for those students who transfer at the end of the school year. Some of the problems encountered are; (1) credits not transferring, (2) courses not offered to continue classes, and (3) repeating courses. Not only are these students disadvantaged academically, but also socially. Students have potential for not being able to catch up during the academic year, which can result in lower self-esteem.

The recommendation was made to create a policy to stabilize tours during the school year. A second issue centered on information on local schools. The recommendation was to provide accessible and accurate information to teens so they can make informed school choices. The Army’s actions to date include, but are not limited to the: (1) commissioning of the Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS), (2) funding school liaison officers at sixty-eight Army installations, (3) adding schools to the In/Out processing checklist for
Army personnel, (4) establishing a Department of the Army (DA) procedure for the stabilization of tours for soldiers with high school family members.

The Military Child Education Coalition (ref., year) in October of 2002 began testing a new videocommunications system that allowed high school staffs to resolve transition issues prior to the student's arrival at a new school. This "virtual counseling center" consists of a computer, monitor, color printer, scanner, and speakers. This system will provide interaction between the student and counselors at the sending and receiving schools (Williams, 2002).

The Washington State Parents Are Vital in Education (PAVE) organization established in 1985 a program called Specialized Training of Military Parents (STOMP). STOMP is a federally funded Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center established to assist military families who have children with special education or health needs. Military families with special needs family members face additional difficulties in transition. Those related to academic achievement include:

1. Continuity in provision of IEP services from state to state;
2. Availability of military member during IEP meetings;
3. Re-establishing relationships with key educational personnel;
4. Challenges with overseas assignments, i.e., denial of command sponsorship for family member with special needs (command sponsorship is necessary for eligibility for medical/educational systems) increasing family separations;
5. Difficulty implementing aspects of IDEA because of host country agreements, i.e. transition services into vocational programming, community access, provision of related services; and
Certain laws, regulations, and services do not apply in overseas assignments, such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Department of Education Regulations for the implementation of IDEA/Medicaid.

STOMP provides materials, resources, and workshops to meet the needs of military parents (ref., year). STOMP provides workshops on:

1. Working with the educational or early intervention program services for their child who is disabled, and

2. Accessing resources in both current duty stations and assignments

Transitioning a child with special needs requires a parent to be more vigilant.

Emily Grimes, (ref., year) in Fort Bragg Schools liaison officer, stated in an article for the Fort Bragg newspaper, *The Paraglade*, that moving a special-needs child can be critical, if a lag in services is created by not having all the necessary documents needed to make the transition. "If the child has special needs, (parents) should have a copy of their child’s individualized education plan so that when they arrive at their new installation, services for that special-needs child won’t be delayed or denied." (p. 1D) Grimes said the following should be done before moving a special-needs child:

1. Contact the child’s special education counselor or director and request assistance as to what should be done before the transition.

2. Write or contact the special education director at the new school and request their local policies.

3. Schedule an annual review and dismissal meeting to discuss the progress the child has made since the last individualized program review, asking for written suggestions that may help the child and the new school’s staff.
4. Request a copy of the child’s complete educational record including a copy of the latest IEP.

5. Parents should hand-carry all records, samples of their child’s work, and other information related to the child’s education.

6. Contact the local Army Community Service or Exceptional Family Member Program coordinator to assist you with identifying resources available at the next duty station.

7. Make sure to take any special equipment and refill medication prescriptions that the child may need for the next few months.

8. Contact the installation school liaison officer to assist with transitioning the child to their new school.

Grimes additionally encourages parents to be a positive resource for the school, volunteer, visit the school, and be involved. She urges parents to participate in the School Improvement Team, Parent Teachers Association, or other committees dedicated to enhancing the educational environment for their children and all other children as well. Grimes states that, “There is a high correlation between parental involvement in education and student success.” (Newman, 2003, p. 1D).

Need for the Study

Geographical mobility is encountered by members of the United States Armed Forces to a greater extent than employees of private corporations. (Bill, 1976). The service member is seemingly in a constant state of transition from one community to another, either within the United States or in an overseas area. As stressful as the move
can be, it is important for the agencies of the military that provide services to know of the adjustments needed to optimize academic achievement. This study can be helpful in examining the issues and concerns associated with mobility and can provide for all stakeholders concerned insights into the strategies for assisting military dependent students adjust to a mobile lifestyle.

The information gleaned from the study should assist teachers and administrators of military dependent children as they strive to meet the needs of mobile students. The results from this study should be especially applicable to schools that serve children of military parents worldwide. The results may indicate a need for programs of assimilation, orientation, remediation, and enrichment for the military student and perhaps additionally for the parents, as well. Additionally, the data may provide valuable insight to schools that serve children of military parents as to how to better assist parents in understanding how mobility affects their children and, as a result, other family members.

Many military families elect to attend the public and private schools surrounding the military installations. This study may also prove to be significant for those schools and school systems who service like or similar student populations. In addition, this study’s findings, conclusions, and implications should be extremely significant to any public junior high school that assimilates mobile children into the populace.

Strategies

Across the United States, many school districts and organizations are implementing measures to bring about an awareness of the impact of mobility on children. The Chicago Board of Education accepted Staying Put, a campaign produced by the Chicago Panel on School Policy that is designed to decrease mobility and improve student transfer
processes throughout school systems. (Chicago Panel on School Policy, 2001). Staying Put includes an overview with a sample press release and suggestions for city government, school boards of education, school administrative offices, and community-based organizations. The second section, implementation, has roles and materials for principals, counselors, teachers, parents, and students including a "If You Move..." a brochure on student mobility (available in both English, Spanish, and Vietnamese); Don't Leave School Without It; a list for parents of transferring students, suggestions for a My Best Yet Folder, a file kept by students and taken along if they move; and Staying Put lesson plans for teachers. The mission of Staying Put is to improve educational quality for children and reduce the adverse effects of student mobility. To accomplish this, Staying Put does the following:

1. Informs educators, students, parents and other community members of the academic and social consequences of student mobility.
2. Promotes the establishment of school-based programs and the dissemination of information about school boards’ enrollment policies as an alternative to student transfers.
3. Ensures that the transfer process reduces the disruptions to student learning and achievement.

In February 1999, then Chief of Staff of the Army, General Dennis J. Reimer and Mrs. Reimer, asked the Military Child Education Coalition to conduct an in-depth study and make recommendations to improve predictability for military-connected high school aged students during the transition process. This qualitative research effort was termed the Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS). Educators formed a partnership in
April 1999 to assess how the Army and the local school system can best accommodate and respond to the needs of new students in the community. Similar studies were conducted at Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Fort Benning, Georgia; Forts Bliss and Hood, Texas; Fort Lewis, Washington; Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Baumholder, Germany; and the Republic of Korea.

One category that was examined by the SETS was the way that the schools manage records and the research-suggested concomitant impact on the mobile student. The SETS data, collected from students and parents, indicate that a military-connected student usually attends at least two high schools from freshman year to graduation. In any move the issue of timely transfer of records is a critical one. Student records are subject to state requirements as well as to local system policies and, eventually, are subject to the scrutiny of a high school counselor or registrar. First, the physical documents have to arrive, and then there is the chore of interpretation. The deciphering of a transcript gets more complex when integrated courses (e.g., humanities) and obscure abbreviations come into play. In the SETS analysis, delays in processing school records impeded appropriate, seamless placement. It was not uncommon for students and parents to report loss of credit or repeating courses previously completed. This is a practical problem of all mobile families and a frustration for schools (SETS, MCEC, 35). "While school records are supposed to follow the child to his or her new school, experts say the mishandling and red tape involved in getting vital educational information to the right person can often make a troubling experience for a child even worse, especially if the child has special needs." (Jacobson, 6)
Bureaucratic aggravations with records transfer were discussed in SETS interviews. School staff found that difficulties with school records frustrated their efforts to help new students. The following inconsistencies or procedural barriers were commonly reported by students, staff, and parents as impediments associated with records and interpretation:

1. Processes for requesting and sending records;
2. Acceptance of hand-carried records;
3. Transcript information on course abbreviations and titles; and
4. Information on course components (especially vague courses like "computer science" and integrated courses like humanities).

Definition of special programs, honors, or concurrent enrollment courses:

1. In-progress "where are you" status of courses when students move off-cycle (mid-year);
2. Keys for grading scales, grade conversion, grade point calculations, and class rank;
3. Progress reporting or placement assistance using state testing or standardized testing results; and
4. Extracurricular participation and the graduation credit potential (such as soccer fulfilling a physical education requirement).

Due to the wide variety of processes, documentation requirements, and programs, the SETS found that the best of "what's working" resided in the efforts of multiple individuals on behalf of the children. When parents took proactive steps getting ready for a potential move several weeks before it occurred, when educators worked at the sending
and receiving schools to ensure that processes were in place to provide for flexibility and responsiveness; and where a system was sensitive to the needs of the mobile student, then it worked. However, the SETS ascertained that all too often this was excessively reliant on the knowledge and good will of individuals and was not institutionalized (SETS, MCEC, 36).

The implications from the SETS are that students, parents, and school staff should take responsibility for school records. At Fort Bragg, there is a junior high configuration of grades seventh through ninth. In ninth grade, students begin to accrue high school credits. As there is no high school on post, students in grades 10-12 who reside on post must attend the local county schools. Also, the school has students whose parents will transfer to other military installations. As an outcome of the SETS, the junior high school in this research piloted a program aimed at creating electronic portfolios to assist the mobile student population.

Items to be placed in the portfolio (CD) include documentation of academic and extracurricular performance. The portfolio will include: (a) resume, (b) report cards, (c) honor roll awards, (d) letters of recommendation, (e) work samples and projects, (f) newspaper clippings, (g) lists of textbooks and ancillary materials, (h) service learning documentation and volunteer experiences, (i) course descriptions and class syllabi, (j) grading scaler, (k) special program explanations, and (l) participation in athletics and clubs.

Additionally, the Military Child Education Coalition (2001) has compiled both sending and receiving school checklists. Their checklists add: (a) health records, including immunization records; (b) birth certificate; (c) social security and receiving
school checklists; (d) school profile; (e) attendance and tardy records; (f) report card; (g) current schedule; (h) withdrawal grades; (i) class rank; (j) cumulative record; (k) testing information-standardized test scores, end of course test scores, competency test scores; (l) IEP/504/Gifted records; (m) JROTC records; (n) guardianship/custody papers; (o) fees owed; (p) alternative school records; (q) writing samples; (r) at-risk or action plans; for classroom modifications; (s) accelerated reader points; and (t) proof of residency/military orders.

Discipline records may be included, if a child has been in serious trouble. Dr. Paris Jones, associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction for Cumberland County (NC) Schools states that "several laws have been passed since the Columbine tragedy that discipline records follow students to other schools if they transfer, and certainly if they are adjudicated or the student has a criminal record" (Washington, 2001 1E).

In May 2000, the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) briefed the twenty-seven Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) senior leaders (commanders, superintendents, and school board chairpersons) on the preliminary findings of the United States Army’s Secondary Education Transition Study. Ten major patterns emerged from the SETS data. Working together, with the endorsement of the Chief of Staff of the Army, the SETS senior leaders developed the ten issues into an Army-wide Action Plan. The intent was to effectively use the salient patterns, lessons learned, and the shared promising practices discovered through the United States Army’s SETS to increase the likelihood of predictability for the military-connected high school student. SETS is about mobile children, it is not just about the Army; therefore, the results and ideas gleaned
have the potential to help all mobile students regardless of the occupation or service affiliation of their parents. (p.)

An outgrowth of the ten-issue action plan was a proposal from Dr. William Harrison to "negotiate a memorandum of agreement between the nine communities that would allow us to look for solutions to the pressing issues like grade and credit transfers, and implement those solutions among ourselves." (Banov, 2003, p.). Since then, dozens of other school districts have signed the agreement and pledge to communicate with each other when students transfer. Dr. Harrison stated that "This was about respecting what others are doing by accommodating the children. How can we adjust to meet the needs of the children?" (p.).

This concept, known as the Memorandum of Agreement, and its Guiding Principles operationalize much of what was put forth in the research-based action plans. The SETS school systems and installation partners have agreed to look for opportunities, procedures, and means to ease the challenges inherent in school transition. The policy and procedures, curriculum and graduation requirements, and extracurricular participation links would be formally developed. Formal and informal articulation of courses, credits, and reciprocal avenues to fulfill graduation requirements would be given highest priority.

The SETS designed a supporting document, Best and Promising Practices, to facilitate the mutual development of reciprocal practices, conduits for information between systems about requirements, and to accelerate the exchange of emerging opportunities. Its main purpose is to provide a framework for possible courses of action.
The best and promising practices, as related to the development of electronic portfolios to expedite student transfers are outlined below.

1. Develop and disseminate a checklist of necessary registration information and withdrawal processes: (a) Develop administrative procedures that address transfer of school records for students entering and leaving the system; (b) Develop a withdrawal procedure for high school students related to installation out-processing.

2. Provide the names of primary and alternate school personnel (include phone number, e-mail address, position, etc.) for additional information pertaining to the transfer of records.

3. Develop a comprehensive information campaign to inform parents of transfer of records procedures.

4. Post information contained on withdrawal documents on district Web sites.

5. Suggested administrative procedures for transferring records: (a) A general withdrawal form can be generated at the campus most times during the school year without prior notification. This is usually sufficient for enrollment in another school. The school official (principal, assistant principal, or counselor) should sign the form documenting on the form those areas not cleared, if any; (b) In addition to the general withdrawal form, parents may request that they be provided records to hand carry with them. This request requires a 48 hour prior notice to ensure processing time and is available prior to June 15 and after August 1 of each school year from elementary and middle/junior high schools.
Because they are open all summer, the process is available at all times at the high schools. If requested, the following items should be provided to students or parents, as appropriate:

1. Copy of report cards, or current grades in classes, if available.

2. Copy of withdrawal document form, which includes the immunization record, completed course grades (9 week grades), identification of enrollment in special programs.

3. Copy of any other records requested by parents, including any special program supporting documentation (at no cost).

4. At times, special circumstances of a family may not allow for the 48-hour notification preferred. If this occurs, campuses need to respond with sensitivity and should make efforts to respond to the request.

Develop systems to ease student transition during the first two weeks of enrollment:

1. Share ideas for creating intentionally inviting school environments that are attuned to the needs of mobile military-connected students/families.

2. Establishing an institutionalized welcome program at each high school site. Examples are: (a) Student and parent conference with counselor, (b) activities to ease into new school, (c) school tour, (d) introduction to teachers, coaches, club sponsors, (e) assignment of cafeteria/lunch partner, (f) escort to bus, (g) presentation of orientation packet, (h) welcome brochure, (i) map of school, (j) student handbook, (k) student organizer/planner, (l) organization/club information, (m) school spirit items, and (n) pass to next dance/activity.
3. Develop "virtual orientation" (school and installation Web sites). For example: Each school and military installation should consider having the following information on their web site: (a) calendar, (b) transition checklist, (c) school registration form and registration packet, (d) school counselor and school newsletter, (e) area specific items, (f) zoning areas, (g) student handbook, (h) school area map, (i) link to MCEC Web site, (j) School Liaison Officer e-mail address and the services provided, (k) Family Support Center/Army Community services available, (l) Army Family Team Building information, (m) School Profile (test results, demographics, history of the school), (n) sample portfolio including contest example for student work (if applicable), and (o) sponsorship.

4. Encourage counselors and/or transition specialists to participate in the MCEC Transition Counselor Institute.

5. Conduct welcome events for new students/families: (a) dance honoring new students/families, (b) reception by principal, counselors, (c) pizza party, and (d) feature new student names on school board, opening exercises, school newsletter, etc.

6. Principal activities: (a) send welcome postcard to student and family, (b) provide name to PTA president, (c) tea/coke party with the principal, and (d) present certificate of welcome.

For example, during the first two weeks of the regular school year there are potentially hundreds of "new" students/families. In August of 2001, Lawton Public Schools mail a card to the home of every enrolled student. This card requests that students/families new to the Lawton-Fort Sill community return the card to the student's assigned school. This card provides the name and address of new to the community
students/families to the principal. Hopefully, this prevents the student from being lost in a “sea” of incoming seventh graders or sophomores.

Promote practices which foster access to extracurricular programs:

1. Exchange information about the governing agencies requirements for extracurricular participation.

2. Encourage school system athletic and fine arts directors to network with each other on a consistent basis.

3. Suggestions for implementation of transition processes that encourage student participation: (a) Coaches, sponsors, and/or advisors are available to counsel incoming students year-round; (b) a student interest inventory is offered through phone, fax, Internet, or mail to determine academic and non-academic interests to personalize information distribution on arrival and facilitate introductions to sponsors and coaches; (c) spring and fall orientations are conducted that include information regarding co-curricular and extracurricular activities; (d) incoming students are interviewed by counselors to determine interests and guide them to matching activities; and (e) school web pages include schedules, try-out time lines, activities, and contact information.

4. The school district may consider the following: (a) After meeting state requirements, schools offer open membership on a continuous basis; (b) school officer elections occur in the fall; (c) prospective students auditioned via videotape for cheerleading; (d) spring induction is observed for Honor Societies (i.e., NHS, Art, Foreign Language); (e) sports offerings are numerous enough to accommodate a year-round calendar; and (f) cheer-leading squads may be chosen mid-year as well as at the end of the year.
Establish procedures to lessen the adverse impact of moves from the end of junior year, as well as before and during the senior year. The school systems and installation partners should consider measures to mitigate the adverse impact of senior moves, such as:

1. Early resolution of class rank of arriving students to facilitate fair competition for honors.

2. Conversion of grade point average (GPA) between losing and gaining school grading systems for the purpose of establishing class rank, competing for class honors, graduation certificates, applying for secondary education opportunities, etc.

3. Priority counseling to resolve graduation requirements and assist students/parents in accomplishing actions to obtain reciprocity for course credits, graduation certifications, senior year course selections, etc.

4. Providing post secondary education counseling to identify college/vocational-technical education opportunities and sources of potential financial assistance.

5. Priority placement into courses/classes essential for completion of graduation requirements.

6. Early identification and priority access to those extracurricular activities that will afford the transitioning student a greater opportunity for acceptance into post secondary education institution.

7. Encouraging parents to participate in early counseling sessions designed to facilitate a smooth and successful transition, as well as a productive senior year that
provides the senior student the opportunity to fulfill their secondary/post secondary educational goals.

8. Encouraging parent participation in "College Night" activities and other available forums intended to provide students with information upon which to base post-secondary education decisions.

9. Recognizing that those transition issues associated with the critical first two weeks of enrollment are of the greatest significance to transitioning seniors.

Conduct surveys of recently transitioned senior students and parents to gain feedback useful for improving senior transition actions/processes.

Communication variations in the school calendars and schedules:

1. Collaborate and post current/accurate calendars and school year events in a manner that is easy for parents to access.

2. Share calendar and school year information.

3. Define, explain, and illustrate and type(s) of high school schedule(s) in place at each high school.

4. Exchange ideas and strategies for "transition labs" or their systems for academic support specifically designed to ease the adverse impact of mid-year moves.

It is important for serving schools and installations to meet regularly to work on issues related to calendars and schedules and to clarify and comprehensively define the implications for each year.

5. For purposes of this document, the terms "calendar" and "schedules" are defined in scope by means of this comprehensive list of what those terms mean relative to school and installation documents. These include, but are not limited to: (a) Opening and
closing dates, (b) beginning of semester dates, (c) grading periods, (d) major Department of the Army, installation/community events, (e) graduation dates, (f) holiday and vacation schedules, (g) extra-curricular dates and tryout dates, (h) assessments (e.g., PSAT/SAT I&II/ACT, state tests, graduation tests, (i) enrollment dates, (j) summer school dates, and (k) extended learning and intersession programs.

6. Identify variations in schedules that it would be helpful to share with partners. For example, block schedules/AB schedules vary from district to district. Many systems also have a version of block scheduling at the middle schools: (a) Systems and campuses will develop each type of schedule used; (b) systems and campuses will describe the processes available for transition support into and out of the schedule systems in place at each campus; (c) consider developing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the schedules with the family in transition as a primary audience; (d) discuss and agree upon means by which basic information will be shared, from hard copy to a Web Page for a welcome packet; and (e) compose a general timeline and process for sharing and annually updating this information among the nine installations.

Create and implement professional development systems pertaining to installation academic interface:

1. Exchanging the processes and products associated with the development and support of joint installation and school system professional development communities.

2. Share strategies, resources, and effectiveness indicators.

3. Provide joint “Understanding the Military Family” workshops by the installation and schools. The Garrison/Base commander may speak to school staffs that
have a significant population of military students about how the military life and culture impact the students.

4. Offer staff development courses that include instructional strategies for meeting the needs of a diverse student population.

5. Installation and School System tours: Provide teachers from the post/base and the school system outside the gate, an opportunity to tour the installation and the post/base schools, providing them a glimpse of a day in the life of the parents and their military students. These visits will facilitate the articulation of curriculum issues, expectations, and requirements for each school system.

6. Handbooks: Development a handbook for teachers to use as a reference, outlining the roles of the military units. Publications will be developed for the installation with the school curriculum expectations and requirements for each grade level.

7. Middle School Tours: Students from post middle schools will tour the high school in the adjacent county to provide a glimpse of a day in the life of a high school student.

8. Middle School/High School Night: Twice each year, in October and May for example, each of the high schools in the area should visit the middle schools on the installation. Principals, counselors, and coaches are available to talk with rising ninth and tenth graders about opportunities, expectations, and the requirements for each high school.

9. Documents for the Army Education Summit held in July 2000 will be made available to school system personnel. These documents outline the ten major
transition issues and provide a context for teachers to understand the Army Secondary Education Transition Study.

10. School districts present Parent Information Sessions, specifically including installation families in advertising the sessions. The sessions will feature various educational topics, e.g., Attention Deficit-Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), counseling groups in the schools, etc. The annual Military parent Academy, a weekend seminar designed to offer parenting support, will be advertised to military parents who live off the post/base as well as those who reside on the installation.

11. Institutionalize opportunities for parents and adopt-a-school units to be invited to visit and participate in the local schools.

12. Encourage mentor and tutor programs like Partners in Education Programs (PIE).

13. Facilitate the use of web sites between schools.

14. Designate a staff member in each school to serve as liaison and coordinate with their counterpart at the installation. This individual will help to ensure school staff have any available information regarding transition issues.

15. School systems should consider sending counselors and/or professional campus-level academic advisors to MCEC’s Transition Counselor Institutes in order to have a designated transition specialist in place at each high school that serves military students.

Continue strong, child centered partnerships between the installation and supporting schools. Participate in a coordinated effort between the SETS partners to design the critical components for creating, implementing, and monitoring the viability
and robustness of the mutual effort and progress on the agreement. Examples of such partnerships:

1. Establishment of a military child committee.
2. Consist of members of both agencies.
3. Meet regularly.
4. Establish a “Local Action Plan”.
5. Establish additional collaborative activities such as: (a) Mentor/internship programs, (b) voluntary advisory council, (c) Parent-teacher organizations, (d) chapel youth programs, (e) family counseling programs, (f) family action agencies, (g) join ministerial alliance, (h) speakers’ bureau, (i) pool of installation preservers for school classrooms, (j) joint organization student leadership projects, (k) leadership retreats for elementary or secondary students, (l) soldier mentoring activities, (m) encourage military parent involvement in school activities, and (n) provide clear information on the eligibility requirements for in-state tuition.

6. Consider establishment of ex-officio school board member or military advisor to the school board.
7. Consider establishment of installation liaison to school board.
8. Exchange ideas with other school systems for coordination of effort and discussion of new challenges and opportunities.

Examples: Additional Lawton-Fort SFL Projects are APLAS (Army Partnership with Lawton Area Schools). Units develop partnership with elementary schools and provide mentors for junior high school students. Military installation co-facilitates summer leadership project for 100 high school students. Military parents are encouraged
to attend conferences and functions. *Wings of Eagles* provides Lawton-Fort Sill sixth
grade students a weekend (Friday-Sunday) retreat at Fort Sill to enhance the young
people's self-confidence, leadership skills, and self-esteem.

Provide information concerning graduation requirements. Consider adopting the
following practices that articulate the scope and conditions for reciprocity of graduation
requirements:

1. Permit the course as a substitute for state requirements. As long as state
   requirements are met, local requirements will be adjusted to support the student's
   transition.

2. A local waiver policy to include a standard application form, a systematic
   review process, and flexible guidelines for approval. The waiver process will document
   how graduation requirements were met.

3. School officials will issue course credits to a student who transitions near the
   end of a semester, as long as the student has passing grades.

4. In the event that a transitioning senior does not qualify for a diploma in the
   receiving school system, but can qualify in the sending school system, course and test
   credits will be transferred back to the sending school for issuance of the diploma.

5. Adopt a standardized matrix that depicts in a graphic representation the
   partner school systems' graduation requirements. School officials will update the matrix
   content annually and whenever a major revision occurs.

6. Inform school partners, parents, and students about required state exit
   level/end-of-course testing and passing scores to improve probability of appropriate and
timely placement in courses and programs. This information will be disseminated through system/installation web sites and print media.

The signatory partners will determine the process and responsible agents who will be required to maintain the "graduation requirements matrix" and distribute all updates. Adopt a policy of program continuity for a student enrolled in top tier diploma programs, such as a college/university preparatory program of study, and/or rigorous academic programs such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB). A student with satisfactory grades will not be required to re-qualify for these programs.

Provide specialized services for mobile students when applying to and finding funding for post secondary study.

1. Share information with SETS partners on methods that have worked in informing parents and students of the best methods for college and vocational/technical applications and the mobile student.

2. Ensure that every junior and/or senior student (and their parents) receives information about the college and vocational/technical application process, financial aid, available scholarships, and grants for pursuing post-secondary education. Counselors and/or teachers provide models of completed applications, financial aid documents, scholarship and grant forms, and letters of recommendation. Include the military liaison in the distribution process.

3. Provide all 11th and 12th grade students and their parents with printed information about what they will need for post secondary educational pursuits and success. The document/handbook includes checklists, timelines, suspense dates, Web
sites, telephone numbers, and names of contact personnel at various local and state colleges/universities and technical schools. The document/handbook is updated annually with the assistance from counselors, other school personnel, and college/university/technical school contacts. This document/handbook will be included in the welcome/orientation packet that all transfer students would receive upon arrival at their new school. In addition, multiple copies of the document/handbook will be provided to the military liaison for distribution from that office.

4. Conduct a district-wide college night and individual college nights as available to provide information and assistance for students and parents with college or vocational-technical applications and financial aid packets. Information about available scholarships and grants should also be provided. College and vocational/technical admissions professionals should conduct the activities if possible. Ensure that the military liaison is included on the mailing lists of all scholarship, grant, and financial award grantees. The military liaison can schedule and replicate this program possibly at their Youth Activities Center on the installation.

5. Hold career education/information seminars for transitioning students. Invite representatives from any local colleges/universities/vocational-technical schools, civic groups, and various companies that provide local scholarships or financial assistance to interested students. Organizations like Kiwanis Clubs, IBM, Coca-Cola, etc. all are able to provide information and assistance. Keep the military liaison informed of the dates of those seminars so that individual could also schedule similar seminars at the installation.
6. Work with the MCEC to inform colleges and universities of the unique need of military students to local college/university admissions personnel. The local installations could provide the addresses: (a) Request that MCEC or like organizations send copies of all documents that describe and detail the unique needs of military students to local college/university admissions personnel; (b) Provide the name of the military liaison to the local college/university; and (c) Create a local Task Force and/or Standing Committee that include representation from military schools, public schools, the military liaison, local universities, and vocational-technical schools to develop solutions to identified needs and to address issues affecting transitioning students.

7. Train counselors and teacher on how to best assist a mobile student on preparing college and vocational-technical applications: (a) Ensure that all high school counselors and the military liaison are provided with information and training from a transition counselor who can provide videos, booklets, or other publications that can be distributed at local schools on the installation. Counselors will in turn serve as resources/trainers for the teachers; (b) Provide assistance on completing college applications, choosing a career, pursuing financial aid and completing financial aid packets, writing resumes and theses for college entrance requirements, and securing letters of recommendation from former and current teachers and administrators. Training software could possibly be installed on one or more installation computers at the youth activities center; (c) Partnership with local colleges, universities, and vocational-technical colleges/centers to conduct orientation classes for local seniors. Create a mentoring program that matches successful college freshmen with local seniors to assist with college application and financial aid process. Hold several program sessions on the
military installation; and (d) Use resources of the installation Education Center to provide
information and assistance to parents and students, especially about careers and
opportunities to finance post-secondary education through military service. Provide
information about various funding sources, as well as scholarships and grants that are
available for special populations such as single parent families, military dependents, and
the large amount of money targets only for minority groups (SETS).

The Military Child Education Coalition (2004) sponsors the Transition Counselor
Institute (TCI). This institute provides professional development for secondary school
counselors designed to increase understanding of the transition challenges faced by
military students. TCI fellows are a cadre of professionals that share ideas and work
together to support military connected students. MEC has also developed an Interactive
Counseling Center (ICC) that is a web-based video conferencing system that allows
families and educational counselors to exchange information between sending and
receiving schools. MEC has installed 52 ICCs and trained the staffs. The ICCs network
has now connected schools that are serving the military communities all over the world.

The junior high school that educates military dependent students has developed
its own TCI site plan to assist in the transition process (See Appendix C).

One military school liaison office has a web site that posts suggestions for a
Parents and guardians are advised of things that they can do:

1. Tell the school when your child will be leaving as soon as you know.
2. Tell the school where you are going, to include the name of the new
   school and the city/state, or installation/camp.
3. Call or email ahead to find out about the new school: Does it have the same programs or services as the old school? What is the class schedule—traditional, year-round, block, etc.? Is this a magnet school or Governor Choice School like some in the state?

4. Make an appointment to discuss required withdrawal procedures with the school guidance counselor.

5. At least one week prior to departure, request in writing an unofficial copy of all school records.

6. When you get to the new school, keep in touch with the old school by phone, mail, or email, until all official school documents arrive.

7. If you have a choice about your departure date, check on test dates and grading periods to prevent your child from losing course credits. Ask about an accelerated schedule to complete course requirements early. Moving to a new school is hard enough without having to repeat coursework.

8. Insist that your child attend every single school day possible throughout the year so that a sudden move does not result in failure for non-attendance.

9. Insist that your child complete required courses and tests as early in the school schedule as possible; electives and nice-to-have programs will not help your child graduate on time.

10. Be specific: Remember that you may be talking with school representatives who have never personally experienced a move. Be specific and well-prepared about the types of assistance you need from them.
The military school's liaison office additionally included what the school system can do for you:

1. Place your child in special programs or services.
2. Arrange for options to complete middle school or high school credits before a move.
3. Help you to plan completion requirements for gateway grades with mandatory tests, and for middle school and high school graduation.
4. Provide information on school calendars, holidays, and course schedules.
5. Write or call the new school to resolve academic issues. Information is also provided for services provided by the installation's relocation assistance office. This office can: (a) Schedule attendance at a PCS Pre-Move briefing; (b) Provide information on the next duty station; (c) Assist you with SITES (Standard Installaition Topic Exchange Service) research; and (d) Register your child (age 8-18) for the youth sponsor program.

The websites also provide links to out-processing lists to help plan the student's withdrawal from school. There are checklists for Kindergarten/elementary School, middle school, and high school. These may be downloaded from the website. See Appendix D for these lists.

The military school district's Webpage lists information for PCS-ing families. This webpage gives the following suggestions, if a family is PCSing with a school age child.

1. Notify the current school of your move and give them the address of the gaining school if you know it.
2. Keep the address of the current school to give to your child’s new school so they can formally request copies of your child’s records.

3. Find out when school starts and arrange any summer vacation around the start date.

4. Keep your child informed about what you find out about the new school and any activities offered.

5. Talk to your child about any concerns he/she has about the new school, required courses, extracurricular activities, making new friends, and keeping in touch with old friends.

6. Hand carry the following paperwork: shot records, copy of last report card, IEP (if your child has one), copy of school records, birth certificate, social security card, any custody paperwork.

7. Register your student as soon as you determine the school he/she will attend.

8. Keep all paperwork away from the packers. Put them in your own folder or envelope in a suitcase or bag you are hand carrying. Some people put the items they hand carry in a locked room or closet, in their car, or at a neighbor’s home so the movers don’t accidentally pack them.

9. Create a student portfolio—important for middle and high schoolers. Has your child volunteered for activities at school? If yes, ask for a letter of recommendation from the activity advisor. Has your student participated in JROTC or sports? Ask for a letter from the coach or teacher. Keep these to give to the new school in place of tryouts; if possible, or use for college admission and scholarship applications. It is better to get
the letters while the teachers still remember your child and the accomplishments they have made, than to wait until graduation and trying to get applications together to send.

At the junior high school in this research, a program named "Student Ambassadors" was instituted during SY 2002-2003 to assist new, incoming students. Student Ambassadors will be chosen to aid in the orientation of new students and to represent the junior high school at functions in which student participation is required. The Student Ambassadors will attend training sessions conducted by the school counselors. Their duties include:

1. Ambassador will work closely with the school counselors in helping new students adjust to the junior high school.

2. Ambassador will act as representatives of the junior high school at school functions.

3. Ambassador will meet with visiting officials to the junior high school to answer questions and conduct school tours.

A description of tasks are as follows:

a. Ambassador will help in the orientation of new students by: (a) Introducing the student to their first period/homeroom teacher; (b) Talking to students about extracurricular activities, school policies, and general school information; (c) Taking students on a tour of the building; and (d) Helping in the location of his/her locker and new classes.

b. Ambassador will check on the student at least twice during the first day of school (which will include lunch).
c. Ambassadors will contact the student at least twice during the first two weeks of attendance to answer questions and make sure the new student has adjusted to the junior high school.

d. Ambassadors will share with the counselors any problems the student may be experiencing in adjusting to the junior high school.

Selection Process:

1. Each homeroom teacher will select one student from his/her homeroom class.

2. This student: (a) Must be articulate, (b) Should be able to relate well to peers, (c) Should have demonstrated the ability to follow school rules, and (d) Should have a positive attitude.

On the following list from the UCLA School Mental Health Project (1987) are additional examples of prevention-oriented welcoming and social support strategies for minimizing negative experiences and ensuring positive outreach.

1. Front Door: Set up a welcoming table (identified with a welcoming sign) at the front entrance to the door and recruit and train volunteers to meet and greet everyone who comes through the door.

2. Front Office: Work with the office staff to create ways to meet and greet strangers with a smile and an inviting atmosphere. Provide them with welcoming materials and information sheets regarding registration steps (with appropriate translations). Facilitate the use of volunteers in the office so that there are sufficient resources to take the necessary time to greet and assist new students and families. It helps to have a designated registrar and even designated registration times.
3. Welcoming materials: Prepare a booklet that clearly says “welcome” and provides some helpful information about who’s who at the school, what types of assistance are available to new students and families, and offers tips about how the school runs. (Avoid using this as a place to lay down the rules; that can be rather an uninviting first contact.) Prepare other materials to assist students and families in making the transition and connecting with ongoing activities.

4. Student greeters: Establish a student welcoming club (perhaps the student council or leadership class can make this a project. These students can provide tours and some orientation (including initial introduction to key staff). For school year 2003-2004, the students in the Achievement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program will serve as greeters in the junior high school that serves military dependents.

5. Parent/Volunteer greeters: Establish a general welcoming club of parents and/or volunteers who provide regular tours and orientations (including initial introduction to key staff). Develop a welcoming video.

6. Welcoming bulletin board: Dedicate a bulletin board (somewhere near the entrance to the school) that says “Welcome” and includes such things as pictures of school staff, a diagram of the school and its facilities, pictures of students who entered the school during the past 1-2 weeks, information on tours and orientations, special meetings for new students, and so forth.

7. Classroom greeters: Each teacher should have several students who are willing and able to greet strangers who come to the classroom. Recent arrivals often are interested in welcoming the next set of new enrollees.
8. Classroom introduction: Each teacher should have a plan to assist new students and families in making a smooth transition into the class. This includes ways to introduce the student to classmates as soon as the student arrives. (Some teachers may want to arrange with the office specified times for bringing a new student to the class. An introductory welcoming conference should be conducted with the student and family as soon as feasible. A useful welcoming aid is to present both the student and the family member with welcoming folders (or some other welcoming gift such as coupons from local businesses that have adopted the school).

9. Peer buddies: In addition to the classroom greeter, a teacher can have several students who are trained to be a special buddy to a new student for a couple of weeks (and hopefully thereafter). This can provide the type of social support that allows a new student to learn about the school culture and how to become involved in activities.

10. Outreach from organized groups: Establish a way for representatives of organized student and parent groups to make direct contact with new students and families to invite them to learn about activities and to assist them in joining in when they find activities that appeal to them.

11. Support groups: Offer groups designed to help new students and families learn about the community and the school and to allow them to connect with each other as another form of social support.

12. Ongoing positive contacts: Develop a variety of ways students and their families can feel an ongoing connection with the school and classroom. (e.g., opportunities to volunteer help, positive feedback regarding participation, letters home that tell "all about what's happening").
This junior high school also utilizes both student and parent surveys (see Appendix E) to receive feedback about its transition plan. There are several Web sites, which also provide information on transitions. Originally established in 1997 as the Military Relocation Information Network, or MRIN.com, maingate.com was relaunched in 2000 and has expanded to become a major information and communications source for the entire military community and its families (Kutner). Assistance in dealing with the anxiety of yet another permanent change of station can be found at http://dod.mil/mton. The Web site is “Military Teens on the Move.” Another site for children ages 6 to 12 called “MTOM for Kids” can be accessed at the same address (Sample).

Military dependent children who have resided overseas are sometimes referred to as “TCKs” or Third Culture Kids, global nomads who have lived outside of their passport countries because of their parent’s occupation. Children of diplomats, international business people, educators and scholars, military personnel, missionaries or inter-governmental organizations such as the United Nations are global nomads or Third Culture Kids. They are “individuals who have spent a significant part of the developmental years in a culture other than the parents’ culture, develops a sense of relationship to all of the cultures while not having full ownership in any” (Pollock, http://www.tckinteract.net/militarykids.htm). A non-profit organization, Global Nomads International, exists to promote opportunities for global nomads to explore the lifelong impact of their internationally-mobile childhood (http://globalnomadsassociation.com/gaintro.htm).
CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of this study will be to investigate the impact of mobility due to military transfer of American military families on the academic achievement of military children. This study is designed to examine the following questions:

1. What are the effects of mobility on the academic achievement of junior high school students?

2. What are the effects of mobility on TerraNova reading scores of junior high school students after the first and second years of a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move?

3. What are the effects of mobility on grade point averages (GPA’s) of junior high school students after the first and second year of a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move?

This chapter contains the following: statement of the hypotheses, sample and demographics, variables, instrumentation, threats to validity, data collection, student achievement on the TerraNova and analysis.

Statement of the Hypotheses

HOA. There is no difference in the reading scores on the TerraNova after the first and second years of a Permanent Change of Station (PCS).
H0A. There is a difference in the reading scores on the TerraNova after the first and second years of a PCS.

H0B. There is no difference in the mathematics scores on the TerraNova after the first and second years of a PCS.

H1B. There is a difference in the mathematics scores on the TerraNova after the first and second years of a PCS.

H0C. There is no difference in student grade point averages (GPA’s) after the first and second years of a PCS.

H1C. There is a difference in student grade point averages (GPA’s) after the first and second years of a PCS.

Sample and Demographics

Participants for this study were selected from a population of military students attending a school that serve children of military parents. The selected junior high school includes grades seven, eight, and nine, serving approximately 594 students. The school has a staff of 54 teachers, two guidance counselors, five instructional assistants, three instructional support assistants (degree), instructional assistants, one assistant principal, and a principal. The student body is comprised of several different ethnic groups. The ethnic compositions are: 43% Caucasians, 35% African-Americans, 14% Hispanics, 3% Asians, and 3% Native Americans, and 1% Pacific Islanders.

Six hundred forty seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students participated in TerraNova standardized testing in the spring of 2001, and 582 seventh, eighth, and ninth graders participated in TerraNova testing in the spring of 2002. Within this population,
Twenty students were compared with their Terra Nova scores for seventh (2001) and eighth grade (2002) scores in both reading and mathematics. Sixteen students were compared with their Terra Nova scores for eighth (2001) and ninth (2002) grades in both reading and mathematics. These students in were identified as having made a permanent change of station move during their seventh or eighth grade years at this junior high school. These students comprised the participants for this research study.

There were twenty students who made a PCS move in school year 2000-2001 and who entered the seventh grade. These students returned the next school year for eighth grade. Their Terra Nova scores were compared for 2001 and 2002 in reading and mathematics. In every comparison to the National Scale Score Mean (50th percentile), there were no statistically significant differences. All test scores were higher than the National Norm. There were sixteen students who made a PCS move in school year 2000-2001 and who entered the eighth grade. These students returned the following year for ninth grade. Their Terra Nova scores were also compared for 2001 and 2002 in reading and mathematics. In every comparison to the National Scale Score Mean (50th percentile), there was only one significant result with the eighth grade (2001) mathematics test. The rest were not statistically significant. All test scores were lower than the national norm and by the time students got to the ninth grade, their scores in math were improved enough and the ninth grade mathematics scores then became not statistically significant (see Tables 1-11).

The academic records of these students for school years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 were used to summarize the participants' academic achievement. The students'
2000-2001 indicated that they were performing academically in comparison with other students nationwide.

Variables

Variables for this study are grade levels, standardized test scores, and grade point averages.

Instrumentation and Procedures

Data collection will come from student cumulative records. The records were screened for registration to indicate PCS mobility, and then standardized test scores and grade point averages were analyzed for the first and second years following a PCS move. Additionally, the researcher conducted a focus group interview with teachers who voluntarily consented to participate. The focus group interview provided insight into teachers' orientation methods for new students and recommendations for strategies to assist the students when they enroll in the junior high school.

Keugler (1988) defines a focus group as a "carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions in a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment" (p.18). A focus group is a selected group of individuals brought together to discuss a set of pre-selected topics. The group is facilitated by a moderator (Petecovic, 1996). Merton, Fiske, and Kendal (1990) suggest that the focused interview with a group of people... "will yield a more diversified array of responses and afford a more extended basis both for designing systematic research on the situation in hand..." (p.135). The focus group interview for this study consisted of seven classroom teachers, one from
each of the grade levels seven through nine. The academic subject areas of language
arts/reading, social studies, mathematics, and science were represented, as well as the
special areas of art and music. An introductory script (Appendix F) was read by the
researcher, followed by a structured series of five questions (Appendix G) concerning
"transition strategies." Also, there were planned probes to augment the five structured
questions. This focus group lasted sixty minutes.

Krueger's (1988) line of reasoning was used in the analytic process of all five
questions: (a) considering words used by participants; (b) considering the context; (c)
considering internal consistency; (d) considering the specificity of responses; and (e)
finding the big ideas. The results of the focus group responses were compared in an
effort to find the transition strategies that most effectively meet the needs of this
population of students.

Prior to both the data collection and focus group interview, permission was
secured from the appropriate governing bodies of the school. In addition, permission was
granted by Seton Hall University's institutional Review Board. Once permission was
granted, the data collection was completed and requested volunteer teachers for the focus
group interview. This solicitation was distributed with a cover letter explaining the
purpose and voluntary consent form. Instructions were included for the voluntary request
form and instructions for its return.

Threats to Validity

Threats to this study are incomplete data for the two years being studied and any
missing date from the participants. These threats will be controlled by the researcher's
ability to remain in continuous contact with participants.
Data Analysis

The data from the student cumulative records was analyzed using various statistical methods. Means for responses to individual items and grouped areas of responses are used to illustrate comparison of tasks and demographics. Tables and graphs will be used to provide visual interpretation of the data. Chapter IV presents the findings from the analysis of the data for this study.
CHAPTER 4

Analysis of Data

This chapter provides general background information on the data collection process and procedure. It continues with the researcher summarizing the key summary descriptive statistics and then proceeds to summarize the findings and results. Data analysis is the process of bringing meaning to a mass of detailed information (Rossman, Corbett, & Firestone, 1985). This process involved categorizing and interpreting data to get meaningful reflections concerning the problem area chosen for study. The data was analyzed using descriptive and analytical, quantitative, and qualitative procedures.

Focus Group Interview

A focus group interview was conducted with teachers. The researcher was granted permission to utilize a focus group interview script with questions developed by Dr. Majorie Petcovic. Petcovic (1996) constructed the questions to flow from a specific to a more general focus, with additional probe questions requesting best and worst transition scenario descriptions. The script is included in its entirety in Appendix F.

Krueger’s 1988 line of reasoning was used with all of the focus group interview questions as the analytic process. It includes: (a) considering words used by participants; (b) considering the context; (c) considering internal consistency; (d) considering the specificity of responses; and (e) finding the big ideas. The analytical reporting of the findings emphasized key trends, which then included selected comments/suggestions by
the participants. The complete discussion is included in its entirety in Appendix F. The seven participants will be referred to only as letters in order to protect their identity.

Teacher Focus Group Results

The seven teachers participating in this interview were asked the following five questions and two additional probe questions: (a) Do you follow a set procedure when incorporating a new student into your classroom? Discuss. (b) What have you found to be the most effective way to try and prevent learning gaps for your mobile population of students? (c) What have you found to be the most effective way to address learning gaps that may have occurred within this population of students? (d) What role can the parents play to benefit both the students and the teachers in making transitions successful? (e) How can we best prepare these students to meet the challenges of future school transitions? (Probe One) If you could do anything, what three things (as a teacher) would you do to make their school transition the most successful? (Probe Two) In your experience, what three things are done that may inhibit the transition from being the most successful?

Question Number 1

Do you follow a set procedure when incorporating a new student into your classroom? Discuss.

The key trend that emerged in response to this question was that teachers have general procedures for incorporating new students. The general agreement seemed to be that teachers provide students with key handouts, such as classroom procedures and
requirements for notebook organization, and they have a buddy system or peer group to orient new students. Several teachers indicated that they allot time to individually counsel new students and have peer tutoring within classrooms. The general agreement seemed to be that their individual new student procedures/plans were effective.

**Question Number 2**

What have you found to be the most effective way to try and prevent learning gaps for your mobile population of students?

Five key trends emerged concerning learning gap prevention: (a) looping/re-visiting skills; (b) making inquiries as to student’s prior curriculum; (c) analyzing student’s critical-thinking skills; (d) utilizing standard curriculum guides established by the school system; and (e) utilizing technology learned through professional development.

**Question Number 3**

What have you found to be the most effective way to address learning gaps that may have occurred within this population of students?

The two key trends that emerged concerning filling learning gaps were: (a) small group instruction; and (b) outside support (parent or tutor). One teacher conducts after school mastery groups. She calls this “After Club,” and students work on skills. Refreshments are served in a pleasant, non-punitive atmosphere. Other teachers commented that through the use of small group instruction, many gaps can be filled or weak areas strengthened, but organization is required. Teachers expressed using
cooperative learning. Other teachers mentioned after school tutoring sessions within the respective classrooms. Many of the teachers encourage students' voluntary participation in the school's after school learning center which is manned by a teacher/educational technologist. Homework assistance, as well as computer access, is available.

Question Number 4

What role can the parents play to benefit both the students and the teachers in making transitions successful?

Four key trends surfaced for question number four: (a) non-mention by parents of student's negative traits; (b) supply provision; (c) parental visibility/communication; and (d) help at home. The teachers all agreed on the above four factors for parents to consider during and after transition. Teachers suggested that parents do not need to advise teachers of the student's bad traits. Let the students have a fresh start in academics, as well as behavior. One teacher remarked that a parent had come in and had commented on the child's negative traits. The teacher, as a result, assumed that she had to be rigid with the child. As a short time progressed, the teacher found that the parent's portrayal of the child was not accurate and, in fact, the student was one of the most delightful in the class.

Parents should only voice the major concerns. Other comments suggested that transitioning students need their parents to provide them with necessary supplies so that they are prepared for their classes, and to provide daily support/help at home to maintain student progression and self-confidence. The teachers agreed that parental visibility and communication were critical to the students' transition and success. Teachers also agreed that the parents should meet and confer with teachers the first week the student is in the
new school setting. They also recommended that parents visit each class and become familiar with class/school requirements, come to every parent-teacher conference, as well as provide an e-mail address. Parents should be responsible for records transition and be able to show evidence of past participation with evaluative assignments.

**Question Number 5**

How can we best prepare these students to meet the challenges of future school transitions?

The trends that appeared for question five were somewhat repetitive from previous questions, but also valuable in that they reaffirm their importance. They are: (a) set clear expectations and standards, (b) discover student’s strengths, (c) accept responsibility for failure and success, (d) encourage critical thinking, (e) teach organizational skills, and (f) promote positivity. The teachers agreed on the importance of having a positive tone that will assist in the transition. One teacher suggested that the students have a “can do” attitude. Two teachers commented on being approachable to students and having an open arena for discussion in the classroom. Another teacher suggested the use of brain-based learning to understand the student’s individual strengths. One of the teachers participants also stated that a teacher should be a role model for students and exhibit a strong sense of character, as well as to help to develop character within the student.

**Probe Number 1**

If you could do anything, what three things (as a teacher) would you do to make their school transition the most successful?
The four trends that surfaced for probe number one were: (a) positive rapport and communication with the student and parents; (b) reinforcement of organizational skills; (c) availability for extra help; and (d) a friendly, open classroom environment. Some teachers also utilized peer buddies for extra help. In summation, the teachers have previously discussed the above suggestions to their satisfaction. They agreed that these four factors would help everyone in making the transition process the most successful.

Probe Number 2

In your experience, what three things are done that may inhibit the transition from being the most successful?

The five trends that surfaced for probe number two were: (a) failure to foster student’s connectedness to the new school, (b) lack of parental support, (c) lack of reinforcement of expectations/inconsistency, (d) failure of teachers to give positive feedback, and (e) student’s negative attitude. Teachers agreed that students needed to know that they cared about them and their potential for success. They also agreed that parental support was critical to the student’s transition. Another trend expressed was that expectations should be clear and consistently reinforced. Additionally, students should come in with a positive attitude to ensure a successful transition.

Student Achievement

Student achievement was analyzed using SPSS 11.0 software for Grades 7, 8, and 9 to compare students with National norms for the appropriate grades and subjects. Ideally, the use of a paired t-test would allow comparisons of each student. However,
there was a major scoring change in the second year by the TerraNova developers, known as the second edition. The validity and reliability of the test is continually assessed and the second edition reflects changes in the scoring.

The first calculations were the descriptive statistics for Grades 7 and 8 comparison. There are 20 students in this assessment and the associated statistics are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TerraNova (2001)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>696.60</td>
<td>29.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TerraNova (2001)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>699.55</td>
<td>29.541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TerraNova (2002)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>704.05</td>
<td>29.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TerraNova (2002)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>713.75</td>
<td>41.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of one sample t-tests allows an analysis of each of the scores for Reading and Math, by grade level. Twenty students attained a mean score of 696.60 in Grade 7 on the TerraNova Reading portion, 2001. When compared to the national mean of 684 for that year and test, a resulting t-value of 1.937 emerges. This value is not statistically significant with $p = .068$. See Table 2 for details. Similar results were realized in Mathematics. The same twenty students attained a mean score of 699.55 in Grade 7 on
the TerraNova Math portion, 2001. When compared to the national mean of 688.3 for
that year and test, there is a resulting t-value of 1.703. This value is not statistically
significant with $p = .105$. See Table 3 for details. In both tests, the sample had higher
scores than their counterparts in a national comparison. However, these differences were
not statistically significant.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One-Sample Test - Grade 7 (2001) Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test Value = 684.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% Confidence Interval of Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TerraNova (2001 - Reading)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One-Sample Test - Grade 7 (2001) Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test Value = 688.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% Confidence Interval of Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TerraNov (2001 - Math)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A year later in Grade 8, the same twenty students attained a mean score of 704.05 on the TerraNova Reading portion, 2002. When compared to the national mean of 692.5 for that year and test, there is a resulting t-value of 1.728. This value is not statistically significant with \( p = .100 \). See Table 4 for details. Similar results were realized in Mathematics. The same twenty students attained a mean score of 713.75 in Grade 7 on the TerraNova Math portion, 2002. When compared to the national mean of 702.3 for that year and test, there is a resulting t-value of 1.244. This value is not statistically significant with \( p = .229 \). See Table 5 for details. Again in both tests, the sample had higher scores than their counterparts in a national comparison. However, these differences were not statistically significant. This means that in this sample of twenty students, there were no significant differences in their achievement levels as measured by the TerraNova during the two-year period after a PCS move.

Table 4

**One-Sample Test – Grade 8 (2002) Reading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Value = 692.5</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TerraNova (2002 - Math)</td>
<td>1.744</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

One-Sample Test - Grade 8 (2002) Math

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TerraNova (2002 - Math)</td>
<td>1.244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continuing the use of one sample t-tests allows an analysis of each of the scores for Reading and Math, by grade level in Grades 8 and 9. There are 16 students in this assessment and the associated statistics are displayed in Table 6. This allows the analysis of student achievement on the TerraNova Reading and Math portions for a total of 36 students (20 in Grades 7 and 8; and 16 in Grades 8 and 9). Sixteen students attained a mean score of 677.44 in Grade 8 on the TerraNova Reading portion, 2001. When compared to the national mean of 692 for that year and test, a resulting t-value of -1.864 emerges. This value is not statistically significant with \( p = .082 \). See Table 7 for details. Similar results were realized in Mathematics. The same sixteen students attained a mean score of 676.31 in Grade 8 on the TerraNova Math portion, 2001. When compared to the national mean of 699.4 for that year and test, there is a resulting t-value of -3.015. This value was statistically significant with \( p = .009 \). See Table 8 for details.
Table 6

Descriptive Statistics - Grade 8 (2001) and Grade 9 (2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TerraNova (2001)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reading</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>677.44</td>
<td>31.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Math</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>676.31</td>
<td>30.646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TerraNova (2002)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reading</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>687.96</td>
<td>29.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Math</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>752</td>
<td>685.81</td>
<td>61.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 7

One-Sample Test - Grade 8 (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (Zailed)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TerraNova (2001)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reading</td>
<td>-1.864</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>-14.56</td>
<td>-31.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8

One-Sample Test - Grade 8 (2001) Math

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (Zailed)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TerraNova (2001)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In both tests, the sample had lower scores than their counterparts in a national comparison. The differences in Reading were not statistically significant and those in Math were significant. This means the students entered their first year with the junior high school scoring significantly below their counterparts on the Grade 8 Math portion of the TerraNova (2001), in a national comparison.

A year later in Grade 9, the same sixteen students attained a mean score of 687.06 on the TerraNova Reading portion, 2002. When compared to the national mean of 702.3 for that year and test, there is a resulting t-value of -2.053. This value is not statistically significant with p = .058. See Table 9 for details. Similar results were realized in Mathematics.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Value</th>
<th>702.3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TerraNova (2002 - Reading)</td>
<td>-2.053</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>-15.24</td>
<td>-31.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same sixteen students attained a mean score of 685.31 in Grade 9 on the TerraNova Math portion, 2002. When compared to the National mean of 711.3 for that year and test, there is a resulting t-value of -1.660. Unlike the first year (2001), this value is not statistically significant with p = .118. See Table 10 for details. Again in both tests, the sample had higher scores than their counterparts in a National comparison. However,
these differences were not statistically significant. This means that in this sample of twenty students, there were no significant differences in their achievement levels as measured by the TerraNova during the two-year period after a PCS move.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Test Value</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TerraNova (2002 - Math)</td>
<td>-1.660</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Grade Point Averages (GPA) for 26 of the 36 students was compared using a paired t-test. Some students' records had missing data and were not included in this analysis. Based on a 4-point scale, the average GPA for the first year after a PCS was 2.5327 and the second year was 2.3950. The t-value is -1.463 and the p = .156. Evidence suggests that the mean GPA tended to drop in the second year, but not significantly. Other variables not tested in this research may be impacting the GPAs in the second year. See Table 11 for details.
### Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Second Year GPA</th>
<th>- First Year GPA</th>
<th>Std. Mean</th>
<th>Deviation</th>
<th>Sd. Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>.47989</td>
<td>.09411</td>
<td>-1.463</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.156</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Student Achievement

Collectively the two groups of students were representative of the students of the junior high school in this case. One group had TerraNova scores higher than the national averages and the other had lower. By the second year, none of the scores were statistically significant in the national comparison. The GPAs reflected a trend of being lower than the first year, but still not significantly. Consistent with the foregoing statistical analyses, each of the hypotheses previously stated are answered below:

- H0A. There is no difference in the reading scores on the TerraNova after the first and second years of a Permanent Change of Station (PCS). *Decision: Null hypothesis is retained.*

- H1A. There is a difference in the reading scores on the TerraNova after the first and second years of a PCS. *See decision for H0A above*

- H0B. There is no difference in the mathematics scores on the TerraNova after the first and second years of a PCS. *Decision: Null hypothesis is retained.*

- H1B. There is a difference in the mathematics scores on the TerraNova after the first and second years of a PCS. *See decision for H0B above*
H0C. There is no difference in student grade point averages (GPA’s) after the first and second years of a PCS. *Decision: Null hypothesis is retained.*

H1C. There is a difference in student grade point averages (GPA’s) after the first and second years of a PCS. *(See decision for H0C above)*

In summary, there were no significant differences with students’ TerraNova scores or GPAs, after the first and second years of a PCS. The students’ achievements were consistent with national or “average” norms. The next chapter will provide a summary, conclusions, and recommendations.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This was a study to identify and examine the influences that moving from one military installation to another has on the academic achievement of military dependents in a junior high school schools that serves children of military parents, after the first and second years of a permanent change of station (PCS). The summary, conclusions, recommendations, and implications are presented in this chapter.

Summary

In addition to examining the influences that moving from one military installation to another has on the academic achievement of military dependent children in a junior high school setting, the study researched how to assist these students in their transition period of academic instruction while moving between schools, in order to prevent knowledge gaps and decrease feelings of frustration, confusion, and loss of confidence in academic ability. This was accomplished through the focus group interview.

Conclusions

This study is designed to examine the following questions:

1. What are the effects of mobility on the academic achievement of junior high school students? There are two phases of analysis of student mobility. The first is a
comparative statistical analysis of the TerraNova test scores and a similar comparative analysis of grade point averages (GPA's) immediately after a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move and after the student has been in place for a complete academic year. The second analysis is somewhat more subjective, as the findings were from a focus group of teachers who are experienced in teaching junior high school students who are subject to frequent moves around the United States and around the world.

Based on the quantitative analysis in chapter four of the two collective sample groups of students using the SPSS 11.0 software for grades 7, 8 and 9 to compare these students with national norms for Reading and Mathematics using the TerraNova national examination. One group had a higher average score in both reading and math than the national average and the second group had a somewhat lower score than the national average. By the end of the second year, none of the scores were statistically significant in comparison to the national scores. The GPA's reflected a trend of being slightly lower the second year, but as with the TerraNova scores, these were also not statistically significant.

The focus groups revealed a slightly different view. The teachers believed learning gaps existed and had devised several ways to close these perceived gaps prior to standardized testing. There was no real detailed explanation as to exactly what kind of gaps existed except in the material that needed to be mastered as prescribed in the curriculum guide for their particular grade and subject matter.

Based on the statistical data and the focus group participants' answers to the specific questions in Chapter IV, the students do not appear to be severely impacted by a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move.
2. The Null hypothesis as stated in Chapter II is retained in every case with the single exception that the GPA's appeared to drop the second year (H1C). There were some outside influences that could have an impact on this particular statistical conclusion.

3. What are the effects of mobility on TerraNova reading scores of junior high school students after the first and second years of a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move? There were two sample groups used to test the hypotheses annotated in Chapter II. The first was composed of a group moving into the school system in the 7th grade and these tests being analyzed against this same sample group's 8th grade scores. A second sample group moved into the school system in the 8th grade and their scores were analyzed against their scores in the 9th grade.

The first sample group scores as revealed by the TerraNova testing showed the following:

- 7th: Reading: 696.6 National Average: 684.0
- 8th: Math: 699.55 National Average: 688.3

This group, while scoring slightly higher that the national average, showed no statistical significance when compared to the national norms. This group scored slightly higher than the national norm.

4. What are the effects of mobility on grade point averages (GPA's) of junior high school students after the first and second years of a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move? The statistical data shown in Chapter IV comparing grade point averages (GPAs) of the sample junior high students after the first and second years of a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move were analyzed using a paired t-test. Based on the four-point model for calculating the grade point average (GPA), the sample students averaged...
a 2.5327 for the first year and a 2.3950 after the second year following a permanent change of station (PCS). The average grade point average (GPA) tended to drop slightly after the second year. The statistical data shows this to not be statistically significant for the sample student groups used in this study. The data shows the hypothesis displayed in chapter II (HOC) to be correct in stating that there is no difference (statistically significant) in the grade point averages after the first and second years after a permanent change of station (PCS) move.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are presented.

Recommendations for Practice

The results of this study should be disseminated to both professional organizations in the educational field and to teachers of highly mobile military family students for the purpose of building dialogue toward actively promoting successful student transitions to new educational situations. School districts and teacher training institutions should give serious consideration to the development of curriculum concerning the issue of student mobility. Transitional/mobility training needs to be considered a priority in staff development.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study should be replicated on a larger population, such as a mix of military bases across the country and overseas. This study could be replicated using the
population of school districts with other highly mobile populations to compare results of successful student transition situations. Teachers who lack mobility training seem to be forming professional opinions/theories from their own past experiences with mobility or from the experiences of other mobile teachers, which does not suggest any type of actual research or standards as a base of knowledge. Educational issues may not be as effectively addressed without some type of transitional/mobility training developed from mobility/transition research. Considering the qualitative data that were gathered for this study, more research needs to be conducted with this unique population of students in mind. The focus group and probe questions were effective techniques to gain information to assist in the triangulation of data for the purpose of study validity. Qualitative information added depth and specific comments that classroom teachers would find helpful and make it more personal to their situations.

Recommendations for Policy

Military family students have a unique lifestyle that includes frequent adjustment and adaptation to national and international cultures and school transitions. The most effective education for all of our children, regardless of their lifestyle, should be our goal. Mobility causes some classroom disruption as has been described in this study; however, we as educators and parents need to consider our role in affecting a smooth and productive transition for all involved with an attitude of acceptance and confidence in the knowledge of our profession (Petcovic, 1996).


Kremski, C. (1999). The relationship of mobility to student achievement for those eighth grade regular students who are required to take the New Jersey Early Warning Test (EWT). Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ.


Neuman, J. (1988). What should we do about the highly mobile student? Presentation to the Educational Service District 189, Mount Vernon, WA.


Schuler, D. Effects of Family Mobility on Student Achievement. ERS Spectrum, 8 (4), 17-24.


Appendix A

Teacher Focus Group Consent Form
Martha Hufnagel Gabriel
Albion Junior High School
P.O. Box 70089
Fort Bragg, North Carolina 28307
910-436-0025
muhufnagel@york.k12.nm.us

May 2003

Dear Teacher,

I am a doctoral student in the Executive Ed.D. Program in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University. My doctoral dissertation is on the implications of junior high school achievement after the first and second years of a permanent change of station.

Purpose of the Research/Duration of Participation
I am requesting your participation in this research study, which will help educators and administrators to identify adjustments and strategies needed to optimize academic achievement for students in transition. Your participation will be to attend a focus group with other teachers. The focus group will take approximately one and half-hours of your time and will help to guide the support needed for educators to determine the importance of the needs of our students in transition.

Description of Procedures
You will be contacted at the beginning of June, pending my approval by the Seton Hall Institutional Review Board, to attend a meeting with a group of junior high school teachers, representing all grade levels and subjects. The group of teachers will convene in a meeting area and will answer seven questions related to transitioning students and your experience in the teaching/orientation of these students. Some examples of these questions include: Do you follow a set procedure when incorporating an incoming student from another military installation? What have you found to be the most effective way to address learning gaps that may have occurred within this population of students? How can we best prepare these students to meet the challenges of future school transitions?

College of Education and Human Services
Executive Ed.D. Program
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2965
Voluntary Nature
Please note that your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. If you do not want to participate at any point in the study, you need only to leave the group. Discontinuing your participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to you at any time.

Anonymity
Please be assured that your anonymity will be protected. There are no codes or identifying information in the study so that your individual response will remain anonymous. The responses of all the teachers will be combined in the summary report presentation of the study. No individual teacher will be identified in the study.

Storage of Data
The information provided by you in the focus group will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home.

Confidentiality
The information from the focus groups will be handled with the strictest confidentiality and security. The research records will not be available to anyone but me as the researcher and the members of my dissertation committee. Upon completion of the project, the information will be destroyed after three years, according to the practices established by the Institutional Review Board of Seton Hall University.

Foreseeable Risks
There are no anticipated risks to you for participating in the study.

Expected Benefits
The results of this research may provide valuable data and feedback to help guide the efforts of school districts to improve the transition process as well as providing strategies to use to support the law, No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Stress or Psychological Harm
If you become upset or experience undue stress while participating in the focus group, please discontinue your participation immediately and seek out a family member, friend, or professional counselor to speak with.

Appropriate Alternative Procedures
No alternative procedures will be required for participants.
Pertinent Questions
I am available to address any questions you may have about the research study or your rights in this research study. You may contact me by telephone at 910-436-0025, extension 332, or by e-mail at mghuffst@bragg.oododolea.edu. If you prefer, you may contact my mentor, Dr. John Collins at 973-275-2823.

Taping
For the sake of ease in capturing what everyone will be saying, I will be using a tape recorder. I am asking your permission for such taping and want you to understand that you have the right to review all or any portion of the tape and that you can request that it be destroyed. Upon completion of the project, the tapes will be destroyed after three years, according to the parameters established by the Institutional Review Board of Seton Hall University.

Informed Consent Form
As a participant in this study, this letter will serve as your copy of the Informed Consent Form as required by the Institutional Review Board at Seton Hall University.

Institutional Review Board Approval
The project has been approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that research procedures adequately safeguard the subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached at (973) 275-2974.

Your signature and return of the attached paper in the self-addressed envelope, indicates your understanding of the project and your willingness to participate. Once I receive approval from the IRB, I will contact you with the time and place of the focus group.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. I am looking forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Martha Huffsteter Gabriel
I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this focus group, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Teacher Signature ______________________ Date ____________

Printed Name ______________________ Telephone Number ____________
Informed Consent

The following has been explained to me and I understand that:

1. I am being asked by Martha Gabriel, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Administration and Supervision at Seton Hall University, to participate in a study of the implications of junior high school achievement at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, after the first and second years of a permanent change of station.

2. Because my individual information is confidential, I will gain no direct personal benefit from this research. However, my participation may help in obtaining data to guide future policies in student transitions.

3. The researcher, Martha Gabriel, or her advisor, Dr. John Collins, can answer any questions about this research project. Martha can be reached at mgbahel@bragg.odvorea.edu or 910-436-0023. Dr. Collins may be reached at collinos@shu.edu.

4. Participation is completely voluntary. I may decline to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice.

5. I understand that this project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the office is (973) 275-2974.

6. If I choose to participate in this research, I understand that I will receive a Certification of Appreciation.

I have read the above material and my signature below indicates my participation in this research activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Printed Name__________________________ Signature__________________________ Date__________________________
Appendix B

Definition of Terms
1. **Accompanied tour**: A tour of duty on which dependents (spouses or children) are allowed to accompany the service member, as opposed to an unaccompanied tour on which dependents are not allowed (Shafritz, Shafritz, + Robertson, 1989).

2. **Active duty**: Full-time duty in a military service without regard to duration or purpose (Shafritz, Shafritz, + Robertson, 1989).


5. **Army base**: A base or group of installations for which a local commander is responsible, consisting of facilities necessary for the support of army activities (Shafritz, Shafritz, + Robertson, 1989).

6. **Base**: A locality from which military operations are projected or supported (Shafritz, Shafritz, + Robertson, 1989).

7. **Deployment**: Assignment of military personnel to temporary tours of duty. Can be weeks, months, or years of separation.

8. **Duty**: Work period.

9. **Duty Station**: A military establishment or post to which an officer or enlisted person has been assigned for duty (Shafritz, Shafritz, + Robertson, 1989).

10. **Family member**: A term used for a person receiving all or a portion of necessary financial support from a service member.
11. **Fort**: A permanent post as opposed to a camp, which is a temporary installation. A fort is sometimes referred to as a “base” or “reservation” (Shafritz, Shafritz, + Robertson, 1989).

12. **Learning gaps**: A break in the hierarchy of skills, strategies, processes, and knowledge units built into a curriculum to enable the student to progress to more advanced material or thinking levels (Petcovic, 1996).

13. **Military Stressors**: The term refers to prolonged absences of active-duty parents and spouses, frequent moves, isolation from civilian community, and potential loss of a family member (Ursano, Holloway, Jones, + Rodriguez, 1989).

14. **Post**: (a) An assigned place of duty, (b) A military installation, usually an army base (Shafritz, Shafritz, + Robertson, 1989).

15. **Service**: The armed forces of a nation in general (Shafritz, Shafritz, + Robertson, 1989).

16. **Station**: Any military or naval activity at a fixed location (Shafritz, Shafritz, + Robertson, 1989).

17. **Student stability**: The idea that students remain at the same school for a number of years (e.g., from kindergarten through sixth grade) (Nakagawa, Stafford, + Sten, 2000).

18. **Successful transition strategy**: A successful transition strategy is any assistance that enables a student to progress continuously in the learning process during the movement between schools (Petcovic, 1996).

19. **Tour of Duty**: (a) The length of time for a prescribed duty, (b) The place of a military assignment (Shafritz, Shafritz, + Robertson, 1989).
20. *Travelers:* Also known as “White Gypsies,” are members of a nomadic ethnic group of uncertain origin (Koerner, 2002).
Appendix C

Junior High School Transition Counselor Institute Site Plan
Junior High School’s Transition Plan

website contains important information regarding registration.
A PowerPoint on clubs has been developed to use with registration.

Transitioning In During the School Year:

- A list of what is required for registration is available to parents (hard copy and on web).
- Registration form/schedule is reviewed with parents and student. Specific grade level requirements are also addressed.
- An orientation packet which includes a handbook, calendar, athletics’ schedule, attendance policy, transportation information, after school learning center, uniform policy, lunch application, and menu is given to parents.
- The student is shown around school. Student Ambassadors are assigned to assist the student, and new students are escorted to the bus in the afternoon.
- Upon completion, the record request is sent promptly to the previous school. In addition, counselors follow up on grades, call prior school, and confer with teachers, special education staff, and student.
- School Counselors ensure parents see school specialists as requested on the school’s special services form.

Transitioning Out During the School Year:

- Parents are provided a “Checklist for Students in Transition.”
- Parents are given a transfer/withdrawal form with grades, the report card for the year if appropriate, a copy of the immunization record, the most recent test scores, and any special program paperwork, if needed.
- Upon receipt of a record's request, records are sent promptly to the forwarding school.

Transitioning from Middle School to Junior High:

- The school counselor corresponds with 8th grade counselor at middle school regarding registration materials. Send materials/guidelines to the counselor for her/his review in case of concerns.
- The principal and counselor meet with the middle school’s administration and counselor to discuss transition.
- Orientation is held with rising 7th graders at the middle school. The principal, 7th grade counselor, and a 7th grade teacher present information regarding JH at the orientation. Parents are invited to attend.
- An open house is held prior to school opening for the rising 7th graders and their parents.
- Registration sheets are checked for accuracy.
During the opening of the school year, the 7th grade counselor and the school nurse introduce themselves to all 7th graders. The counselor then reviews study skills with them.

In-School Transitioning for Rising 8th graders:

- Counselor visits all 7th grade classrooms to present registration material.
- Parents are invited to attend the registration presentation.
- 8th grade curriculum is introduced, stressing importance of careful selection and planning. Questions are answered and concerns are addressed.
- Registration is checked for accuracy, proper placement, etc.

In-School Transitioning for Rising 9th graders:

- Counselor reviews registration procedures with 8th grade teachers, including student course recommendations.
- Counselor discusses with rising 9th graders registration procedures, course selections, and provides an overview on high school expectations. Information on other high school options is also provided.
- Counselor assists on an individual basis with parents and students as needed to discuss specific concerns.
- Registration forms are checked for accuracy and proper placement.

PTA sponsors an Open House at the beginning of each school year.

Transferring from JH to HS:

- Principal, Special Education Representative, and Counselor meets with HS representatives to prepare for student registration and transitioning of students to 10th grade.
- Counselor reviews registration procedures with 9th grade teachers and teacher recommendation guidelines for student course selection.
- Counselor discusses registration procedures, course selection requirements, including high school graduation and college entrance requirements.
- Counselor meets on an individual basis with parents and students as needed to discuss specific concerns.
- A list of students who will be attending, test scores (9th grade NC Computer Test and TerraNova), and a list of students and the courses in which they did not receive credit for the year.

Information on County High School’s of Choice is provided to all rising 9th and 10th grade students and parents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00</td>
<td>Morning Meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Class 1: Literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Class 2: Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>Afternoon Meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30</td>
<td>Class 3: Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30</td>
<td>Class 4: Social Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Afternoon Meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- Breakfast and lunch are provided by the school.
- Morning and afternoon meetings are conducted by the school counselor.
- Classes are conducted by certified teachers.
- Students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities.

**School:**
- Transition Counseling Institute

**Program:**
- Focus Area: Education and Employment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process of</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Focus Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Improving flexibility</td>
<td>New plan: consider</td>
<td>Conduct intervention study</td>
<td>Goal: improve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Increasing attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.增强参与度</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Military Schools' Liaison Office Out-processing Lists for Student Withdrawals
Transitioning To A New School - Helpful Reminders

1. Contact Army Community Service, Educator Program (SEP) for information on your音 looming installation and successor community.
2. Visit the website for both the Department of Education and local County/or District school.
3. If going overseas, visit the DEEDS website.
4. Contact the housing office at the your installation to determine the waiting period for last-minute transfer. This may determine the school your child will attend. If you will be in temporary housing, contact your school liaison officer for guidance.
5. Check the new school calendar for starting and ending dates.
6. Be familiar with the process of setting up of records, school eligibility minimums; and paperwork requirements.
7. If you have a child who is high school age, get information on the graduation requirements. Be familiar with the school and graduation requirements. Be familiar with the school's grading system and the school's grading system and whether or not your child will need to take special education classes.
8. Give the current school(s) adequate notice of withdrawal. Remember your child's attendance/grade point average (GPA).
9. Hand over all documents to the new school. DO NOT PUT THESE RECORDS IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD CREATE.
10. Contact the installation School Liaison Officer and school counselor for assistance.

Transitioning A Special Needs Student - Checklist

Before you leave your current duty station:

1. Contact your local special education coordinator/director and request assistance as to what should be done before the transition to the new school. Write or contact the special education director for the state that you are going to and request local policies.
2. Schedule an annual Review and Dismissal (ARD) meeting to discuss the progress you child has made since your last Individualized Education Program (IEP) review. Ask for written suggestions that may help your child and the staff at the new school.
3. Request a copy of your child's complete educational record to include a copy of the IEP. Hand over all records, samples of your child's work, and other information related to your child's education.
4. Contact your local Army Community Service (ACS), Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Program Coordinator. They can assist you with identifying resources at your new duty station.
5. Be sure to take any special equipment and medication prescriptions that your child may need for the next few months.
6. Contact the installation School Liaison Officer to assist with transitioning your child to the new school.
## KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
OUT-PROCESSING CHECKLIST

Please print all information and complete one form for each student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF STUDENT</th>
<th>STUDENT ID#</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME OF SCHOOL</td>
<td>NAME OF TEACHER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Notify school of moving plans
- Date

- Visit school to officially withdraw
- Date

- Return all textbooks and library books
- Date

- Pay all charges or fines
- Date

- Get copy of unofficial records
- Date

Notes:________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Signature of parent/guardian___________________________________________________

Signature of school official___________________________________________________
MIDDLE SCHOOL
OUT-PROCESSING CHECKLIST

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION AND COMPLETE ONE FORM FOR EACH STUDENT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF STUDENT</th>
<th>STUDENT ID#</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF SCHOOL</th>
<th>NAME OF COUNSELOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- NOTIFY SCHOOL OF MOVING PLANS ________ DATE ________
- VISIT SCHOOL TO OFFICIALLY WITHDRAW ________ DATE ________
- RETURN ALL TEXTBOOKS AND LIBRARY BOOKS ________ DATE ________
- CLEAN OUT LOCKER ________ DATE ________
- NOTIFY CLUB SPONSORS AND COACHES ________ DATE ________
- PAY ALL CHARGES OR FINES ________ DATE ________
- GET COPY OF UNOFFICIAL RECORDS ________ DATE ________

NOTES: ________________________________

______________________________

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN ________________________________

SIGNATURE OF SCHOOL OFFICIAL ________________________________
HIGH SCHOOL
OUT-PROCESSING CHECKLIST

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION AND COMPLETE ONE FORM FOR EACH STUDENT.

NAME OF STUDENT ___________________ STUDENT ID# _______ GRADE _______

NAME OF SCHOOL ___________________ NAME OF COUNSELOR _______

➤ NOTIFY SCHOOL OF MOVING PLANS _______ DATE _______

➤ VISIT SCHOOL TO OFFICIALLY WITHDRAW _______ DATE _______

➤ RETURN ALL TEXTBOOKS AND LIBRARY BOOKS _______ DATE _______

➤ RETURN STUDENT ID CARD _______ DATE _______

➤ CLEAN OUT LOCKER _______ DATE _______

➤ NOTIFY CLUB SPONSORS AND COACHES _______ DATE _______

➤ PAY ALL CHARGES OR FINES _______ DATE _______

➤ GET COPY OF UNOFFICIAL RECORDS _______ DATE _______

NOTES: __________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN ____________________________

SIGNATURE OF SCHOOL OFFICIAL ____________________________
Appendix E

Student and Parent Transition Surveys
We, at Albritton, are constantly looking for ways to improve our school and the service we provide to our valued students. Please help us serve you better by answering questions below.

Please check the appropriate boxes:

1. I received individual guidance and personal attention regarding my academic schedule. YES NO

2. Different academic courses made the transition difficult. YES NO

3. Adjusting to a different school calendar was difficult. YES NO

4. Extra-curricular activities available helped me fit in. YES NO

5. I found the faculty and staff to be very helpful and caring. YES NO

6. Having a "student ambassador" show me around was very helpful. YES NO

Comments or Suggestions:

If you were denied participation in a club or extra-curricular activity, such as athletics, please tell us why.

Please tell us about your adjustment as a new student.

What one thing did you like about the services provided at Junior High School?

What one thing would you like to see done differently?

Date: ____________________ Grade: ____________________
"Encourage Effort, Achieve Success"

We, at Albrighton, are constantly looking for ways to improve our school and the service we provide to our valued parents and community. Please help us serve you better by answering questions below.

Please check the appropriate boxes:

1. Were you greeted courteously and with a smile?  
   YES  NO

2. Were your questions or needs answered satisfactorily?  
   YES  NO

3. Were you referred or directed to the appropriate staff member?  
   YES  NO

4. Were all requested documents available?  
   YES  NO

5. Were you satisfied with the service?  
   YES  NO

6. Did our office look professional?  
   YES  NO

Comments or Suggestions:

What one thing did you like about the services provided at Junior High School?  

What one thing would you like to see done differently?  

Other  

Name/grade/organization:  
Address/city/state:  
Phone # (Work/Home):
Appendix F

Teacher Focus Group Script
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCRIPT

(TEACHERS)

Focus: Effective transition strategies for transient military family students.

Introduction

Good afternoon. I appreciate your willingness to participate in this discussion on effective transition strategies for transient military family students. My name is Martha Gabriel and I am a doctoral student from Seton Hall University.

Before we begin, I want to assure you of complete confidentiality when the findings from this meeting are later organized and written as part of the results of this study. Your names will not appear on any documents. However, for ease of group conversation today, write your first name on these 3x5 name cards that I am now passing out. Please fold them in half and set them in front of you.

I will be tape-recording this hour-long session, so that I will not miss any of your comments. Please speak one at a time to ensure a clear tape for me to be able to listen to and think about again later.

You were selected to participate in this study because at junior high school teachers, who teach at a junior high school, which is located on a military base, you are in the unique position to regularly be a participant in and an observer of the transition process of this population of students. You may have had very different encounters with these students for whatever reasons, so your points of view will not always agree or necessarily always be positive. We gain valuable information from both positive and negative experiences and from being tolerant of opposing and/or controversial views.

Let’s begin today by discussing and trying to add clarification to several areas of concern that consistently reoccurred on comments from both parents/cedents and teachers.

Again, I want to thank you in advance for your time and willingness to voluntarily share your valuable input concerning these issues.

Let’s begin!

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(Teachers)

Chapter One Teacher Focus Group Transcript

I introduced myself, reviewed my purpose, assured them of their anonymity, and thanked the participants in advance for their time. Their answers are presented below, divided by questions and noted by participant number. This was done for reader ease and clarification. The interview lasted approximately one hour.

(We will start with Question Number 1 and I think we will start and go around the room this way.)
Question 1: Do you follow a set procedure when incorporating an incoming student from another military installation? Please discuss.

Teacher Participant One:
Yes, I pair each student with a buddy in their group so that they will understand exactly how the class is set up and the way of doing things and set procedures for every day when they come in. I also run things off they are to keep the entire year on yellow paper and I keep a complete set of those so every time a student comes in, they get a packet of yellow items which will be classroom procedures, certain maps that go along with world geography that they need for the year, certain skill sheets that I think they need for the year as we go back and review those, and they already have holes punched in them for their three-ring binders.

Teacher Participant Two:
I do some of the same things. I, first, since I teach a hundred-minute block, I ask the students in pretty much detail what they have already covered, at least the big things. I provide them with key handouts that I have given out over the year. I make sure that a student in the class kind of guides them in understanding classroom procedures and I try to find within the first couple of days fifteen minutes to sit down with the child and really go into detail about how to set up the notebook and things like that.

Teacher Participant Three:
I would just reinforce everything that they have said but you try to pair them with a student, that you try and find out where they were, what they were doing, if they were taking the same class at the school that they were transitioning from and what type of projects they had done and just try to spend some time with them, to make them feel comfortable and welcome, and involved as much as they can into the class and from the onset.

Teacher Participant Four:
Okay. What I try to do, is if it is a homeroom student, I will pair them up with a buddy and I will try to have them be escorted around to the different classrooms. I also give them a syllabus for them to see and I sometimes give them a diagnostic test that’s not a part of their grade. It’s just to see where they stand.

Teacher Participant Five:
It is going to be easy for me to sit here and go last. I really only have one other thing to add to what you are doing because I believe we are all kind of on the same page. I like to see what their study skills, where those are, their testing skills, and their note-taking skills. So I will almost always schedule an after school meeting with them so that I can go over that with them for about an hour and other than that the same, pretty much the same thing. The buddy system, peer tutoring thing, class procedure thing, all of those. I definitely like your part of thing talking about making them feel comfortable because in order to make that transition smooth academically, you have got to deal with that frustration they feel of being the new kid and all of that and so you pair them with somebody that is going to be mutually beneficial to them. That helps a lot.
Teacher Participant Six:
All right, in my classroom when I get a new student from a different military installation, I try and find some other student in the classroom that they have come from that installation that they can buddy up with and there is a lot of sharing time and I have a special activity that they can see where they have to find someone who was at the last military installation they were in, or have a common problem or something like that and that does make them feel better and just trying to help them with where they are and where we are going and take a look at their notebook from their previous school and get an idea of where their skill level is and try and work with them so that they feel comfortable in the class and a lot of sharing time with the students and with me also.

Teacher Participant Seven:
Each homeroom is assigned an ambassador. When a new student comes into the classroom from the counselors, this person is to guide and direct the student from their homeroom, their lockers, their classes, take them around to the school, show them where their schedule is, what classes and teachers. When they get into the classroom, my classroom, I give them a syllabus that has to be signed, not only by the student but also by the parent. I also again buddy up with the person in the classroom to find out like Teacher Participant C said where they are coming from, what kind of songs were they singing in the last group. Kind of let them open up in front of the classroom and let them speak. And then after that I give them about three or four days to sit within the group and then I will have them sing just so they know what is going on and observe. They don’t really have to participate, they just have to observe the first couple of days and then after that then I will say it is about time you need to start singing with us or within the group and then like you said the buddy help system works really well.

Question 2: What have you found to be the most effective way to try and prevent gaps for your mobile population of students?

Teacher Participant One:
In my class it is not as developmental as other classes say, for instance, in math you have to master certain skills before you can master the following skills. In math, we apply the basic skills year around to all the different continents in world geography and so we constantly go back and loop. For every new continent that we study, we start all over again with basic skills: map reading, directions, latitude, longitude, looking for patterns with information on countries and how they relate and so with students coming and going all of the time I have found the most effective way is to constantly go back and revisit those skills. I keep a list of those and check off to make sure that for every new item that we start that we revisit every one of the major skills that they need.

Teacher Participant Two:
Because I teach language arts and because writing and grammar grow out of the literature rather than being separate things that we study, it often is not a problem when the student comes. The only time it is a problem is if any class should be in the middle of a novel.
they should come to when a hundred pages have already been read or something. After looking at the child's records and kind of seeing what the ability is, if I believe that that kid can take a book home and over a weekend and several nights catch up, I give them the option to do that. But, it is easy for me to kind of individualize for that student if it is not possible to let them jump right in where they are. I can give them a shorter book to read, I can let them go back and do some short stories or poems. Things like that, but because the skills that have to do with writing and grammar and the elements of fiction, drama, poetry, whatever, are ongoing things, it really just depends on where this child is.

Teacher Participant Three:
I find that in teaching art and the freedom that we have in that curriculum, it would be almost impossible for a student to transition and be in a similar place because there wouldn't be the familiarity of a textbook that perhaps they had at the former school or anything like that. So I think the easiest way to keep a student from falling into that gap would be just by asking questions of what has he done. I may get a student that was in art, has not had art and so you have to have questions and find out what they are familiar with, what they are comfortable with and it would be really easy for them to just sit back and glide into the class and be very invisible, but you have to constantly communicate with them and draw them in and that same freedom of my curriculum also allows me the freedom to individualize a curriculum for a student perhaps that was in a different program.

Teacher Participant Four:
In science, I have to assume that this is the first time for everyone that they never had it before and that works out good for me.

Teacher Participant Five:
Now this is a social studies lesson probably analyzing something to death. Now let me make sure I understand the question. You want to know what it is that we can do with our classroom setting that when our students leave us that that gap isn't present? Or can it be interpreted that way because that is the way I interpreted is. I am sorry. (Yes.) Okay, sorry. It bears to what Teacher A was talking about also. With what I teach in social studies, there has to be a clear understanding of cause and effect relationships. So that's, that is probably the biggest thing that the kids need in order to make sure that when they go to another social studies class setting, that they understand that relationship as it relates to historical events. Their critical thinking skills, all of those things, if they know how to open a textbook, read a passage, or from a worksheet and understand it, you are not just learning just new facts but you are learning the why, the how, the who and how it affects everything. I think that that gives them a really deep sense of comfort in knowing that no matter where I go and what textbook I am going to open, I am going to be able to handle it and I think that helps.

Teacher Participant Six:
In order to prevent gaps in the math curriculum with my students, the number one thing that I do is I use the Department of Defense's curriculum outlines and try and incorporate the technology that we have learned at the University of Northern Iowa summer
workshops and also the workshops that are held during the year at Peachtree City, Georgia, and, of course, as soon as we do find that we have a student that comes from the surrounding county, and not from a Department of Defense school, often times we find that they have used different textbooks and their course syllabus is a little different or the order in which material is presented is often different too because of that, having students come from a variety of settings, often times is just a matter of learning where the gaps are, if there are any and working with the students but again, that if they have come from the Department of Defense curriculum, the syllabus should be very similar and they should be approximately at the same place. But you just have to realize that students come from many, many settings and, and you teach a well-rounded curriculum and try and present to that student all the knowledge and understanding you can before they leave you and, and in addition to teaching skills, you teach the thinking skills process so that they can handle many of the situations they may encounter when they leave.

Teacher Participant Seven:
In choir, every time I start a new piece of music, I have twenty questions that I ask them and we go through the same twenty questions every time we start a new piece of music. So if a student is coming in and they don’t know where we are and what we are doing, filling that gap, they can use the neighbor next to them. They can fill that in. Their music skills are very important. If they know how to read a piece of music, they know where their part is singing, what line they are in, what note, that will help them. Assuring the student if they don’t understand in the beginning that someone will help them out. When they go to another new piece, “Oh, that’s where that is. That’s where I start. Oh, I read on this ___.” So that is helpful and almost everyone else, too.

Question 3: What have you found to be the most effective way to address learning gaps that may have occurred within this population of students?

Teacher Participant One:
Once again I try to use looping where I constantly go back and revisit the major skills. I also have after school mastery groups. Every time we have a test we also have a skills section on that test and so when students show non-mastery of those skills, they are invited to stay. It is not seen as a detention. We call it after club and always serve refreshments and they say and we rework on these skills and then have a little re-test on that to make sure that they have achieved mastery on those items and also on the back of the Terra Nova testing list for seventh graders, there is a list of the sub-skills that are tested throughout school studies and so they are a list of the things so that they can see I need to know these things. I usually try to provide a copy of those forms for parents also so that they can see, this is what my child needs to do and hopefully every now and then the parents can if they see some connection with something they are doing maybe in travel, let the child read the map, ask where is the latitude, where are the coordinates. Hopefully they can reinforce those skills too.

Teacher Participant Two:
I do sort of the same thing. My students don’t come to my class every day by any means and copy notes. Actually there are only several times a year that they have to get very, very important information in their notebook. Sometimes it is on a transparency. Sometimes it is on a handout. But what I do when a new student comes in just be sure to provide a hard copy of information. It might be the elements of plot, the elements of fiction, again, certain key literary terms and like Teacher Participant One said earlier, every time we start something, we are constantly reinforcing those particular things that they need for the rest of their lives in school. So just by reinforcing in class and giving them a hard copy of the notes so I can actually say to the student, if you haven’t talked about point of view yet, go back to your notes, which is in a particular section of the notebook and we might have a little class discussion by way of review just for that person and if I have to, if the student really needs it, I can always find time for a little mini individual lesson with that student maybe while my other students are in the library or while they are working on an in-class writing assignment. I do have the luxury of having these students a hundred minutes a day and I see every one of them. Every one of those minutes and I try to do a variety of activities so usually I can find that individual time.

Teacher Participant Three:
I would just like to reinforce what these ladies say. I think that we constantly re-teach and as Teacher Participant One says that we loop the same information over and over again and as that’s brought up and re-taught, it is reinforced each time. I think the concept of in art with our notebooks, keeping hard copies of information that students would have been given and trying to get a new student’s notebook caught up, re-teaches and brings them to the point that the other students have been and just continuing the individualized approach with them and each student is where they need to be.

Teacher Participant Four:
What I do, I try to ask for the student’s opinion. I want to know about their own experiences. And then I try to relate that experience to science. When I begin teaching a new topic, I try not to ask for specific answers. This way everyone can get involved.

Teacher Participant Five:
One of the things when you approach the student, you have to identify why that learning gap has occurred and what I find with most students even though they are transient and they are moving from place to place, what is happening is they are also moving those bad learning skills or lack of learning skills when they are moving from place to place. So this is where I would really hit them really hard with study skills, after school. Poor organization plays into this so that once you can identify what the cause is beyond knowing that they can be frustrated because they are having to move so much and that you can approach it from that end. It helps a lot.

Teacher Participant Six:
In order to address learning gaps that may occur in the area of mathematics, I find that one of the best ways to address this is with one-to-one tutoring sessions with the student where a designated time is set up each day. And if they have had trouble with their homework or trouble understanding something in class, they know that they can come in
and meet with me one on one. And also within the classroom I establish a buddy system so that they have someone that they can call or do their homework with and that works out well. If they are ever absent, they know that they can call that person and, and get the assignment. Within a classroom often times we employ cooperative learning so that they are in with students with a variety of abilities and this helps them to feel a little more comfortable especially if they are new or if they have gaps in their learning. Review sessions are always done prior to the test and then, of course, we have an after school learning center and also after school tutoring within the classrooms and so a lot of opportunity is provided and as long as they are willing to make use of these opportunities, there isn't any reason why they couldn't be successful.

Teacher Participant Seven:
When a new student comes into my classroom for a course or general music, I give them a WYDK Test, which is What Do You Know About a Piece of Music Test. And they follow twenty questions I ask them, just general information. I have them take it and when they, when I grade it I go back and see what they knew and what they don't know. Then I talk with them. You have a singing test twice a semester. That's when I get to do one-on-one instead of a whole choir as a group consecutive area there. I have them one-on-one come up to between me and the piano and that is where I can talk instead of embarrassing them in front of everyone else. They are one-on-one with me and that is the time that I get to know that person more to see what they are doing. Also again, repetition is very important especially in music learning something over and over again. I also have an open door policy after school. I am available to be seen at any time or there is three minutes at the end of each class that they can come and see me if they don't want to ask a question in front of the class. They can come see me personally.

Question 4: What role can the parents play to benefit both the students and the teachers in making transition successful?

Teacher Participant One:
I think one thing that is very important is that when the parent first meets the teacher, they should not tell the teacher all of the child's bad grades. I had that happen once and I believed everything the parent said. This was with an elementary child that I had all day and that first week I treated him very sternly. I constantly made eye contact and said this is how we do it here. He was the most delightful child in the class that year. Apparently there had been some type of problem between the child and the teacher the year before. But I had just assumed he was going to be a problem because that is what the parents said. So I think parents should, if there is a concern, a big concern, let the teachers know but keep the bad stuff to a minimum. Let the teacher and child work out their own relationship. I also think that the parents need to provide the supplies that are asked for. Another school may have had different supplies and if the child is coming in, they are already a bit behind because they have to play catch up. And if they don't have what is required, if they need a 3" notebook and they only have 3 composition books, they are going to have difficulties, and so I think those are some of the things that parents can do to make transitions easier.
Teacher Participant Two:
I totally agree with both of those and I would add to that. Parents need to be visible in the school, and they certainly should come to every parent-teacher conference, and they should provide e-mail. I am perfectly willing to e-mail a parent every single day. I have found that if parents are willing to make themselves available, either over the phone, either by coming into a conference. Best of all now a day with email, we can really make it an individual thing. In my class, without going back to any of these other questions, and talking about thinking skills, since it is literature based, there are three levels that we look at every piece of literature on. One is the literal, one is the interpretive where they have to understand symbols within that particular piece of work. But the third and the most important is the evaluative where they apply it to their own lives and that’s where parents really come in. I even have assignments where I ask that parents participate, they provide just a brief paragraph or something like that that the child can bring in and share and if parents are willing to do all of those things, it is so much better for the child. I know I am long-winded on this one. I have got one more little thing to say. All research that I have ever seen is crystal clear about when there is a very good open supportive relationship between parent and teacher, the child is more successful.

Teacher Participant Three:
I would like to reiterate all of these things, communication being the most important thing. I think parents need to come in and familiarize themselves with the school with the rules, the procedures in order to make that transition more smooth for the child, the parent has to know what is going on, what is different, what is the same from school to school. I think parents also need to keep up with paperwork and all of those things that, that can be right at hand so that the school that they are going into they will have all of the information that they need to make that child be successful. And again, just communicating with the school and being visible and being familiar with their child’s day and the differences.

Teacher Participant Four:
I would like to see parents during the first week of school visit the school. Maybe they could come to lunch with their child the first week. Get around to every teacher face to face and don’t wait for a piece of paper to come home on a student. They should come and get the papers, get the syllabus, get the, the rules and regulations, and get everything.

[END OF TAPE 1]

Teacher Participant Five:
An initial interview with those parents is at least within the first few days if that the kids are in school, when they first come in. Especially with us it would be so great as a team those of us that work on that team concept that if we could kind of interview with the parent and kind of get a feel for exactly what they actually expect from us because sometimes it scares me what parents expect us to do for these children at the junior high setting so I would like to see that take place. For instance there is no way that we can call or email that parent every day with the homework assignments that kids are supposed to do. So for me, I will always let my parents know that every Monday the work that we will be doing that week while we will be doing that work, the kids have access to that
information on the board. If it is a long involved procedure, they have it in written form so that the parent can certainly monitor from that angle what it is that they need to do to help that child. And if there are extra things that they need to do to catch them up, I would do that as well. The other thing I would like the parents to do is to realize that their child needs to start fresh. No matter what was going on when they left as far as behavioral is concerned. As far as their academics, certainly just let them start fresh and that child just hearing that sometimes is so relieved. It also offers a lot of relief to the parent I think.

Teacher Participant Six:
I believe a lot of things have already been stated that the parents need to do. I think the main thing they have to realize is that being a parent is a lifetime commitment and often times at the junior high level we don't see parents as visible in our school as they are in the elementary school and this is really the time when they really need to take an active approach and be visible whether it be at conferences or providing teachers input on their child. Parents who volunteer in the school, we find that students more are much more successful than the parents who do not come into the school. So just basically making themselves available to the teacher whether it be by phone calls, visits, conferences and I would definitely provide an email address so that there could be constant communication. And many times students who are not doing the homework, the parents say will you please sign his assignment sheet. But as a parent, what they need to do is once they receive that back, they need to make sure that the assignment is done and that it is being sent back to school and it is not totally our responsibility. We can only do so much on our end but if the parents are willing to work with us, the chances of that child being successful are just much greater.

Teacher Participant Seven:
Probably the parents needing to be more accountable in their child's education. They need to be involved with their student's life. I communicate with the parents through journals. That is my number one thing is through journal writings. I think the parents get to know their child a little bit better through these journals. Every time we do a piece of music, I have the students read the words. What does this piece mean to you? Because if you cannot relate to your audience what that piece of music is meaning to you, then they are not going to listen to you. I invite parents to concerts, chaperones on trips, I use discipline cards, emails, phones, in fact, and I even use a study guide every test. When the test is completed and graded, it is to go home every time. They get a homework grade for this and the parent is to sign it with a signature. So the parent knows exactly what that child's grade is. They can also know what that child's grade is through progress reports.

Question 5: How can we best prepare these students to meet the challenges of future school transitions?

Teacher Participant One:
I think that one of the first things is that we need to be seen as approachable adults, not someone that the child should fear or someone that the child has no respect for. They
should feel comfortable coming to us, which will help them to develop positive child-
adult relationships so they can carry that on to the next school. I am a stickler for
reinforcing what I would call formal English in the speaking and writing in the
classroom. I believe that if a student writes a paragraph in a social studies classroom then
it needs to be as correct, as it would be for an English teacher. That way when they go to
a new school, if they say it is okay to write in fragments, at least the child has a higher
standard that they have become accustomed to doing. I think it is important the child
should be held responsible for his or her own actions. I read a wonderful book once Love
and Logic - Discipline in the Classroom and the teachers are not, the suggestion was not
to respond in a harsh or negative tone if the child forgets something, but "I am sorry you
did not come prepared today." If we constantly allow them to go back to their lockers,
they develop the need to go back to their lockers. If we constantly supply the things that
they don’t have, then they don’t learn to depend on themselves. So I think holding them
accountable for their actions is also good.

Teacher Participant Two:
I agree and what I would add to that is we need to do everything we can to discover what
a child’s strengths are. I think we can address weaknesses in a totally different way than we
can address weaknesses. I am not saying that we don’t address weaknesses, we certainly
do but in my classroom, I try to have a very open arena for discussion and I absolutely
will not tolerate from day one any unkind statements. There is a lot of oral presentation.
So I guess what I am trying to say is that I want while that child is in my in loco parents
kind of custody, I want that child to find some strengths to believe in that they can take to
another school. One of the ways they do that is, of course, from a classroom where
multiple intelligences and kind of this brain-based learning idea has been of focus and
where the child has really come to understand what his individual strengths are. He can
take that with him.

Teacher Participant Three:
I think just specifically preparing them for future transitions like if we have to, we have
to teach organizational skills of how to make them more responsible so that they are more
responsible for their own successful school transition. We have to give them the skills so
that they will get the questions that they need answered. That they will not just come into
a new school and quietly sit back and get overlooked. And by getting them organized
and making then responsible for their own education, you equip them with the skills
to do this.

Teacher Participant Four:
I love to see students who are independent learners. I like if a student comes in and I say
go to chapter sixteen, they don’t sit there and ask me what page it is on. They know how
to use a book. They find the page of chapter sixteen. I love students that if they don’t
know a word, they feel free to get up and go to the dictionary, look up the word, sit back
down. They don’t even have to ask me. That is an independent learner. But you have
got to get students to be critical thinkers. I try to get them to analyze the answer and try
to rattle it to something that they already know about. Try to make sense of that, try to
form an opinion. Don’t sit there and say, “I don’t know.” That is what I think. I think it
is this, this and this. And most teachers will accept your opinion. That is what I like to see.

Teacher Participant Five:
On our team the first day of school I tell the students a lot, that we don't look at you as an eighth grade student and I don't want them to refer to themselves as an eighth grade student. We call them pre-high school students. And the reason that we do that is because that eighth grade year is such a pivotal point that if they leave us the way they came and when it comes to their attitude toward learning and they are not going to accept responsibility for their failures or their successes, that we will have done them no favors if we do not hold them accountable. So after the second week of school, I no longer call their attention to any information that is on the board, about test schedules, about homework, none of this. Each nine weeks ray level of expectation is going to go up. What I might have accepted in an easy that they would have written or if I am not grading for grammatical structure that first part of the nine weeks. By that last part of the nine weeks I expect to see improvement because you know then that we pushed really and we had been talking about how much they had improved this year some of them. That that holding them accountable for their learning is so very, very important. And what happens when you do that they see that consistent preparation equals consistent success and that is very transitional.

Teacher Participant Six:
The best way to prepare students to meet the challenges of a future would be number one to develop a sense of self-confidence and then in a sense of self-worth and to develop critical thinking skills. I think it important that teachers be a role model for students and exhibit a strong sense of character and help to develop character within the student, also.

Teacher Participant Seven:
Okay, music is an outlet and hopefully it will be a positive outlet for students. I like positivity in their experience and reinforcements. Have them feel good about themselves. I need to have a classroom environment that is conducive to learning at all times and there is no negativity. If you have a speaking voice, you can sing. If you don't know, please ask. Because how else are you going to learn? You can't sit there. You need to ask. Don't be afraid to ask. I don't know you try to be loud or yell anything, you need to keep that tone positive all the time and that's what is going to help a student to go to the next transition where ever it may be. Hopefully this will be a positive attitude and I can do, not I can't. I can do attitude. That will help their way.

Probe 1: If you could do anything, what three things as a teacher would you do to make their school transition the most successful?

Teacher Participant One:
First I would try to develop a positive rapport with the student and with the parents. Reinforce those organizational skills. Constantly make sure that the child is doing what
they are supposed to be doing in the manner they are supposed to be doing it. And then this may sound trivial but not just a peer buddy in the classroom but assign two or three students to be their lunch buddy. When they go into that cafeteria and there is nobody they have a connection to, it is kind of sad to be the only one at the table and so those are the three things that I would choose.

Teacher Participant Two:
I think the very first thing is to make sure that student understands that he is in a friendly environment in my classroom. My students from any one know that I will not tolerate unkindness. They know that I will even reach them down outside of my class if I get wind. We actually do a unit on bullying and all of the different kinds of bullying. So I want them to know number one that they are in a friendly, safe environment and I do everything I can to provide that. The second thing is absolutely have a relationship of some sort with that parent and the older I have become and the more experienced I have become, the better able I am to get that access to parents. I can be a lot more persistent than I used to be with parents and I know how to make a parent feel not threatened also. The third thing is what some of these colleagues of mine have said so eloquently is try to instill some skills and confidence in their ability to kind of understand that if they have those skills, they can glean out whatever information they need wherever they are.

Teacher Participant Three:
First I would say that most importantly it would be communication at home and at school, everybody working as a team to make sure that this transition can be done positive. Secondly, in my own classroom I think it is very important to have an atmosphere, a creative atmosphere that encourages and fosters specifically for the creativity but in any class encourages the learning that you want to take place and lastly, I would say you have to get to know a student. You have to make them feel welcome by making them feel appreciated for who they are as an individual and that they will bring something, they are bringing something to our school that is valuable and that needs to be fostered as well.

Teacher Participant Four:
I would like to have every student feel physically safe the very first thing and I would like them to feel that their opinion is important. I am looking for a way for them to express their opinion at a time. Second thing I would like to talk to every parent and I would like to talk about anything that they would like to talk about so I could just see how much they care. And the third thing, I would like to talk to the student one-on-one, by themselves, to find out how they feel about moving to a new school. Sometimes students they don’t want to move. They don’t want to be in a new school and sometimes they bring those feelings and problems with them the very first day.

Teacher Participant Five:
One of the first things I would like to do with my new student is, especially if they have a tendency to be kind of shy and not trust themselves as far as what they’ve academically done is I’ve created a system which I have called “success by design,” something I do
with my special ed. students all of the time is ahead of time, while the other students are working on something else, I'll bring the new student to my desk, go over the materials with him, and make certain he understands it. That is the student I am going to call on when it is time to discuss it. And they will be amazed at how their sense of pride and confidence just blossoms when you do that. No one even knew when I am doing that. The student doesn't know what I am doing. That is very important. The other thing I do is something that I kind of borrowed from my mother and father who raised thirteen children and each and every one of us just knew that we were their favorite because they made us feel that way. So there is that element that I like to make each of my students, especially those transitioning in feel that you are my favorite and I tell them that. You are all my favorite. Now I know I am my mother's favorite, okay. The other thing that I would like for them to know is that your character and who you are becoming as a person is as important to me as anything that you bring to the table intellectually because that is, that is the substance of who you are. Your intelligence just grows out of that.

Teacher Participant Six:
To make the school transition successful, there are three things that I would incorporate. Number one is to establish rapport with the student and a parent, and second make myself available for extra help and the third thing is to stress strong organization. study skills and thinking skills and the combination of all three of those skills together should make that student very successful.

Teacher Participant Seven:
Just to wrap that up, just be available to both the student and the parent. Make friendly phone calls periodically, just want to let you know how Joe or Sue is doing, and everything is going great or not. If there is a problem area or if not. Open communication there. Having the student finding a friend is very important to find somebody they can go to. If they can't go to a teacher, go to a friend. Giving constant encouragement and letting them know that their voice counts and makes a difference.

Probe 2: In your experience, what three things are done that may inhibit the transition from being the most successful?

Teacher Participant One:
I think one of the things would be failure to do anything to make the child feel a connectedness to the school. They have a strong loyalty to their friends and the teachers, they have left and so anything we can do to foster a connectedness is good. If that is not done, I think that that would inhibit transition. A second thing is lack of obtaining parental support in supporting the school plan, the teachers, providing the children the supplies and the things that they need. And the third one would be, lost that let me see, oh, not re-enforcing what you expect to be done. If the child thinks well there are standards but I can do what I want to do, I don't think that is a good thing and so I think that we need to constantly reinforce what we expect to be appropriate behavior and appropriate organization.
Teacher Participant Two:
I think that the third one is maybe one of the most important things we can do is let them know that we are going to hold them to a standard even though we are going to do everything we can to make them feel comfortable, to nurture them, to bring them into the classroom environment. That doesn’t mean that is all there is to it. That doesn’t mean that we don’t have very, very high expectations and we are going to enforce our rules, we are going to involve their parents. I think that a child who is allowed to kind of come in and as back and be quiet and remain unnoticed is going to inhibit their success and so we are not going to let that happen.

Teacher Participant Three:
I agree. I think that the standards have to be made clear and I guess I was thinking about more concrete things like if there is like an information packet in the guidance office that just has, you know that compiles all of this for a student to sit down and look through with like a map of the school, you know, the hours about the different clubs and that sort of thing and provides them with some way to really familiarize themselves with the school and feel that same connectedness that someone previously talked about.

Teacher Participant Four:
I think we have to let the student know that whatever they did in the past, they are now coming in with a new slate and if they did something bad in the past, now it is time for them to change, to change everything. I think we have to let them know that we too care about them. We care about them and that we are here to help them succeed. I think we should not let a student unnoticed get lost in the shuffle. Sometimes a new student comes in and we forget about that new student. That should not happen.

Teacher Participant Five:
I think the first would be not holding that students accountable for their success and failures. The second thing I think would be the teacher failing to give positive feedback for whatever measure of success that you see in that child whether it would be today that he was able to stay in his seat or he only get out of his seat once instead of five when he normally would. Or he improved from an E to a D. Any attempt at success needs to be honored and measured that way. Failure to do that is going to make it difficult. And, of course, the lack of parental involvement is the daily support.

Teacher Participant Six:
The three things that may inhibit a transition for a student to be successful, number one, I would feel is the lack of parental involvement in the school and number two the failure of the child to feel that they can be successful in the classroom and the third would be the student not understanding classroom procedures and rules.

Teacher Participant Seven:
I believe what inhibits a child to learn is their attitude. They have to have a positive attitude and a good attitude and if they don’t have this attitude, it is not going to work. Consistency is also the key in manners, daily procedures. Every time you do this, this
happen. Consistency across the board. Following standards and setting those high standards, knowing that you are not going to tolerate anything lesser than that. And also you need to love that child no matter what. I think it is very important, especially at this age that you will take the time with that child and I think the child will remember you for that. They took the time with me. They cared about me. It is just going to make a big difference in their life to know that you cared.

I want to give you this opportunity now if there is something maybe that you have been thinking about that you perhaps did not add. I think perhaps some of these questions as you see they overlapped some of the concerns and I would just ask if anybody has any additional comments?

Teacher Participant Two:
One thing that I was thinking, it would be great if we could develop a very brief questionnaire that we can send home with the student for the student and the parent kind to kind of sit down and fill out and one of the things might be: what are your interests? What extracurricular things did you participate in in your last school, or would you like to participate in in this school and we can make an effort even if it’s in the middle of the year, to get a child immediately into a club or you know involved in something that would help the child meet people.

Teacher Participant Seven:
And I believe too in what another person said earlier about having an information packet. If it wasn’t in a packet or a booklet, put it on the web site. You could go on the web site and click on it and say, "Oh, this is what’s happening at our school," and/or: if not, have a computer in the front hall of the guidance office. While they are waiting to be seen, they could be clicking on this and with the touch of a finger and say "What club is this? Oh, this interest here is in sports or after school clubs or whatever so the child and the parent could see it together and view it together while they are waiting. I just think that would be something that we need that would help with the transition.

Teacher Participant Two:
I think that is a great idea. I think we can get our ed. etches to come up with something like that.

Teacher Participant Seven:
Or the students, themselves, could put this together, this packet together.

Teacher Participant Two:
Well, I was talking about the computer, the technology aspect.

Teacher Participant Seven:
But, yeah, you could use pictures, or a little Power Point presentation would be good.
Well, I want to thank all of you for your participation. It means a lot to me that you volunteered to help me out with this interview. I don’t think I could have chosen a more articulate bunch. I actually was pleased with the responses overall because I had more, I had to turn people away and that is a good feeling when you have to turn people away. But as I had to submit my materials to Seton Hall, I had to stick with what had gone up through their chain of command. I could only have six to eight teachers. So I was not allowed to add any more. I would have loved to add some more, but they would not allow me to do that. [END OF TAPE]
Appendix G

Permission to Use Teacher Focus Group Questions
Martha Gabriel
3090 Raeburn Court
Fayetteville, NC 28304

Dear Martha,

You have my permission to use the focus group interview questions for teachers that I developed for my dissertation entitled, Effective Educational Transition Strategies for Transient Military Family Students.

You may add additional questions, if necessary, to reflect the appropriate demographics for your dissertation/case study entitled, Implications of Junior High School Achievement at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, after the First and Second Years of a Permanent Change of Station, A Case Study.

Sincerely,

Marjorie L. Petocic, Ed.D.