

2015

EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF MILITARY- CONNECTED CHILDREN

Report



**SC EDUCATION
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

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Executive Summary

Federal-connected students are children “residing on Indian lands, military bases, low-rent housing properties, or other Federal properties and, to a lesser extent, concentrations of children who have parents in the uniformed services or employed on eligible Federal properties who do not live on Federal property.”¹ Children who have at least one parent or guardian who is military connected represent a group within the broader category of federal-connected children.

In 2011, about 1.1 million school-age students had a parent in the military.² Estimated number of school-age students in South Carolina with a parent in the military varies, with the highest recent count being 23,710 in 2012.³ School-age students who have a parent or legal guardian on active duty, in the National Guard, or Reserves are often considered “military dependent” or “military connected.” According to US General Accountability Office, data about military connected students as a group are not collected at the national level.⁴

Reporting of Military Connected Students

In South Carolina, some data about military connected students are captured in PowerSchool. However, when compared to Defense Manpower Data Center data, it is underreported significantly in PowerSchool. In 2012, the Department of Defense reported there were 23,710 military connected students in the state. PowerSchool data indicates there were 7,853 students during school year 2013-14 and 6,175 in school year 2012-13. Both sets of data include military connected students with at least one parent or guardian serving Active Duty, National Guard or Reserves.

Accurate reporting of military connected students is important for many reasons. As described in Section 1, school districts are eligible for additional federal funding based on the number of federally connected students (including military connected students) they educate. In order to qualify for Impact Aid, school districts must have at least 400 federally connected children, or such children must represent at least three percent of the district’s average daily attendance.⁵ By analyzing and reporting the number of military connected students, school districts can also better understand their student population and develop services (such as counseling and support groups) that will address unique needs of military connected students. During FY 2012-13, twelve districts received more than \$2.3 million in federal Impact Aid.

¹ U.S. Department of Education. “Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.” <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/impactaid/whatisia.html>. Accessed 27 Jan. 2015.

² U.S. Government Accountability Office. “Education of Military Dependent Students.” March 2011. GAO-11-231, p.3.

³ For detail, refer to Table 1.

⁴ Ibid, p. 16.

⁵ 20 U.S.C. Section 7703(b)(1)(B).

Table 1
FY 2012-13 Impact Aid Revenue by District⁶

District	Impact Aid Revenue
Aiken	\$92,953
Anderson 4	\$639,649 ⁷
Barnwell 29	\$16,120
Beaufort	\$48,883
Berkeley	\$254,842
Charleston	\$145,941
Dorchester 2	\$113,775
Florence 3	\$13,409
Marion	\$13,242
Richland 2	\$588,135
Sumter	\$394,647
York 3	\$55
Total	\$2,321,651

Source: SC Department of Education

Attendance and Academic Performance

Considering the data presented in Appendix B, it appears that military connected students in middle and high school have higher absence rates than military connected students in elementary school. There do not appear to be differences between the attendance rates of students with deployed parents compared to students whose parents are not deployed, and there do not appear to be any differences by the Type of Service the parent is affiliated with (Active Service, Reserve, or National Guard).

For the SC Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS), a higher percentage of military connected students scored Met or Exemplary, in all grade levels and for all subjects. For Mathematics and Reading & Research the difference is typically near 15 percent, and for Science the difference is typically near 17 percent.

On the end-of-course assessments (Table 5), the mean score for military connected students was typically six points higher than the mean score for all South Carolina students, regardless of subject area or grade level. Considering the mean score for each group as the score for a typical student, for four of the six measures presented here, military connected students would receive a higher grade on the assessment than would a typical South Carolina student.

⁶ SC Department of Education Website.

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/cfo/finance/documents/dstrev13.pdf>. Accessed 10 Feb. 2015.

⁷ According to Anderson 4, funding is due to property that was incorporated into the Lake Hartwell project (US Corp of Engineers) that was taxable but became untaxable due to the project.

High School Graduation Rate

The federally approved way of computing a graduation rate is to identify a cohort of students who were grade 9 students in a specific year, and find the percentage of that cohort that graduates 3 years later. Students are removed from the cohort when they transfer to other degree-granting institutions or programs, and students who transfer into a school are added to the cohort.

For our military connected students, this process was not possible because the enrollment history of these students was not available. The EOC evaluation staff could not know when students were initially in the ninth grade, and we could not document transfers into or out of a cohort of students who were initially enrolled in the ninth grade three years prior.

The data available identifies students by grade level and graduation status. For students who were identified as being in twelfth grade during 2013-14 timeframe, the EOC evaluation staff could identify: (1) those students who graduated, (2) those who received a certificate or did not graduate (non-graduates), and (3) those students who transferred to other degree-granting institutions (removed from the graduation cohort).

Based on this information, the graduation rates for military connected students are included in Table 2 below. Table 3 shows the 2009-13 graduation rates for the state.

Table 2
2013-14 High School Graduation Rates for Military Connected Students

	Total Number of Students	Eligible for a Graduation Cohort	Percent Graduates
2013	237	227	96.5
2014	309	305	97.4
Both Years	546	532	97.0

Table 3
2009-13 High School Graduation Percentage Rates for South Carolina

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
73.7	72.0	73.6	74.9	77.5

The discrepancy between the rates obtained for the military-connected students and the rates for all South Carolina students is a result of the inability to correctly construct a graduation cohort for the military-connected students.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Findings

Finding 1: Data about military connected students are insufficient at both the national and state levels.

Finding 2: When compared to Department of Defense data, military connected students are underreported in South Carolina. In 2012, the Department of Defense reported there were 23,710 military connected students (ages six through eighteen), in the state. PowerSchool data indicates there were 7,853 students enrolled in grades 1 through 12 in 2014 and 6,175 in 2013. This data only reflects military connected students enrolled in public schools. It does not include students enrolled in Department of Defense (DoD) schools, private schools or students who are homeschooled. Data for military connected, homeschooled, and private school students are not collected at the state level.

Finding 3: In South Carolina, military connected students in middle and high school have higher absence rates than military connected students in elementary school. There do not appear to be differences between the attendance rates of students with deployed parents compared to students whose parents are not deployed, and there do not appear to be any differences by the type of service the parent is affiliated with (Active Duty, Reserve, or National Guard).

Finding 4: Military connected students achieve higher levels on state assessments than their non-military peers. For the SCPASS assessment, military connected students consistently have a higher percentage of students that score Met or Exemplary, in all grade levels and for all subjects. For Mathematics and Reading & Research the difference is typically near 15 percent, and for Science the difference is typically near 17 percent.

On the end-of-course assessments, the mean score for military connected students was typically 6 points higher than the mean score for all South Carolina students, regardless of subject area or grade level.

Finding 5: The federally approved way of computing a graduation rate is to identify a cohort of students who were ninth grade students in a specific year, and find the percentage of that cohort that graduates three years later. Students are removed from the cohort when they transfer to other degree-granting institutions or programs, and students who transfer into a school are added to the cohort.

For our military connected students, this process was not possible because the enrollment history of these students was not available. The EOC evaluation staff could

not know when students were initially in the ninth grade, and we could not document transfers into or out of a cohort of students who were initially enrolled in the ninth grade three years prior. The overall graduation rate for 546 students identified as military connected was 97% for school years 2013 and 2014.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Consider unique challenges of military students in an academic setting. With better data, schools and districts should establish flexible attendance policies that take into account student attendance immediately prior to or after a parent/caregiver deployment.

Sumter County School District developed a district-wide attendance policy that considers particular attendance needs of military connected students. Similar policies should be considered by districts for implementation.

Recommendation 2: Current PowerSchool “Parent Military Status” field should be revised to:

- (a) better reflect all criteria for qualification for federal impact aid as described in Section 8003(b) (2). Districts could potentially receive federal money to meet the educational needs of students with at least one parent who is federally connected. For example, children whose parents work on federal property (such as the Veterans Administration Hospital) may be counted as part of the federal-connected student population at the school or district level.
- (b) provide more information regarding students that may be helpful for school staff. PowerSchool’s Option 07 reads “The student’s Parent or Guardian died while on active duty within the last year” and Option 08 reads “The student’s Parent or Guardian was wounded while on active duty within the last year.” It would be helpful to guidance counselors and social workers to know if a student has a parent or guardian who died or was wounded even if it occurred more than one year ago.

Recommendation 3: Schools and school districts in South Carolina need to enter more information in PowerSchool for military connected students to: (1) better meet their educational needs, (2) better inform provision of support services such as counseling and peer support, and (3) potentially provide additional federal Impact Aid revenue if threshold requirements are met.

Section I Background

In 2014, the General Assembly passed Act 289, the Military Family Quality of Life Enhancement Act. The Act's purpose is to "enhance many quality of life issues for members of the armed forces" (Act 289 Preamble). Part V requests the EOC to develop an annual report on the educational performance of military connected children:

The Education Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education, is directed to establish a comprehensive annual report concerning the performance of military connected children who attend primary, elementary, middle, and high schools in this State. The comprehensive annual report must be in a reader-friendly format, using graphics wherever possible, published on the state, district, and school websites, and, upon request, printed by the school districts. The annual comprehensive report must address at least attendance, academic performance in reading, math, and science, and graduation rates of military connected children.

The EOC evaluation team worked closely with the military and education community as it developed this report. Professionals, who directly support military families, including school liaison officers and organizations that support the National Guard and Reserves, provided input and reviewed report drafts. Both the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and Defense Manpower Data Center provided data.

Challenges of Military Connected Students

Federally connected students are children "residing on Indian lands, military bases, low-rent housing properties, or other Federal properties and, to a lesser extent, concentrations of children who have parents in the uniformed services or employed on eligible Federal properties who do not live on Federal property."⁸ Children who have at least one parent or guardian who is military connected represent a group within the broader category of federal-connected children.

Nationally, there were about 1.1 million school-age students with a parent in the military.⁹ Estimated number of school-age students in South Carolina with a parent in the military varies, with the highest recent count being 23,710 in 2012.¹⁰ School-age students who have a parent or legal guardian on active duty, in the National Guard, or Reserves are often considered "military dependent" or "military connected." According to US General Accountability Office, data about military connected students as a group are not collected at the national level.¹¹ However, educational challenges for military

⁸ U.S. Department of Education. "Office of Elementary and Secondary Education." <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/impactaid/whatisia.html>. Accessed 27 Jan. 2015.

⁹ U.S. Government Accountability Office. "Education of Military Dependent Students." March 2011. GAO-11-231, p.3.

¹⁰ For detail, refer to Table 2.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 16.

connected students are well-documented and understood.¹² Several national organizations' missions support the needs of military connected students.¹³ Nationally, school districts identified a high mobility rate among military connected student population as a primary challenge to students' academic performance.

- Frequent moves increase academic needs due to differences in state and district curricula and standards. Students may have academic difficulty when they transfer to a school with different curricula, academic standards or assessments.
- The classification of students may also vary from state to state. If a student is considered special needs in one state, the student may lose the special needs determination in another state resulting in a loss of critical services and support. Similarly, states have different definitions and eligibility requirements for being classified as gifted and talented. A student may lose this status when he or she moves to another state.
- Students and their military families may also be disconnected from schools. It is difficult for students to become involved in extracurricular activities and sports if they arrive at a new school mid-season. A lack of public transportation may also limit students' and parents' ability to participate in school events, especially after school activities. Some parents may also decide not to be involved or invest time and resources in their children's schools because they anticipate transferring from the community in a few years.
- Behavioral and emotional issues also impact students, often related to a parent's deployment or absence.¹⁴ Due to frequent moves, some military connected students may have behavioral issues at school. During the high school years, it is more difficult for students transferring schools due to social groups being well established in the earlier years. Long student absences during a parent's return and reintegration from a deployment may also impact their ability to perform in school.
- The challenges described above are intensified if students are also disabled or have other special needs. As more special needs students continue to be placed in mainstream classrooms, teachers face additional difficulty of instructing and supporting a student who is placed in the classroom after school has begun.

Strategies to Address Challenges

Both the United States Department of Education and the Department of Defense (DoD) provide Impact Aid funds to local school districts for federally connected students.¹⁵ The U.S. Department of Education's Impact Aid is part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and totaled almost \$1.3 billion in fiscal year

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Organizations that support military connected students include the Military Impacted Schools Association, Military One Source, Operation Military Kids, Military Child Education Coalition. For more information, refer to Appendix A.

¹⁴ U.S. Government Accountability Office. "Education of Military Dependent Students." March 2011. GAO-11-231, p.18-19.

2010. The Impact Aid Program provided an additional \$41 million in 2010. Established in 1950 by Congress, Impact Aid “compensate[s] local school districts that have lost property tax revenue to the presence of tax-exempt federal property, including military installations, or that have experienced increased expenditures due to the enrollment of federally connected children, such as military and Indian students.”¹⁶ During FY 2012-13, twelve districts received more than \$2.3 million in federal Impact Aid.

Table 1
FY 2012-13 Impact Aid Revenue by District¹⁷

District	Impact Aid Revenue
Aiken	\$92,953
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Programs at the national level also address the unique needs of military connected children and their parents. Office of the Secretary of Defense established the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), which “plans, directs, coordinates and manages schools and education-support programs for eligible dependents.”¹⁹ The DoDEA also provides professional development for military school liaison officers.

¹⁵ “Federally connected students” refers to children “residing on Indian lands, military bases, low-rent housing properties, or other Federal properties and, to a lesser extent, concentrations of children who have parents in the uniformed services or employed on eligible Federal properties who do not live on Federal property” U.S. Department of Education. “Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.” <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/impactaid/whatisia.html>. Accessed 27 Jan. 2015.

¹⁶ The School Superintendents Association. “Fact Sheet on Impact Aid.” <http://aasa.org/content.aspx?id=9000>. Accessed 27 Jan. 2015.

¹⁷ SC Department of Education Website. <http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/cfo/finance/documents/dstrev13.pdf>. Accessed 10 Feb. 2015.

¹⁸ According to Anderson 4, funding is due to property that was incorporated into the Lake Hartwell project (US Corp of Engineers) that was taxable but became untaxable due to the project.

¹⁹ (<http://slmodules.dodea.edu/uploads/Overview%20of%20DoDEA.pdf>)

Several national nonprofit organizations also provide support, including Operation Military Kids and the Military Child Education Coalition.

In 2008, Congress established the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) to develop consistency among widely varying state policies that affect transitioning military connected students. MIC3 addresses key education transition issues that impact students and their families such as placement, attendance, eligibility, and graduation. South Carolina codified the Compact (Title 59, Chapter 46) and established the South Carolina Council in 2010. The State Superintendent of Education leads South Carolina's State Council for MIC3. The State Council also consists of a military installation representative, two members of the House of Representatives, two members of the Senate, two members appointed by the State Superintendent of Education, the State Board of Education chair and chair-elect. The State Council provides training and information to school educators, leaders and staff about the compact so schools can provide assistance to military connected students when they transfer into the state's public school system.²⁰

Administered by each service branch, the School Liaison Office Program advises and supports military parents with school-age children. Often school liaisons assist parents in solving education-related challenges. School liaisons serve as a liaison for military families transitioning to a new community. They work with local schools, school districts, families and the larger community to address military children's academic needs.²¹ The Department of Defense also administers the Military Family Life Consultant Program, which counsels staff, parents and children in school districts with a high percentage of parent deployments.

²⁰ The Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission. "About MIC3." <http://mic3.net/pages/About/about.aspx>. Accessed 27 Jan. 2015.

²¹ The National Military Family Association. "School Liaison Officers." <http://www.militaryfamily.org/get-info/military-kids/education/school-liaison-officers.html>. Accessed 27 Jan. 2015.

Section II

Demographics of Military Connected Students in South Carolina

South Carolina's largest military installations are located in Charleston, Beaufort, Richland and Sumter counties. The Charleston Air Force Base and the Naval Weapons Station in Goose Creek comprise Joint Base Charleston (JBC). The Charleston Air Force Base houses C-17 aircraft, and the Naval Weapons Station houses several programs, including the Nuclear Power Training School, the Naval Hospital, Space and Naval Systems Warfare Command and some other tenant units. Both the Marine Corps Air Station and the nearby Marine Recruit Depot on Parris Island are in Beaufort County. The Marine Corp Air Station is base to both F-18 and F-35 aircraft, and serves both as a training base and an operational flying base. The US Marine Corps trains on Parris Island.

Both Fort Jackson and Shaw Air Force Base are located in the Midlands. Located in Richland County, Fort Jackson is the Army's main production center for Basic Combat Training. Approximately 50 percent of the Army's Basic Combat Training is completed at Fort Jackson, with more than 36,000 troops trained each year. Fort Jackson is home to the U.S. Army Soldier Support Institute, the Armed Forces Army Chaplaincy Center and School, the National Center for Credibility Assessment (formerly the Department of Defense Polygraph Institute, and the Drill Sergeant School, which trains all Active Duty and Reserve instructors.

Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter County is home to Air Force's largest combat F-16 wing, the 20th Fighter Wing. Shaw also serves as home to Headquarters Ninth Air Force, U.S. Air Forces Central, Third Army, U.S. Army Central and many other tenant units.

Number of Military Connected Students

As mentioned in Section I, data about military connected students as a group are not collected at the national level. In South Carolina, some data about military connected students are captured in PowerSchool. However, when compared to Defense Manpower Data Center data, it is underreported significantly in PowerSchool. In 2012, the Department of Defense reported there were 23,710 military connected students in the state. PowerSchool data indicates there were 7,853 students during school year 2013-14 and 6,175 in school year 2012-13. Both sets of data include military connected students with at least one parent or guardian serving Active Duty, National Guard or Reserves.

This data discrepancy is evidenced by Figures 1 and 2.²² Federal data show military connected students are in every South Carolina county. School district reporting of military connected students may be incomplete due to lack of understanding of student qualifications and of potential economic benefit. As a result, school districts may be

²² Special thanks to Dr. Jerry Mitchell of USC's Department of Geography for developing these maps with data provided by EOC.

foregoing additional funding through the Impact Aid program. If the enrollment of federally connected children in the school district is at least 400 or three percent of the average daily attendance, the school district may be eligible to apply for Impact Aid. Military connected student data appears to be more consistently reported in Richland (42%), Sumter (22%), Dorchester (67%), Berkeley (59%) and Beaufort (35%) counties.

For 2012, the Defense Manpower Data Center reported 23,710 military-connected students. School districts statewide identified 6,275 (26%) of these students as military connected. Seven counties had higher reporting rates than the statewide average. Dorchester (63%), Berkeley (49%), and Richland (45%) counties both exceeded the state average and contained more than 400 DMDC reported military connected students. Counties with more than 400 DMDC reported military connected students with reporting rates less than the state average are Beaufort (18%), Sumter (16%), Aiken (14%), Horry (14%), Kershaw (10%), Spartanburg (6%), Greenville (5%), York (4%), Charleston (4%), and Lexington (2%). Richland, Spartanburg, York and Lexington counties contain more than one school district, which may decrease the likelihood of meeting the criteria for receiving impact aid (400 or more students or three percent of the average daily attendance).

Figure 1
South Carolina Map with Military Connected Students by County,
Defense Manpower Data Center, 2012

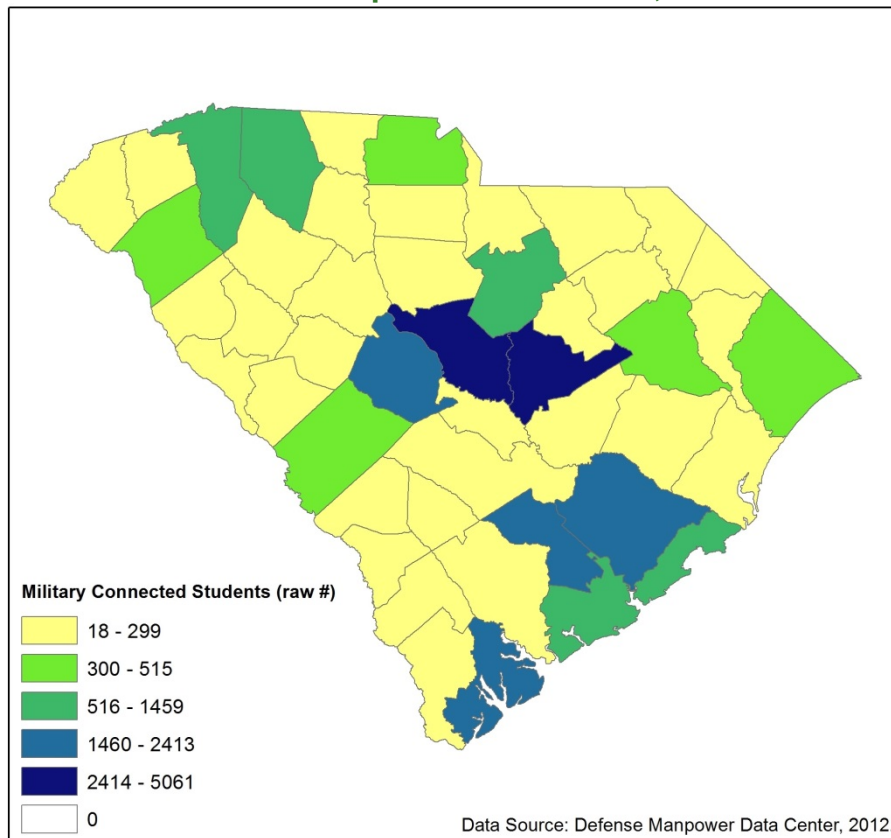


Figure 2
South Carolina Map with Military Connected Students by County,
SCDE PowerSchool Data, 2012-13

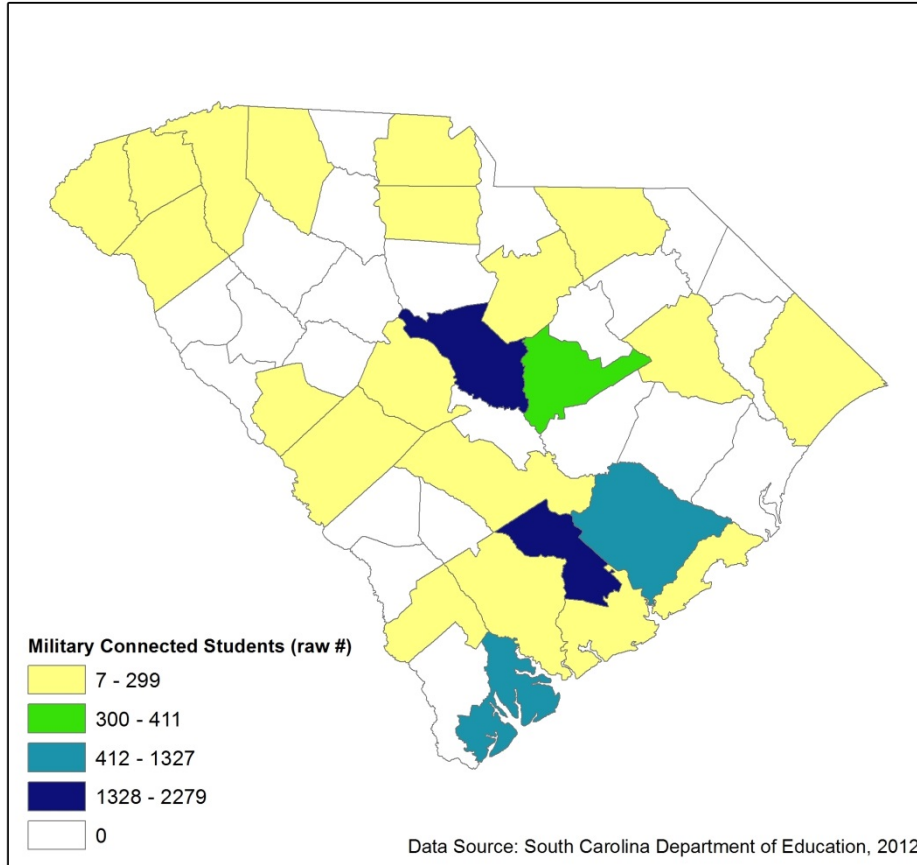


Table 1 indicates DoD reported 23,710 military connected students (ages six – eighteen) in 2012, which was the last year DoD disaggregated the number of military connected students by county and status. SCDE data show there were 7,213 students in 2013 and 8,802 students in 2014. SCDE data were also disaggregated and a breakdown for students by Active Duty, Reserves and National Guard was available. While the EOC evaluation team was unable to collect data for both SCDE and DoD for the same year, there is still a significant discrepancy in statewide numbers.

The overall reporting rate across all districts in South Carolina was 37 percent. For both 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years, 21 counties did not report any military connected students. School districts appear to report students with at least one Active Duty parent (52%) more frequently than they do students of parents in the Reserves (16%) or the National Guard (15%). The DoD reported more than 1,000 military connected students in the Spring of 2012 in six counties (Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester, Lexington, Richland, and Sumter).

Accurate reporting of military connected students is important for many reasons. As described in Section 1, school districts are eligible for additional federal funding based on the number of federally connected students (including military connected students) they educate. In order to qualify for Impact Aid, school districts must have at least 400 federally connected children, or such children must represent at least three percent of the district's average daily attendance.²³ By analyzing and reporting the number of military connected students, school districts can also better understand their student population and develop services (such as counseling and support groups) that will address unique needs of military connected students.

²³ 20 U.S.C. Section 7703(b)(1)(B).

Table 2
Number of Military Connected Students Reported by the SCDE in 2013 and 2014, and the DoD in 2012

County	All Services				Active Duty				Reserves				National Guard			
	SCDE 2013	SCDE 2014	DOD 2012	2014 Percent of DOD ²⁴	SCDE 2013	SCDE 2014	DOD 2012	2014 Percent of DOD	SCDE 2013	SCDE 2014	DOD 2012	2014 Percent of DOD	SCDE 2013	SCDE 2014	DOD 2012	2014 Percent of DOD
State	7213	8802	23710	37	6111	7308	13922	52	565	667	4269	16	537	827	5519	15
Abbeville			44				1				12				31	
Aiken	70	79	461	17	50	57	203	28	7	9	131	7	13	13	127	10
Allendale			43				8				3				32	
Anderson	36	37	361	10	26	28	102	27	3	3	63	5	7	6	196	3
Bamberg			36				5				11				20	
Barnwell			54				21				13				20	
Beaufort	540	942	2252	42	527	928	1993	47	12	9	134	7	1	5	125	4
Berkeley	1231	1436	2034	71	1088	1323	1345	98	74	58	467	12	69	55	222	25
Calhoun			24				11				3				10	
Charleston	58	144	1313	11	51	133	733	18	4	4	440	1	3	7	140	5
Cherokee			93				23				23				47	
Chester	11	11	62	18	6	9	17	53	1	1	21	5	4	1	24	4
Chesterfield	8	7	70	10	6	5	15	33	1	1	12	8	1	1	43	2
Clarendon			80				39				14				27	
Colleton	63	60	91	66	38	36	33	109	3	3	24	13	22	21	34	62
Darlington			119				50				19				50	
Deaf & Blind	4	5			1	2			1	1			2	2		

²⁴ "Percent of DOD" reflects the number of "SCDE 2014" students as a percentage of the students reported by the Defense Manpower Data Center.

County	All Services				Active Duty				Reserves				National Guard			
	SCDE 2013	SCDE 2014	DOD 2012	2014 Percent of DOD ²⁴	SCDE 2013	SCDE 2014	DOD 2012	2014 Percent of DOD	SCDE 2013	SCDE 2014	DOD 2012	2014 Percent of DOD	SCDE 2013	SCDE 2014	DOD 2012	2014 Percent of DOD
Dillon			86				23				3				60	
Dorchester	1565	1614	2125	76	1181	1200	1445	83	299	318	471	68	85	96	209	46
Edgefield	42	50	49	102	15	19	22	86	8	11	3	367	19	20	24	83
Fairfield		7	51	14		2	15	13		4	4	100		1	32	3
Florence	20	27	366	7	4	11	122	9	2	2	50	4	14	14	194	7
Georgetown			110				38				23				49	
Greenville	53	53	950	6	45	42	283	15	7	8	360	2	1	3	307	1
Greenwood	11	10	161	6	7	6	23	26	1	1	35	3	3	3	103	3
Hampton	78	85	102	83	38	40	32	125	8	12	17	71	32	33	53	62
Horry	62	52	408	13	49	41	166	25	2	2	86	2	11	9	156	6
Jasper			73				45				12				16	
Kershaw	91	251	797	31	70	208	473	44	7	13	96	14	14	30	228	13
Lancaster			124				40				26				58	
Laurens			109				22				21				66	
Lee			56				26				9				21	
Lexington	37	662	1460	45	31	321	497	65	1	88	206	43	5	253	757	33
Marion			81				36				12				33	
Marlboro			62				20				4				38	
Mccormick			18				9				2				7	
Newberry			102				10				12				80	
Oconee	101	121	133	91	39	45	24	188	17	22	32	69	45	54	77	70
Orangeburg	43	39	230	17	15	17	67	25	10	9	67	13	18	13	96	14

County	All Services				Active Duty				Reserves				National Guard			
	SCDE 2013	SCDE 2014	DOD 2012	2014 Percent of DOD ²⁴	SCDE 2013	SCDE 2014	DOD 2012	2014 Percent of DOD	SCDE 2013	SCDE 2014	DOD 2012	2014 Percent of DOD	SCDE 2013	SCDE 2014	DOD 2012	2014 Percent of DOD
Pickens	57	96	250	38	34	53	50	106	5	14	72	19	18	29	128	23
Richland	2536	2244	5061	44	2336	2063	3510	59	68	53	743	7	132	128	808	16
SC Charter	22	176			10	146			6	8			6	22		
Saluda			35				6				4				25	
Spartanburg	33	39	516	8	20	29	145	20	6	6	167	4	7	4	204	2
Sumter	414	555	2414	23	403	544	2027	27	8	7	168	4	3	4	219	2
Union			94				15				11				68	
Williamsburg			78				30				11				37	
York	27		472		21		102		4		152		2		218	

Source: SCDE PowerSchool, Data Received October 22, 2014 and Defense Manpower Data Center, Data Received October 20, 2014.

Section III

Academic and Attendance Data for Military Connected Students in South Carolina

While better information and data are needed at the federal level to assess student performance and support military connected students, our state has an established mechanism for collecting this information. In PowerSchool, a “Parent Military Status” (PowerSchool Specific Fields, Revised January 2014, p. 69) field includes a drop-down list with eight possible student status options:

- (blank) – Neither Parent nor Guardian is serving in any military service.
- 01 – A Parent or Guardian is serving in the National Guard but is not deployed.
- 02 – A Parent or Guardian is serving in the Reserves but is not deployed.
- 03 – A Parent or Guardian is serving in the National Guard and is currently deployed.
- 04 – A Parent or Guardian is serving in the Reserves and is currently deployed.
- 05 – A Parent or Guardian is serving in the military on active duty but is not deployed.
- 06 – A Parent or Guardian is serving in the military on active duty and is currently deployed.
- 07 – The student’s Parent or Guardian died while on active duty within the last year.
- 08 – The student’s Parent or Guardian was wounded while on active duty within the last year.

South Carolina’s establishment of a military student identifier is widely endorsed at the national level, and has three primary benefits.²⁵ Timely and consistent collection of student data in the “Parent Military Status” field:

- Facilitates data-driven decisions about specific policies and practices that would better support this student population,
- Assists with meeting individual needs of military connected students. Similar to data collected for homeless children, this information could be used to monitor attendance, academic performance and graduation rates.
- May provide additional funding to local school districts educating military connected students through Impact Aid programs.

The following analysis focused on three student outcomes:

- student achievement as measured by the South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) Assessment,

²⁵ Department of Defense, American Association of School Administrators, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Military Family Association, National Guard Association of the United States, Military Child Education Coalition, Military Officers Association of America.

- student achievement as measured by the End-of-Course Evaluation Program (EOCEP), and
- student attendance.

Each of these measures were examined for students with respect to the following attributes of military parents and students, including: military parent(s) type of service (Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard), the deployment status of the parent during the academic year (deployed or not deployed), and the academic level of the student (primary, elementary, middle, or high school). Table 3 presents data that indicates the number of students in each of these groups, and the number of valid responses for each of the outcome variables for students in each of these groups for school years 2012-13 and 2013-14 combined.

Table 3
Availability of Measures Used in Analyses by Demographic Group

Demographic Group	Total Number Of Students	SCPASS Tested	EOCEP Tested	Attendance Information
All Students	16,261	7,080	1,736	15,865
Service Type				
Active Duty	13,604	5,761	1,472	13,261
Reserve	1,237	613	125	1,212
National Guard	1,420	706	139	1,392
Deployment Status				
Deployed	1,836	814	187	1,788
Not Deployed	14,425	6,266	1,549	14,077
School Level				
Primary (KG-2)	5,465	0	0	5,070
Elementary (3-5)	4,329	3,866	0	4,328
Middle (6-8)	3,506	3,214	404	3,506
High (9-12)	2,961	0	1,331	2,961

Source: SC Department of Education, Data Received October 22, 2014.

Attendance information was available for 98 percent of the students identified as military connected. The data above did not include attendance data for kindergartners because five-year-old kindergarten is voluntary. SCPASS information was available for 89 percent of students identified as elementary school students, and for 92 percent of students identified as middle school students. Neither primary nor high school students should have SCPASS information, as SCPASS is administered in grades 3 through 8. The percentages of elementary and middle school students with SCPASS scores available reflects the fact that many military connected students may have resided in a different state during the previous academic year, and therefore did not test with SCPASS. EOCEP information is only available for only those students who took Algebra 1, English 1, or Biology 1 during the specified year. As a result, only 45 percent of high school students have EOCEP scores for school years 2012-13 and 2013-14.

Attendance Rates

Student attendance rates were computed based on information provided by the SCDE. As already discussed, within any year only, the number of students reported as military

connected by school districts throughout the state is only 37 percent of the number reported by Defense Manpower Data Center. The percentages obtained from students who are reported as military connected may be representative of all military connected students if the attendance rate for unreported military connected students is the same as the attendance rate for students who have been reported as military connected. At this time no information is available to determine whether this condition is satisfied. Table 4 presents the absence rates for districts with 30 or more military connected students, sorted by decreasing absence rate. Among districts reporting 30 or more military connected students, the highest absence rate is 8.7 percent for Orangeburg 5, and the lowest absence rate is 2.7 percent for Hampton 1. Comparable data for the general student population were not available. Appendix B contains additional information regarding absence rates for these districts by the type of military service (Active Duty, Reserves, National Guard), by parental deployment status (deployed, not deployed), and by the school level (elementary, middle, and high).

Considering the data presented in Appendix B, it appears that military connected students in middle and high school have higher absence rates than military connected students in elementary school. There do not appear to be differences between the attendance rates of students with deployed parents compared to students whose parents are not deployed, and there do not appear to be any differences by the Type of Service the parent is affiliated with (Active Service, Reserve, or National Guard). These trends were confirmed by performing an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the attendance data to determine whether differences in attendance rates were observed by school type, deployment, type of service, and academic year (See Table B-1).

Table 4
Percent of Days Absent for Military Connected Students in School Districts with 30 or more Military Connected Students

School District	Number of Students	Percent of Days Absent
All Districts	15,865	4.0
Orangeburg 5	70	8.7
SC Public Charter School District	198	7.6
Pickens 1	144	5.9
Lexington 1	651	5.1
Oconee 1	217	5.1
Dorchester 2	3125	5.0
Sumter	954	4.9
Greenville	105	4.5
Charleston 1	170	4.4
Richland 1	162	4.1
Spartanburg 7	50	4.0

School District	Number of Students	Percent of Days Absent
Florence 1	44	3.9
Anderson 4	43	3.7
Beaufort	1417	3.7
Berkeley	2561	3.7
Aiken	148	3.6
Edgefield	87	3.6
Kershaw	338	3.6
Colleton	120	3.3
Newberry	48	3.3
Horry	113	3.0
Richland 2	4566	2.7
Hampton	156	2.5

Source: SC Department of Education, Received October 22, 2014.

At the national level, there have been conversations regarding attendance policies that consider the unique needs of military connected students due to a parent's deployment and subsequent return to home. Sumter County School District has developed a districtwide attendance policy that considers military connected students.

Sumter School District works very closely with Shaw AFB and the 3rd Army to accommodate our military families as best we can. In addition to following the guidelines of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, Sumter School District revised Policy JH - Student Absences and Excuses (1/27/14) to include the following:

"In addition, a student whose parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty member of the uniformed services, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting will, upon presentation of appropriate military orders, be granted up to five additional excused absences upon approval by the superintendent or designee to visit with his/her parent or legal guardian."

-Maria Thomas, Sumter County School District

Academic Achievement

The academic achievement of military connected students was compared to the academic achievement of all students in South Carolina for students in grades 3 through 8 with the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) assessment, and for high school students with the South Carolina End-of-Course Evaluation Program (EOCEP). SCPASS results for military connected students and for all students in South Carolina are presented in Table 5.²⁶

²⁶ Data retrieved from: <http://ed.sc.gov/data/pass/> and <http://ed.sc.gov/data/eocep/>

Table 5
SCPASS Percent Met or Exemplary for Military Connected Students (MCS) and All Students in South Carolina

Academic Year	Grade Level	Mathematics			Reading & Research			Science		
		Number MCS	Percent MCS	Percent SC	Number MCS	Percent MCS	Percent SC	Number MCS	Percent MCS	Percent SC
2014	All	3083	82.3	66.7	3081	86.4	71.1	2039	81.8	64.7
	3	599	81.3	63.3	597	90.8	78.2	293	78.5	60.1
	4	578	88.4	73.6	578	88.2	73.1	578	84.4	66.2
	5	555	88.1	69.3	555	91.2	75.4	270	81.9	65.2
	6	502	79.5	65.9	503	85.5	69.6	248	78.6	62.2
	7	459	78.0	63.1	459	82.6	68.9	459	83.9	70.1
	8	390	75.1	65.0	389	76.1	61.5	191	77.5	64.2
2013	All	3995	81.9	65.3	3992	84.7	67.7	2645	80.1	61.3
	3	798	83.6	65.3	798	88.8	74.4	403	74.2	58.1
	4	679	86.9	68.2	677	87.4	71.1	679	81.4	63.1
	5	656	85.2	68.3	89.6	73.2	73.2	308	76.9	60.7
	6	642	75.9	62.0	642	79.8	62.8	321	76.0	58.4
	7	644	81.4	63.4	643	82.1	63.0	644	85.9	67.0
	8	576	77.3	64.8	576	78.5	61.8	290	80.3	60.7

Source: SCDE, Received October 22, 2014 and Defense Manpower Data Center Data, Received October 20, 2014.

MCS = Military Connected Students

For the SCPASS assessment, a higher percentage of military connected students scored Met or Exemplary, in all grade levels and for all subjects. For Mathematics and Reading & Research the difference is typically near 15 percent, and for Science the difference is typically near 17 percent.

On the EOCEP tests (Table 6), the mean score for military connected students was typically 6 points higher than the mean score for all South Carolina students, regardless of subject area or grade level. Considering the mean score for each group as the score for a typical student, for four of the six measures presented here, military connected students would receive a higher grade on the assessment than would a typical South Carolina student.

Table 6
End-of-Course Assessment Performance of
Military Connected Students and All Students in South Carolina

Academic Year	Military Connected Students			All South Carolina Students	
	Number of Students	Mean	Letter Grade	Mean	Letter Grade
Algebra 1					
2013	398	83.5	C	78.2	C
2014	535	85.7	B	79.8	C
English 1					
2013	350	81.3	C	75.3	D
2014	537	82.2	C	76.0	D
Biology					
2013	310	84.2	C	78.1	C
2014	451	85.4	B	79.2	C

Source: SCDE, Received October 22, 2014

High School Graduation Rate

The federally approved way of computing a graduation rate is to identify a cohort of students who were ninth grade students in a specific year, and find the percentage of that cohort that graduates three years later. Students are removed from the cohort when they transfer to other degree-granting institutions or programs, and students who transfer into a school are added to the cohort.

For our military connected students, this process was not possible because the enrollment history of these students was not available. The EOC evaluation staff could not know when students were initially in the ninth grade, and we could not document transfers into or out of a cohort of students who were initially enrolled in the ninth grade three years prior.

The data available identifies students by grade level and graduation status. For students who were identified as being in twelfth grade during 2013-14 timeframe, the

EOC evaluation staff could identify: (1) those students who graduated, (2) those who received a certificate or did not graduate (non-graduates), and (3) those students who transferred to other degree-granting institutions (removed from the graduation cohort).

Based on this information, the graduation rates for military connected students are included in Table 7 below. Table 8 shows the 2009-13 graduation rates for the state.

Table 7
2013-14 High School Graduation Rates for Military Connected Students

	Total Number of Students	Eligible for a Graduation Cohort	Percent Graduates
2013	237	227	96.5
2014	309	305	97.4
Both Years	546	532	97.0

Table 8
2009-13 High School Graduation Percentage Rates for South Carolina

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
73.7	72.0	73.6	74.9	77.5

The discrepancy between the rates obtained for the military connected students and the rates for all South Carolina students is a result of the inability to correctly construct a graduation cohort for the military connected students.

APPENDIX A RESOURCES

Department of Defense Education Activity provides professional development training in a webinar format for school liaison officers. This information is also helpful for local school districts to understand the needs of students and how to support them in a comprehensive manner.

DoDEA's Website "Keeping Students at the Center" <http://slmodules.dodea.edu/>.

School Liaison Officers serve as a primary point of contact for students and their families transitioning to new communities and schools. They are also a resource for schools and school districts. To view a list of school liaison officers by branch, go to <http://www.dodea.edu/Partnership/schoolLiaisonOfficers.cfm>.

Fort Jackson MWR School Liaisons provide ongoing educational support for military connected schools. This comprehensive website provides information about public and private schools, homeschooling, and local school districts.

http://www.fortjacksonmwr.com/school_liaison

Military Impacted School Association is a national organization of school superintendents. MISA supports school districts with a high concentration of military children by providing detailed, comprehensive information regarding impact aid and resources for families and schools.

<http://militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org/>

The **Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3)** provides consistent policy in every school district and in every state that voluntarily joins MIC3. MIC3 addresses key educational transition issues such as enrollment, placement, attendance, eligibility and graduation.

<http://www.mic3.net>

For more information about South Carolina's role in MIC3, go to

<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/lpa/mic.cfm>.

South Carolina Operation: Military Kids (OMK) is part of the National OMK initiative designated to provide support to the children and youth of families that are impacted by global contingency operations. This includes those served by Army installations, Air Force, Navy and Marine bases, and those families, children and youth who are geographically dispersed.

www.operationmilitarykids.org

www.scomk.org

The **Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)** focuses on ensuring quality educational opportunities for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition. A 501(c)(3) non-profit, world-wide organization, the MCEC performs research, develops resources, conducts professional institutes and conferences, and develops and publishes resources for all constituencies.

www.militarykids.org

Military OneSource is a confidential Department of Defense-funded program providing comprehensive information on every aspect of military life at no cost to active duty, National Guard, and reserve members, and their families.

Information includes, but is not limited to, deployment, reunion, relationships, grief, spouse employment and education, parenting and childhood services. It is a virtual extension to installation services.

The program also provides free resources to schools, including books and videos with relevant topics that help students cope with divorce and deployment.

www.militaryonesource.mil

South Carolina Programs

The **International Baccalaureate** Program helps students develop skills to create a better and peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. For more information, including a list of South Carolina schools participating in the IB Program, go to <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/127/>.

Four-year-old kindergarten is available in the state and is offered in public schools and private child care centers. State-funded prekindergarten for four-year-olds serves children in the “most at-risk” category, where family income falls 185% below poverty level or the family is Medicaid eligible. Families may also be eligible for other services such as Even Start, Head Start, state-funded family literacy programs, Social Security, food stamps, Medicaid or temporary assistance to needy families (TANF).

Children also qualify in case of a documented developmental delay, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) requiring pre-kindergarten, incarceration of a parent, placement in a foster home, or a child who is homeless. Documentation of family or child “most at-risk” conditions must be kept on file for review. Children who participate in free and reduced meal programs at the center/school they attend may also qualify, if income eligibility is verified on each child and records are kept on file for review.

Some districts use local funds to serve children who are not in the “at risk” category. Several districts serve all children who request services. A few districts charge a fee for non-qualifying children, but state regulations prohibit any fees for “at risk” children.

State law says that “students may enter kindergarten in the public schools of this State if they will attain the age of four on or before September first of the applicable school year.”

APPENDIX B
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SCPASS DATA

Further analyses were performed using attendance data available from the military connected students obtained from the SCDE to determine whether there were differences in the attendance rates of military connected students with respect to the type of service of the parent (Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard) whether the parent was deployed, and grade level of the student (Elementary, Middle, or High). To eliminate the possibility that differences with respect to type of service or deployment might be found because either of these factors may be related to other factors, academic year was also included in the analysis as a covariate, and all possible interactions were also considered. There results of these analyses indicate that no differences were found by either the type of service or whether the parent was deployed. Differences were found by school level, indicating that elementary school students are absent at a lower rate than middle or high school students.

Table B-1
Analysis of Variance for Student Attendance

Effect	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Academic Year	1	97.70	97.70	4.29	0.0384
Type of Service	2	63.41	31.71	1.39	0.2487
Academic Year by Type of Service	2	20.65	10.32	0.45	0.6357
Deployment	1	57.98	57.98	2.54	0.1107
Academic Year by Deployment	1	11.76	11.76	0.52	0.4725
Type of Service by Deployment	2	331.78	165.89	7.28	0.0007
School Year by Type of Service by Deployment	2	4.84	2.42	0.11	0.8993
School Level (Elementary, Middle, High)	3	1292.31	430.77	18.91	<.0001*
Academic Year by School Level	3	72.68	24.23	1.06	0.3633
Type of Service by School Level	6	164.76	27.46	1.21	0.3000
School Type by Type of Service by School Level	6	28.71	4.78	0.21	0.9738
Deployment by School Level	3	269.38	89.79	3.94	0.0080
School Year by Deployment by School Level	3	157.23	52.41	2.30	0.0752

Effect	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Type of Service by Deployment by School Level	6	511.79	85.30	3.74	0.0010*
School Year by Type of Service by Deployment by School Level	6	97.09	16.18	0.71	0.6414

* Statistically significant.

Table B-2
Absence Rates for School Districts with 30 or more Students by School Level

School District	District		Primary		Elementary		Middle		High	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All Districts	15865	4.0	5070	4.0	4328	3.3	3506	4.4	2961	4.4
Orangeburg 5	70	8.7	25	4.6	8	2.6	10	14.8	27	11.9
SC Public Charter School District	198	7.6	96	6.6	44	8.3	14	11.4	44	8.0
Pickens	144	5.9	49	4.1	33	3.5	22	5.2	40	10.6
Lexington 1	651	5.1	139	4.1	146	3.0	210	6.3	156	6.4
Oconee	217	5.1	72	4.7	67	4.4	34	6.0	44	6.1
Dorchester 2	3125	5.0	1121	3.9	857	3.3	718	5.9	429	9.7
Sumter	954	4.9	275	4.5	395	4.0	170	4.8	114	9.0
Greenville	105	4.5	33	4.1	35	3.5	26	5.5	11	6.9
Charleston	170	4.4	60	3.9	39	4.0	43	7.1	28	1.7
Richland 1	162	4.1	70	4.1	48	3.4	36	4.6	8	7.4
Spartanburg 7	50	4.0	25	3.3	15	2.5	7	6.4	3	11.3
Anderson 4	43	3.7	17	4.6	9	3.0	7	2.6	10	3.6
Beaufort	1417	3.7	553	4.4	437	3.5	221	2.2	206	3.8
Berkeley	2561	3.7	989	3.8	636	3.0	583	4.4	353	3.7
Aiken	148	3.6	48	4.0	59	3.1	34	3.9	7	4.4
Edgefield	87	3.6	28	3.6	42	3.6	16	3.6	1	3.0
Kershaw	338	3.6	95	3.6	115	4.6	65	3.6	63	1.8
Colleton	120	3.3	35	3.8	23	3.2	55	3.3	7	2.1
Newberry	48	3.3	19	2.2	10	2.3	7	6.0	12	4.5
Horry	113	3.0	27	3.3	28	3.6	34	2.4	24	3.0
Richland 2	4566	2.7	1097	3.5	1137	2.9	1080	3.0	1252	1.6
Hampton 1	156	2.5	43	2.4	46	2.3	41	4.0	26	0.6

Source: SCDE, Received October 22, 2014

Table B-3
Absence Rates for School Districts with 30 or more Students by Parent Deployment Status

School District	District		Deployed		Not Deployed	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All Districts	15865	4.0	1788	4.7	14077	3.9
Orangeburg 5	70	8.7	18	8.7	52	8.6
SC Public Charter School District	198	7.6	36	7.5	162	7.7
Pickens	144	5.9	12	5.8	132	6.0
Lexington 1	651	5.1	103	5.7	548	5.0
Oconee	217	5.1	51	5.6	166	4.9
Dorchester 2	3125	5.0	482	5.8	2643	4.9
Sumter	954	4.9	36	5.4	918	4.9
Greenville	105	4.5	45	4.6	60	4.5
Charleston	170	4.4	22	4.3	148	4.4
Richland 1	162	4.1	15	3.7	147	4.2
Spartanburg 7	50	4.0	15	6.7	35	2.8
Florence 1	44	3.9	7	3.9	37	3.9
Anderson 4	43	3.7	3	4.7	40	3.7
Beaufort	1417	3.7	88	4.8	1329	3.6
Berkeley	2561	3.7	222	3.5	2339	3.8
Aiken	148	3.6	40	5.1	108	3.1
Edgefield	87	3.6	29	4.2	58	3.3
Kershaw	338	3.6	37	4.1	301	3.5
Colleton	120	3.3	40	3.4	80	3.3
Newberry	48	3.3	9	3.3	39	3.3
Horry	113	3.0	44	2.8	69	3.2
Richland 2	4566	2.7	271	2.8	4295	2.7
Hampton 1	156	2.5	30	2.4	126	2.5

Source: SCDE, Received October 22, 2014

Table B-4
Absence Rates for School Districts with 30 or more Students by Service Type

School District	District		Active Service		Reserve		National Guard	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All Districts	15865	4.0	13261	3.9	1212	3.9	1392	4.1
Orangeburg 5	70	8.7	26	10.4	17	4.7	27	9.5
SC Public Charter School District	198	7.6	156	7.8	14	4.8	28	8.0
Pickens	144	5.9	81	6.0	18	8.1	45	4.9
Lexington 1	651	5.1	313	5.2	87	4.4	251	5.2
Oconee	217	5.1	81	5.7	39	5.2	97	4.5
Dorchester 2	3125	5.0	2342	5.2	602	4.0	181	5.1
Sumter	954	4.9	932	4.9	15	3.7	7	4.0
Greenville	105	4.5	87	4.8	14	3.6	4	2.5
Charleston	170	4.4	154	4.5	7	3.0	9	3.6
Richland 1	162	4.1	130	4.1	4	2.5	28	4.4
Spartanburg 7	50	4.0	29	4.8	12	3.3	9	2.3
Florence 1	44	3.9	12	5.4	4	1.3	28	3.7
Anderson 4	43	3.7	35	3.9	1	3.0	7	2.9
Beaufort	1417	3.7	1390	3.7	21	3.6	6	6.2
Berkeley	2561	3.7	2308	3.8	131	3.4	122	3.3
Aiken	148	3.6	106	3.8	16	2.9	26	3.2
Edgefield	87	3.6	32	4.3	17	3.3	38	3.2
Kershaw	338	3.6	276	3.6	20	3.9	42	3.4
Colleton	120	3.3	73	3.6	6	6.0	41	2.5
Horry	113	3.0	90	3.1	4	1.3	19	3.2
Richland 2	4566	2.7	4221	2.8	116	2.7	229	2.4
Hampton 1	156	2.5	73	2.8	20	2.4	63	2.1

Source: SC Department of Education, Received October 22, 2014

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