

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2534

As Passed Senate, February 28, 2026

Title: An act relating to promoting educational stability for children of military families.

Brief Description: Promoting educational stability for children of military families.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Shavers, McEntire, Barnard, Leavitt and Nance).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/12/26, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/18/26 [DP].

Floor Activity: Passed Senate: 2/28/26, 48-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes changes to school district requirements for enrolling children of military families, transferring their education records, and providing them with services and accommodations.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Harris, Ranking Member; Cortes, Dozier, Hansen, Krishnadasan and McCune.

Staff: Alex Fairfortune (786-7416)

Background: Resident Student Admission. Washington school districts are open to the admission of resident students between the ages of 5 and 21. School districts remain open for admission to students with disabilities through the end of the school year in which the student turns age 22.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A child of a military family satisfies Washington's residency requirements if the child's parent or guardian is transferred to, or is pending transfer to, a military installation within Washington while on active duty under official military orders.

Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. In 2009, Washington adopted an interstate compact intended to remove barriers to educational success for children of military families. Among other provisions, the compact facilitates timely enrollment and helps ensure that children of military families are not disadvantaged due to difficulties in transferring education records.

Conditional Enrollment Application. A school district must accept an application for enrollment and course registration for a child of a military family on a conditional basis by electronic means. Once the parent or guardian provides proof of residence, the school district must finalize the child's enrollment.

Proof of Residence. The parent or guardian of the child must provide proof of residence to the school district within 14 days of the arrival date stated in official military documentation. Proof of residence may include any of the following:

- an address of a temporary on-base billeting facility;
- a purchased or leased residence, or a signed purchase and sale agreement or lease agreement for a residence; or
- any federal government housing or off-base military housing.

Request for Records. A school district enrolling any student must request the student's permanent record from the school the student previously attended, including records of disciplinary action, history of violent behavior or sexual offenses, attendance, immunization records, and academic performance.

Enrollment Pending Official Records. Upon receipt of unofficial education records, a school district must enroll and appropriately place a child of a military family, as quickly as possible based on the information provided, pending validation of the child's official records. Simultaneous with the enrollment and conditional placement, the school district must request the child's official education record from the school the child previously attended.

Requirements for Students with Disabilities. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that, when a child with a disability transfers to a school district in another state during the school year and had an individualized education program (IEP) in effect, the child's new school district must provide a free appropriate public education. This includes services comparable to those described in the child's previously held IEP, in consultation with the child's parents or guardians, until the school district conducts an evaluation, if necessary, and develops a new IEP, if appropriate, consistent with federal and state law.

The IDEA also requires the child's new school district to take reasonable steps to promptly obtain the child's records, including the IEP and any other special education records, from the school the child previously attended, in compliance with student data privacy laws.

Summary of Bill: Student Admission. Residency Requirements. A child of a military family meets the residency requirements for enrollment in a school district if, as a result of a parent's active duty status, call to active duty, or notification of an impending call or order to active duty, the child relocates to Washington and the child's military parent or guardian:

- is transferred to, or has received official notice of a pending transfer to, a military installation within Washington or a bordering state; or
- relocating due to a military exigency, for example overseas deployment, sea duty, or other mobilization.

Proof of Military Orders. The parent or guardian must provide the school district with a copy of official military orders or documentation issued by the appropriate military authority confirming the directed move.

Proof of Residence. Proof of residence must be provided to the school district within 90 calendar days of enrollment. A parent or guardian may use, as proof of residence, the address of a temporary lodging located within the school district where the military family expects to obtain permanent housing.

Application for Enrollment. A school district must accept an application for enrollment and course registration for a child of a military family on a conditional basis before the military family arrives in Washington or a bordering state. The school district must accept the application by any reasonable means, including electronically or by mail. A school district must provide military families with the maximum flexibility practicable in the method of application submission, consistent with verification, privacy, and administrative requirements.

Special Education Services. Transfer of Education Records. If a child of a military family transfers with an IEP or a plan developed under section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (section 504 plan), the school district must take the necessary steps to accept the transfer of the child's education records and any prior evaluations.

Continuity of Services and Accommodations. Upon enrollment, the school district must ensure that the child of a military family receives appropriate services and accommodations consistent with the child's existing IEP or section 504 plan, without unreasonable delay.

Reevaluation Timeline. If the school district determines that an evaluation is necessary, the district must take reasonable steps to conduct the evaluation as expeditiously as practicable, consistent with applicable federal and state law.

Transportation. A non-resident school district is not required to provide a child of a military

family with transportation to and from the resident school, unless otherwise required by state or federal law.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: No public hearing was held.

Persons Testifying: N/A

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: N/A