

College Readiness Tips for Military-Connected Students¹

AP Classes

Encourage students to take Advanced Placement (AP) courses rather than Honors courses when possible. AP courses are nationally recognized and will transfer to any school in the same way. Often, Honors courses are weighted to compensate for the difficulty of the course. These courses are often not weighted in the same way across schools.

For example, a student may receive a “B” in an Honors course that would be weighted to average as an “A” in her current district. However, when she transfers to another school there is no guarantee that the new school will accept weighted grades from other schools or even use weighted grades at all. In this case, the student’s Honors “B” that used to equate to an “A” is now considered a “B” on her transcript. She would have a better GPA if she had obtained an “A” in a general education course or in an AP course, both of which are weighted equally across schools and transcripts.

Application Support

Tutor.com, which is free to all military families, will review college application essays for military-connected students at no cost.

Early Applications

Encourage students to apply to universities, trade schools, and other post-secondary options as early as possible. When institutions have rolling deadlines, they often give priority to early applicants for financial aid. If students are planning to apply for in-state tuition in their current or next location, it may take additional time for the institution to provide verification and approval. In addition, if students are planning to receive education or training benefits from a G.I. Bill benefit transferred to them, it may take additional time to enroll.

Letters of Recommendation

Encourage students to keep track of contact information for teachers who could provide letters of recommendation (for college applications, scholarship applications, job resumes, etc.). If possible, students should request letters of recommendation before they move to their new location and keep both electronic and hard copies stored with the remainder of their educational and health records.

Records

Remind students and parents to keep hard and electronic copies of all student records. It is much more difficult to obtain copies of these after the student has left the school. Further, only certain items are retained in the permanent record (e.g., health records and academic transcripts) and school policy regarding what is saved in permanent records is not consistent across schools. Be sure to maintain your own electronic and hard copy files for all important records, including but not limited to:

- Transcripts;

- Attendance records;
- Health information (medications administered, immunization records, accident reports, or other health information);
- Results from group or individually administered cognitive, academic, behavioral, or socio-emotional assessments or evaluations;
- Teacher evaluations and progress notes;
- Participation and progress in academic, behavioral, socio-emotional, or other interventions (including response to intervention, or RTI, programs);
- Awards and honors earned;
- Student participation in school activities;
- Any documentation of behavior plans, 504 plans, IEPs, or other documentation of student progress.

Resumes

Help students begin writing their resumes as early into their high school career as possible. Mobile students often engage in valuable experiences in many different locations. It is often much easier to track these experiences along the way than to try to remember each one clearly at a later date. Each resume draft should be kept with the date of revision clearly marked. Electronic and hard copies should both be kept and stored with the remainder of students' educational and health records.

¹ Information obtained from Amanda Yoder, M.S. Ed., NCC, Professional School Counselor