

Challenges Elementary Public School Teacher's Face When Teaching
Military-Connected Students

Priscilla Lafond Hicks

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Carol C. Cash, Chair

Ted S. Price

Bobby R. Browder

Glen I. Earthman

March 24, 2020

Richmond, Virginia

Keywords: military connected, military, practices, challenges

Challenges Elementary Public School Teacher's Face When Teaching Military-Connected Students

Priscilla Lafond Hicks

ABSTRACT

Many military children face obstacles during their lives, and these obstacles can affect their classroom environment due to their mobility, social-emotional behavior, and academics. The purpose of this study was to identify challenges, if any, that teachers indicate exist while educating military-connected students in public schools and teacher actions to address any challenges. Existing literature on military connected students and teacher perceptions of military-connected challenges was reviewed.

This study examined teacher perceptions of the challenges, responses to challenges and training these teachers experienced while teaching military-connected students.

A Likert-type survey of questions was administered through an online survey tool to elementary school teachers in two public school divisions in Virginia. The survey instrument was developed by Mittleberg (2014). After collecting the data, the researcher examined and analyzed data based on the survey responses. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What challenges do teachers identify related to educating military-connected students?
2. What practices do teachers use to address the perceived challenges?
3. What do teachers indicate as their level of training to teach military-connected students?

The study concluded with eight findings and eight implications. The findings provided teachers with the tools necessary to address the needs of military-connected students as well as provided schools and school divisions with information that could impact their professional learning decisions.

Findings included but were not limited to how teachers perceived that assessment of students' background knowledge was a challenge when teaching military-connected students, how filling in students' knowledge gaps was a challenge, and how adjustment to students leaving and arriving at various times during the school year were a challenge when teaching military-connected students. A few implications were, school leaders should investigate ways to assist

teachers in assessing students' background knowledge. It should be a consideration that personnel be provided with resources to help focus on meeting the needs of the students who have knowledge gaps and the development of a handbook of team building and getting to know you resources should be given to teachers to assist in building a strong classroom environment.

Challenges Elementary Public School Teacher's Face When Teaching
Military-Connected Students

Priscilla Lafond Hicks

GENERAL PUBLIC ABSTRACT

There are many public school divisions in the United States that service military-connected students. Of the 132 school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is at least one military-connected student in each school division. According to Wykes (2015), Virginia is one of the top 10 states for military presence with 10% (Wykes, 2015, p. 23). Teachers in these school divisions face perceived challenges that need to be addressed. Some of those challenges include mobility, academics, and the social-emotional well-being of the military-connected student. This quantitative study focused on the perceived challenges public school teachers face when teaching military-connected students. Data were collected using a Likert-type survey with participants from two school divisions who service military-connected students. There were limitations in this study beyond the researcher's control such as the accuracy and honesty by the respondents and response rate.

This study produced eight findings and eight implications. Of the eight findings, three were teachers perceived the adjustment to students leaving and arriving at various times, having a routine in place when new military-connected students arrive into the classroom after the start of the school year, and receiving the level of training needed to prepare them to support parents/guardians of military connected students in their classroom were a challenge. A few of the implications included, the need for teacher preparation programs to address the challenges military connected students face, the development of a handbook of team building activities for teachers to use in the classroom as a resource and the need for resources that could focus on meeting the needs of students' knowledge gaps to support those military connected students.

Dedication

This dissertation is being dedicated to my family who have been with me throughout this journey. First, to God who has given me the spiritual guidance to believe that I could take on this task. To my father, Willie Hicks, who passed away in February of 2018. He always pushed and encouraged me to do more for myself. It has been difficult dealing with his loss because I looked up to him for the hard worker and provider he was for our family. He was a strong man of few words, but I knew he loved me. I am forever grateful for his love and guidance. My mother, Mary Hicks, she has always been my best cheerleader. She provided me with strength and support throughout this journey. My son, Preston, the love of my life. I wanted him to see how hard work and determination pays off. My son/nephew, Terrence, for being my support. I am very fortunate and blessed to have such a caring family to support me. This has been a journey, but well worth it.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my entire family for putting up with me as I went through this process. They have been very patient as I was not able to complete my parental duties of cooking and helping with homework as I took these classes and completed this dissertation. To Dr. Cash and Dr. Price, thank you for your time, patience, and guidance. Dr. Earthman for your honesty through this process, and Dr. Browder for the support, believing in me and spending hours in the library guiding me through this process.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
General Public Abstract	iv
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
List of Figures.....	ix
List of Tables	x
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Purpose of the Study	2
Research Questions.....	2
Summary of Methods	3
Conceptual Framework.....	3
Limitations.....	4
Delimitations	4
Definition of Terms	5
Organization of the Study.....	6
Chapter 2 Review of Literature.....	7
Mobility of Students	7
Military-Connected Students and Mobility	8
<i>Social emotional behavior.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Military-connected students and social emotional behavior.....</i>	<i>9</i>
Academics	10
Military-Connected Students and Academics	11
Military-Connected Students and Instructional Challenges	12
Conclusion and Implications	15
Chapter 3 Methodology	17
Purpose of the Study	17
Research Design	17
Research Questions.....	17
Population.....	18
Data Collection Procedures	18
Instrument Design.....	18
Data Management.....	19
Data Analysis.....	19
Time Line	20
Methodology Summary	20
Chapter 4 Presentation of Data and Analysis	21
Introduction	21
Research Questions.....	21
Description of Participant Data	21
Demographic Data.....	21
Data Analysis.....	22
<i>Research question 1</i>	<i>22</i>

<i>Survey question 11</i>	22
<i>Survey question 12</i>	27
<i>Survey question 13:</i>	30
<i>Research question 2</i>	32
<i>Survey question 8</i>	32
<i>Research question 3</i>	37
<i>Survey question 9</i>	37
<i>Survey question 3</i>	43
<i>Survey question 10</i>	45
Summary.....	49
Chapter 5 Findings of the Study	50
Introduction	50
Summary of Findings	50
<i>Finding 1</i>	50
<i>Finding 2</i>	51
<i>Finding 3</i>	51
<i>Finding 4</i>	51
<i>Finding 5</i>	52
<i>Finding 6</i>	52
<i>Finding 7</i>	52
<i>Finding 8</i>	53
Implications for Practitioners	53
<i>Implication 1</i>	53
<i>Implication 2</i>	53
<i>Implication 3</i>	54
<i>Implication 4</i>	54
<i>Implication 5</i>	54
<i>Implication 6</i>	54
<i>Implication 7</i>	54
<i>Implication 8</i>	54
Suggestions for Future Research	55
Summary.....	55
References	56
Appendix A Human Subjects Training Certificate of Completion	61
Appendix B Survey	62
Appendix C Letter to Superintendent	70
Appendix D Letter to Participant	71
Appendix E Permission of Use from Dr. Mittelberg	72
Appendix F Demographic Data	73

List of Figures

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.	4
--------------------------------------	---

List of Tables

Table 1 Survey Instrument.....	19
Table 2 Challenges Identified by Teacher Mean and Count in School Division 1.....	23
Table 3 Challenges Identified by Teacher Response—Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree Nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree in School Division 1	24
Table 4 Challenges Identified by Teachers in School Division 2.....	25
Table 5 Challenges Identified by Teachers—Number of Respondents who Answered the Statement in School Division 2.....	26
Table 6 Responses to Statements in School Division 1	27
Table 7 Responses to Statements in School Division 2.....	29
Table 8 Top 3 Choice Responses to Statements in School Division 1	30
Table 9 Top 3 Choice Responses in School Division 2.....	31
Table 10 Practices Used by Teacher Mean and Count in School Division 1.....	32
Table 11 Practices Used by Teachers in School Division 1.....	33
Table 12 Practices Used by Teachers in School Division 2.....	35
Table 13 Practices Used by Teachers in School Division 2.....	36
Table 14 Level of Training to Teach Military Connected Students in School Division 1.....	37
Table 15 Level of Training to Teach Military-Connected Students School Division 1	38
Table 16 Level of Training to Teach Military Connected Students in School Division 2.....	40
Table 17 Level of Training to Teach Military-Connected Students in School Division 2.	42
Table 18 Professional Development Training Hours in School Division 1	44
Table 19 Professional Development Training Hours in School Division 2.....	45
Table 20 Teacher Opinions in School Division 1	46
Table 21 Teacher Opinions in School Division 1	46
Table 22 Teacher Opinions in School Division 2	48
Table 23 Teacher Opinions in School Division 2	48
Table 24 Teacher Years of Experience Teaching Military-Connected Students in School Division 1	73
Table 25 Teacher Years of Experience Teaching Military Connected Students School Division 2.....	73
Table 26 Grade Levels Taught in School Division 1.....	74
Table 27 Grade Levels Taught in School Division 2.....	74
Table 28 Military-Connected Students in the Classroom in School Division 1	75
Table 29 Military Connected Students in the Classroom in School Division 2.....	75
Table 30 Students who have Joined the Classroom Due to Military Related Reasons in School Division 1.	76

Table 31 Students who have Joined the Classroom Due to Military Related Reasons in School Division 2.	76
Table 32 Students Planning to Leave for Military Reasons in School Division 1.....	77
Table 33 Students Planning to Leave for Military Reasons in School Division 2.....	77
Table 34 Number of Students Taken Extended Absences Due to Military Connected Reasons in School Division 1.....	78
Table 35 Number of Students Taken Extended Absences Due to Military Connected Reasons in School Division 2.....	78

Chapter 1

Introduction

Students of military families make frequent moves in and out of public and military-dependent schools within the United States and abroad. With those frequent moves, there are challenges students face that may be related to the mobility, academic progress and the social-emotional growth. Bradshaw (2010) found that during school transitions, military connected children had difficulty acclimating to new school conditions, specifically school rules, methodology , procedures, and scholastic standards. (Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, Mmari, & Blum, 2010)

Since the end of World War II, the Department of Defense has provided school on the installations for selected military installations in the United States and out of the country. (Economics of Education Review, 2010). According to DoDEA (2017),

In 1950, federal legislation consolidated the funding and operation of these installation-run schools under the authority of Section 6, Public Law No. 81-874, which gave the then Commissioner of Education the authority to make arrangements for the free public education of children who resided on federal property if a state did not allow tax revenues to be expended for that purpose, or if no local educational agency (LEA) was able to provide suitable free public education to such children. (DODEA, 2017, p. 1)

Within Section 6, “arrangements included establishing new schools on federal properties and providing funding to local school districts to educate eligible dependents. In 1964, the Secretary of Defense combined three separate school systems into the Department of Defense Overseas School System. It was then divided into three geographic areas.” (DODEA, 2018, p. 1)

Statement of the Problem

In 2016, there were 1.2 million military dependents enrolled in both public and tuition based schools around the world (DoDEA, 2016). Usually students come into school academically behind their peers. According to Astor, DePadro, Gilreath, Esqueda, and Benbenisty (2013),

a teacher must be knowledgeable about the child’s background, culture, life circumstances, family values and strengths. Many public school teachers do not know

they have military students, or they do not understand the families' military culture and background in the schools' diversity process (Astor, et al 2013, p 235).

The problem is teachers have a difficult time identifying the issues that are associated with military-connected students. Educators who can comprehend the life, task, and transitions of the military child will be better able to teach those students with a military connection. Teachers may create particular methodologies through instructive offices or staff improvement in military networks to assist military students more adequately (DOD, 1994).

According to DePedro, Esqueda, Cederbaum, and Astor (2014), Civilian run schools lack the knowledge and awareness to be supportive and responsive to the social and emotional needs that impact the school experiences of military connected students. Students experience life events such as war, deployment, and relocation which are the major issues facing military connected students. (DePedro, Esqueda, Cederbaum, & Astor, 2014, p. 19)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify challenges, if any, that teachers indicate exist while educating military-connected students in public schools and teacher actions to address any perceived challenges. The findings of this study identified the challenges, if any, that teachers perceive existed while educating military connected students in the public school system. The study also identified teacher actions to address the perceived challenges of mobility, socio-economic growth, and academics. The findings provided teachers with the tools necessary to address the necessities of military connected students. The findings provided schools and school divisions with information that could impact their professional learning decisions.

Research Questions

This study answers the following questions:

1. What challenges do teachers identify related to educating military-connected students?
2. What practices do teachers use to address the challenges?
3. What do teachers indicate as their level of training to teach military-connected students?

Summary of Methods

This study investigated the perceptions regarding potential challenges and possible ways to address them. Based on a review of the literature, the researcher chose a quantitative research approach and used a Likert-type survey for this study. According to Hoy and Adams (2014), this research approach was most appropriate. As defined by Hoy and Adams (2014), “Quantitative research is scientific investigation that includes both experiments as well as other systematic methods that emphasize control and quantified measures of performance.” (Hoy & Adams, 2016, p. 144) Quantitative researchers were concerned with the development and testing of hypotheses and the generation of models and theories that explain behavior (Hoy & Adams, 2016, p. 1).

This study was conducted in 23 elementary schools in a urban and a suburban school division. The participants were teachers who had experience educating military-connected students. The instrument used to collect the data was a survey for the elementary teachers that measured the perceptions of the individual teachers and was developed by Mittleberg (2014).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (see Figure 1) was developed from the research examining the suggested relationship between student challenges in the areas of mobility, academic background, and social emotional behaviors and the impact of those challenges on teacher actions which will impact student outcomes. The study sought to understand teachers’ perspectives of military-connected students. It also sought to understand teacher perspectives of how they deal with the mobility of students, their social emotional behaviors and academic background.

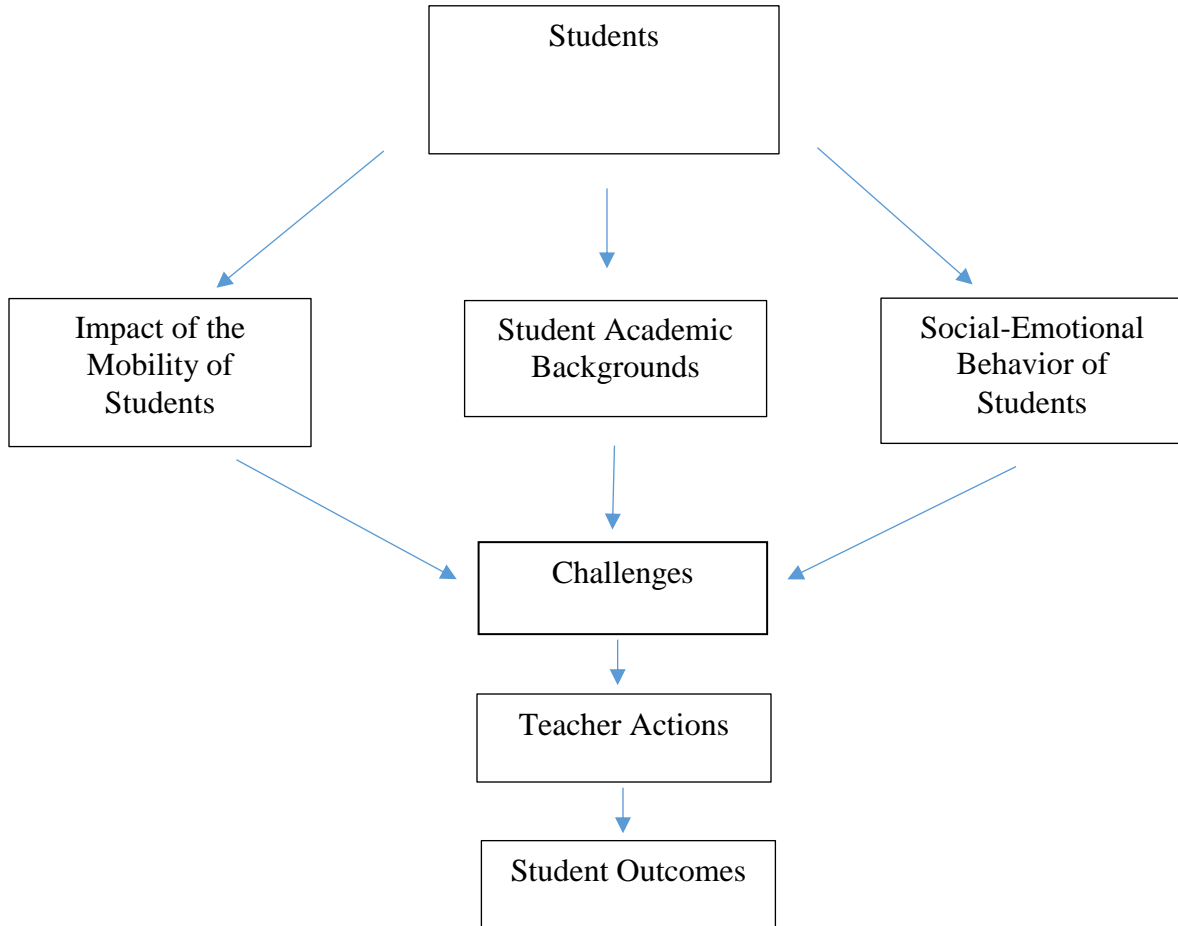


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

Limitations

There were limitations in this study beyond the researcher's control that may have affected the outcome of this study. These limitations included:

1. Accurate and honest answers by the respondents to the survey.
2. The response rate from participants.

Delimitations

The delimitations were factors in which the researcher had control. These delimitations included:

1. The areas of focus for this study were urban and suburban school divisions.

2. The study contained information from only two school divisions in Virginia. Findings might not apply to the Commonwealth as a whole or to other school divisions in the Commonwealth.
3. The survey was only extended to those educators who had experience teaching military-connected students. Teachers who taught elementary military-connected dependent students were invited to participate in the survey. Teachers who had no experience teaching military-connected students or had taught beyond the elementary level were not invited to participate in the study. This is in line with the Mittleberg study of 2014 (Mittelberg, 2014).
4. This research study focused on teacher perceptions as they relate to educating military connected students in two school divisions.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to support the understanding of the reader.

1. **Challenges.** “A simulating task or problem.” (Merriam-Webster, 2020, p. np)
2. **Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DDESS or DODDS).** “One of three operational areas within the DoD Education Activity. It operates 65 schools on 15 installations in 7 states, Puerto Rico, and Guam, serving approximately 27,000 students and employing over 2,300 educational professionals” (DODEA, 2017, p. 2)
3. **Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA).** “The umbrella organization that unites efforts to provide quality educational opportunities and services to military dependents around the globe. DoDEA plans, directs, coordinates, and manages the education programs for Department of Defense (DoD) dependents who would otherwise not have access to a high-quality public education. DoDEA has a long and proud history of serving military families at locations around the globe.” (Department of Defense Education Activity, 2020, p. n.p.)
4. **Department of Education.** A cabinet level department of the US Government.
5. **Military.** Of, for, or pertaining to the Army or Armed Forces.

6. **Military-connected students.** “Children in P-6 schools, adolescents in Middle and High School and students who are adolescents or young adults in Trade Schools, or Institutions of Higher Education (2 or 4 year schools) that are official dependents of a Military Service member. A military-connected student has one degree of separation from their military sponsor; the connection may be biological, because of an adoption, through foster parenting or with in loco parentis authorization” (Education A. A., 2020, p. 1).
7. **Non-military connected.** “Not associated with soldiers of the military” (The Free Dictionary.com, 2017, p. np)
8. **Practices.** “the usual way of doing something.” (Merriam-Webster, 2020, p. np)
9. **Student Mobility.** “Making a school enrollment change at a time not required by the grade structure of the school system” (Gruman, 2008, p 1833).

Organization of the Study

This research study contains five parts. Chapter one which is the primary section fills in as the presentation, giving a clarification of why this examination was directed. It incorporates the background information, explanation of the issue, significance of the study, purpose of the study, justification of the study, theoretical structure, and meaning of terms, restrictions, and association of the examination. Chapter two contains the literature review, incorporates a conversation of the difficulties instructors face while teaching military connected students. It likewise analyzes data on how they manage the social-emotional, scholastic and mobility aspects of these students’ lives and their degree of mindfulness. Chapter three outlines the methodology of the study. It contains the purpose of the study, research design, research questions, data collection procedures, instrument design, data treatment and management, and methodology summary. The presentation of data collected is contained in Chapter four, and Chapter five identifies the findings of the study, lists the implications for practitioners and suggests topics for research in the future.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

“If educators are not responsive to differences between students’ experiences, beliefs, and practices and those embedded in schools, students may be systematically and disproportionately put at risk for school failure” (Utley, Obiakor, & Bakken, 2011, p. 11). As school populations change, students move in and out multiple times of a year.

Over a million of the country’s military-connected students attend state funded schools (Astor & Benbenisty, 2014). “In addition, civilian school personnel are frequently unaware of the needs of military-connected students because they have not been trained to respond appropriately to the unique and often intense experiences of such students” (De Pedro, et al., 2011, p. 572) Knowing that military students have unique needs such as parents being deployed, transitions, and relationships, teachers without those experiences can benefit from learning about the students’ situations.

This chapter includes the examination of several different aspects of military-connected students and their academic performance with the understanding that military-connected students have other challenges in their lives. Specifically, it examines (1) mobility of students and its impact on academics, (2) effects of mobility on social and emotional growth, and (3) instructional challenges and resources educators incur when working with military-connected children at the elementary level.

Mobility of Students

“Mobility, rather than stability has become the norm for students in schools across the United States. The student mobility rate is now higher in the United States than in any other industrialized country” (Blazer, 2007, p. 1) Student mobility alludes to the recurrence of such moves among students in a particular classroom, school or locale. Mobility is also known as “churn” or transience” (Sparks, 2016, p. 3). “The most common causes of student mobility are residential moves related to parents’ jobs or instability.” (Center, 2017, p. 2) Some moves are disruptive, such as homelessness, unemployment, eviction and difficulties with landlords. Mobility does not only impact students who change schools, but it also classroom academics and schools that must deal with different students (Rumberger, 2015). With high mobility comes various school conditions such as overcrowding, discipline and negative social or academic climate (Isernhagen & Nadia, 2010, p. 18)

As indicated by the 2013 enumeration report, 10% - 14% of school-aged children changed living arrangements from the previous year and nearly 9 million children changed their living arrangements from 2012-2013. The report additionally demonstrated that students who change schools the most every now and again represent about 13 percent of all students from kindergarten through eighth grade, and that mobility can harm students' sustenance and wellbeing, raising grade retention and lowering academic accomplishments (Patricia A. Popp, 2014).

An investigative study by Fisher, Matthews, Stafford, Nakagawa, and Durante (2002) found that 89% of the participants believed that transition programs needed to be focused on providing a consistent but caring educational environment, as these traits were essential for establishing quality relationships with students (Fisher, Matthews, Stafford, Nakagawa, & Durante, 2002, p. 327).

Military-Connected Students and Mobility

Military children move because their parents' assignment within the military changes, or because of their parents' initial military enlistment or separation from the military. Moving is necessary and can be very emotionally and physically challenging for the entire family. Some children are thrilled one day and depressed the next. Mobile military-connected students can have different stressors in their lives that add to the normal stress most children face (Mittelberg, 2014). There are unique stresses that students may encounter in addition to the extreme stress of parental deployment, relocation, and their education. . The risk of relocation for military students is high (Mittelberg, 2014). "There is one thing you can count on as a military family. One of the many challenges that you will be faced with on your journey is a permanent change of station (PCS)" (Crooks, 2017, p. 1).

Social emotional behavior. Educators can advance children's social and emotional well-being in many ways, for instance, by establishing a material-rich setting to stimulate social collaborations among children (Ho & Suzanne, 2018). "To many educators and parents, it is common sense: children who have strong social and emotional skills perform better in school, have more positive relationships with peers and adults, and have more positive emotional adjustments and mental health" (Jones & Bouffard, 2012, p. 27). Scholarly and SEL skills create and work together, endeavors to advance them ought to be intended to advance both

simultaneously (Bouffard, 2012). How educators and students process and react to feelings impact and influence their social, emotional and cognitive development.

There is a growing recognition at the local, state and federal levels in the United States and around the world that schools must meet the social and emotional development needs of students for effective teaching and learning to take place and for students to reach their full potential. (Rivers, 2013, p. 368).

Military-connected students and social emotional behavior. Black (2006) found that students who relocate mid-year felt change issues in their scholarly and community lives. According to Allan and Bardsley (1983) only one move, predominantly in the elementary grades, can be difficult for many children. Military students have difficulty adjusting to a new social setting, they had feelings of grief or sadness due to the loss of friendships and social connections, stress resulting from changes in family structure when a parent is deployed as well as the stress of missing the parent who is deployed. These difficulties impacted learning (Harris, Patrick, & Ragone, 2016). Changing schools can be very upsetting, filling students with uneasiness and, contingent upon their age, be frightening. Students wonder how they will adapt with their new school both in their academics and socially (Alward, 2011).

Robinson 2013 expressed change includes making new friends, and navigate the social standards, different procedures and schedules, innovative teachers with contrasting desires, and a change in the pace and substance of the educational program.

Military-connected students experience different types of challenges. One challenge is deployment. The longer parental deployments are, the greater the impact on the child's educational achievement (Canon, 2011). Factors that can cause military-connected students to not perform as well as non-military connected students include relocation, transitions, deployment. (Garner, Neale-McFall, & Nunnery, 2011). Mobility also affects a child's social and emotional growth.

Youngsters ages 3 through 6 were found to exhibit behaviors of tension including relapse, physical protests and fears of detachment. Older children, who comprehend the truth and potential threats associated with their parent's being absent, display indications of irritability and sometimes animosity. Teenagers were seen as defiant and at higher danger of using drugs and taking part in early-age sexual behavior. These emotional responses can have grave ramifications in scholastic performance (Cannon, 2011).

Long and frequent deployments, with short stay times in the middle, have put strains on Army children and families already tested by frequent moves and parental absences. These strains may present in the form of social, or behavioral conduct issues among children at home and school (Canon, 2011). “Stimulating social and emotional development for all students in classrooms involves demonstrating social and emotional skills, giving chances for students to practice and sharpen those skills, and allowing students an opportunity to apply these skills in different circumstances.” (Weissberg, 2016, p. 6).

Children of military families also experience high rates of mental health trauma and related problems. (Cooper, 2010). Without appropriate emotional support systems, children of military personnel may be at a huge disservice compared with their peers in non-military families (Sogomanyan & Cooper, 2010). Good support systems can help alleviate the negative experiences a child may have when their parent is deployed. According to Sogomanyan and Cooper (2010), many children indicate that through support services they had peers to talk to, and those children who felt upheld showed increased resiliency. Which helps them deal with parental deployment.

Academics

According to the State of Georgia report from 2014 by the Governor’s office of students’ achievement in Georgia, it was found that schools with higher percentage of mobile students, had a larger group of students with disabilities and fewer gifted students. Mobility inhibits the students from learning the foundational skills they need to perform academically. “Teachers in highly mobile classes blamed mobility for their inability to effectively preserve the learning environment and deliver quality instruction” (Bruno & Isken, 1996, p. 152). “Mobile students make academic progress slower and lose knowledge quicker than their non-mobile peers” (Mao, Whitsett, & Mellor, 1998, p. 7). The impact of military lifestyle has a strain on military connected student’s learning. The academic standards may vary in lack of continuity in academics may lead to gaps in skills, teacher expectations vary, curricular expectations differ, accountability of students are expected to be absorbed for their own learning and students can enter the school behind or ahead of classmates (Becky et al, 2016)

Military-Connected Students and Academics

The children of the military work force living in the United States are ordinarily enrolled in Special Domestic Dependents Elementary or Secondary Schools or in government funded schools that are commonly near the installations to which one or both guardians are assigned. The bulk of children of military work force are enrolled in government funded school systems and there are many public schools throughout the United States. School can be one place where stability and normal routine can provide an anchor for children during military challenges (Staff, 2005). The academic expectations are high and have an incredibly significant impression on military children but by believing that they can achieve to high standards and helping them to be successful is crucial (Silvernail & Adams, 2016).

The Department of Defense (DoD) is committed to ensuring all children of military families are provided a world class education that prepares them to be successful in their careers, leading contributors in their communities and productive citizens in the 21st century. The DoD educates a small percentage of students (approximately 7%, or 86,000 students, with about 25,000 of those students enrolled stateside) in DoD-owned and operated schools (Defense D. O., Educational Options and Performance of Military-Connected School Districts, 2011, p. 5).

With about 84% of military children under the age of 14, it is important to investigate the educational outcomes of the population of the military child. (Engle et al. 2010, pp 79). It has been suggested that “these negative effects of education among mobile populations are short-term and most important in early childhood” (Hango, 2006, p. 642). Changing schools is a trial for students as they cope with new learning environment with diverse teachers, classmates and curricula (Ihrke, Faber, & Koerber, 2011). Having a deployed parent may also shift the family life style at home, which can have a damaging effect on educational performance (Richardson, et al., 2011)

Maintaining positive primary and secondary school climates for large portions of military students can be a challenge, especially for civilian public school districts. Military students are rarely mentioned as a unique student population or cultural group within school reform research and/or federal, state, district and school-level policies and procedures. Moreover, few studies, across academic disciplines, have examined the role of supportive and caring school environments on the social, emotional and psychological

development of military students. (Astor, DePddro, Gilreath, Esqueda, & Benbenishty, 2013, p. 234)

The effects of a student's mobility and its impact on academics are great. Students must adjust and readjust to different teaching methods and pacing in a new school setting.

Information from the Government Accountability Office (March, 2011) states the largest challenge reported by school districts in their survey was the increased academic need of children in military families who transfer to a school with different curricula or academic standards than those in their previous school and thus need additional support. States use different curricula and have different graduation and academic standards and assessment practices, sometimes making it difficult for a receiving school to integrate new students. (Office, United States Government Accountability, 2011, p. 20)

Garner, Arnold, and Nunnery (2014) reported "mobility often results in exposure to different curricula and instructional techniques, thus putting military-connected students at risk of gaps in knowledge and skills. Students may be in need of additional academic support or assistance with subject matter that they had not been exposed to previously." (Garner, Arnold, & Nunnery, 2014, p. 31)

Military-Connected Students and Instructional Challenges

Issues, such as state-to-state transfers where the curriculum varies, can create gaps in academic performance. As children move from state to state, the graduation and academic requirements may vary, which can create academic difficulty for the military students. One advantage for the military students is they may be more self-sufficient, social, adaptable, and able to meet new peers easily. They may be more tolerable and have better regard for authority than their non-military equals (Mmari et al. 2010; Park 2011). Gruman, Harachi, Abbott, Cantalano and Flemming (2008) found that "mobility has a negative effect on school performance, including lower math and reading scores, behavior problems, and increase in the likelihood of being held back a grade." (Gruman, W., Abbott, Cantalano, & Fleming, 2008, p. 1839)

"One of the most prevalent social and emotional (SEL) approaches involves training teachers to deliver explicit lessons that teach social and emotional skills, then finding opportunities for students to reinforce their use throughout the day. Another curricular approach

embeds SEL instruction into content areas such as English language arts, social studies, or math.” (Jones & Bouffard, 2012, p. 17)

Teachers can also naturally foster skills in students through their interpersonal and student-centered instructional interactions throughout the school day. Adult-student interactions support SEL when they result in positive student-teacher relationships, enable teachers to model social-emotional competencies for students, and promote student engagement (Williford & Sanger Wolcott, 2015). Teacher practices that provide students with emotional support and create opportunities for students' voice, autonomy, and mastery experiences promote student engagement in the educational process. (Weissberg, 2016, p. 6)

As children change academic settings, there are several ways in which a school system can work to contribute positively to the well-being and academic outcomes of their students. “Teachers are the essential element within schools having critical influence regarding the learning that goes on in classrooms” (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Schulman, 2005, p. 397).

The objective is to better prepare educators who will have to respond to the unique academic and social-emotional needs of military connected students. University instructors have recognized the signs, future teacher education preparatory candidates will need to know in regards to the culture and life style of the military and the difficulties and advantages of being a military connected student. Teachers have coursework and know how to apply the concepts taught in class. Educators received professional learning opportunities from their university faculty and staff (Risberg, Curtis, & Shivers, 2014) “Teachers are crucial to military children as they can assist in the process of assimilating into a new curriculum. In addition, they can also be of assistance in helping to foster new students’ peer relationships and social network.” (Trawick-Smith, 2013, p. 67)

“Culturally responsive teaching is a concept that signals a need to expand the customary professional knowledge base for teachers in order to close the achievement gap. Culturally responsive teaching is not only interested in providing mainstream knowledge through different techniques, but it also involves transforming the actual perspectives, knowledge base and approaches of a conventional classroom’s curriculum and instruction.” (Vavrus, 2008, p. 52)

Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990) found that Teachers identified new students' in-complete knowledge as the source of many instructional problems. Students lacked complete knowledge because moving created gaps in their education. Teacher training programs should acknowledge that many teachers work with unstable student populations which creates a challenge for students instructionally and meeting the needs of these students will require different strategies to be successful.” (Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990, p. 182)

While acknowledging the challenges of military-connected students face, it is just as “important that future and practice teachers see the benefits these students possess, such as opportunities for travel and experiences in meeting and interacting with those living in other places” (Risberg, Curtis, & Shivers, 2014, p. 46). It has been expressed by military parents who have children in government funded schools, that teachers need training on how to support their children and families. (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Teachers should acknowledge, value, support and respond to the cultural values, traditions, communication, learning styles, contributions and relational patterns of all students in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 79). Students who are military-connected versus students who are not military connected have several challenges that prevent them from competing with their age/grade level counterparts in a public school setting. The academic, social, and emotional effects of moving combined with the stress of military life have a huge impact on these students. It is the responsibility of the school system and educators in the school to help those students perform to their greatest potential. Students are all at different levels, motivating students, assessing student abilities, helping students with learning disabilities and special needs are challenges for teachers (Pekel, 2016).

The single most powerful thing that educators can do to increase motivation is to build close connections with their students (Pekel, 2016, p. 3). Adults also need to help students believe that when they challenge themselves mentally, use good learning strategies, and see mistakes and failures as opportunities to improve, they can become smarter and more successful in school. If teachers help students develop positive visions of their possible selves and see how their actions in the present, it will affect their ability to realize those visions, and teachers can improve both academic effort and academic outcomes (Pekel, 2016, p. 3)

According to the 2018 South Carolina Educational Performance of Military Connected students report (2018), during the 2017-18 school year, the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee staff labored meticulously with the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) to ensure the intent of the proviso was met. School liaison officers also provided sustenance and direction about workshop content and family commitment. MCEC is a 501(c)(3) not for profit, world-wide association, concentrating on guaranteeing quality educational opportunities for every single military child influenced by family detachment, mobility and change.” (South Carolina Oversight Committee, 2018, p. 19)

“School counselors are in a situation to have an effect on military-connected students and can imaginatively structure interventions that help manufacture confidence, inner locus of control, a feeling of direction and an optimistic outlook of the student’s personal future. School counselors can use specific interventions at the elementary level to include: play treatment strategies, individual journaling, age suitable anger management techniques, and breathing and muscle unwinding exercises (Wood, Greenleaf, & Thompson-Gillespie, 2012, p. 12)

The most significant intervention is the quality of the school counselor’s partnership with the family and working with the student’s guardians as a group. School counselors can be an enormous advantage to families by assisting with correspondence between the family and the deployed member through student art and written work; helping parents talk to their children about changes in roles, duties and responsibilities; and helping parents renegotiate routines, limit setting and discipline (Wood, Greenleaf, & Thompson-Gillespie, 2012, p. 13)

Conclusion and Implications

A review of the literature reveals that military dependent students face challenges of mobility, social emotional behavior and academics. This can have a major impact on the lives of elementary military connected children. Teachers had their perceptions of how to educate military-connected students. There is limited information on this topic, however, this study will explain the challenges teachers perceive while working with students who are military-connected.

Based on the emergent themes and gaps in the literature on military connected students, This study helped explain how teachers address these challenges. Mittleburg’s study addressed

these areas and her recommendations for future research include additional studies in other locations with military connected students.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify challenges, if any, that teachers indicate exist while educating military-connected students in public schools and teacher actions to address any perceived challenges. The findings of this study identified the challenges, if any, that teachers perceive existed while educating military connected students in the public school system. The study also identified teacher actions to address the perceived challenges of mobility, socio-economic growth, and academics. The findings provided teachers with the tools necessary to address the needs of military connected students. The findings provided schools and school divisions with information that could impact their professional learning decisions.

Research Design

The use of a quantitative research design allowed the researcher to identify the variables of the study, employ statistical procedures and observe and measure information numerically. This allowed the researcher to carefully work out procedures that were highly systematic (Creswell, 2009, p. 117). This research study used a quantitative methodology by employing a survey from Mittelberg. Mittelberg's study (2014) consisted of "an investigation of the challenges that teachers face when teaching military-connected students in elementary school. To answer her three research questions, a non-experimental survey research study was conducted." (Mittelberg, 2014, p. 25)

This study uses Mittelberg's survey questions. The researcher was purposeful in the selection of schools that were of interest for the study.

Research Questions

In response to the purpose of this study, the following research questions were developed.

1. What challenges do teachers identify related to educating military-connected students?
2. What practices do teachers use to address the perceived challenges?
3. What do teachers indicate as their level of training to teach military connected students?

Population

The Commonwealth of Virginia is the home of 132 school divisions, and there are military-connected students in every Virginia school division (Education, Virginia Department of, 2018). This study included two school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia. One of those school divisions was suburban and the other rural. Both school divisions service more than 200 elementary military-connected students.

Data Collection Procedures

After the researcher, who has received IRB training (see Appendix A), received IRB approval, data were collected using the survey instrument (see Appendix B) through Qualtrics. The survey was posted electronically for public elementary school teachers in both school divisions to complete. School divisions were in close proximity to military installations. There were five elementary schools, one middle school, one junior high school and one high-school with approximately 9,860 students in one school division, and 28 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, and 7 high schools with approximately over 39,000 students in the other school division. For the purpose of this study, only the elementary schools were surveyed. Notification was sent to the superintendents of each school divisions in advance, requesting the survey be completed by elementary teachers (see Appendix C). The survey was open to all teachers who had experience educating military-connected students. Teachers were notified through email requesting their participation in the survey (see Appendix D).

Instrument Design

The instrument design used to collect data was a survey instrument with multiple choice questions.

Instrument is the generic term researcher's use for a measurement device (survey, test, questionnaire, etc.). To help distinguish between instrument and instrumentation, consider that the instrument is the device and instrumentation is the course of action (the process of developing, testing, and using the device). Instruments fall into two broad categories: researcher-completed and subject-completed, distinguished by those instruments that researchers administer versus those that are completed by participants. Researchers chose which type of instrument, or instruments, to use based on the research question. (Biddix, J. Patrick, n.d.)

The survey for this study was adapted from a dissertation by Mittelberg (2014). Mittelberg (2014) provided written permission for the survey to be used (see Appendix E). This survey consisted of several questions to teachers about military-connected students, and was aligned to the research questions as indicated in Table 1.

Data Management

The survey was distributed via e-mail and collected anonymously. The data were stored in a password protected personal computer located in the researcher’s home. These data will be retained until the successful defense of the dissertation.

Data Analysis

Quantitative researchers are interested in designs that are used to determine aggregated “differences between groups or classes of subjects with emphasis placed on precise measurement and controlling for extraneous sources of error” (Rudestam & Newton, 2014, p. 82).

Table 1

Survey Instrument

Research Question	Survey Question*
1. What challenges do teachers identify related to educating military connected students?	“Creating a safe and collaborative learning environment” “Assessment of student's background knowledge” “Meeting the individual learning needs of students” “Communication with parents” ‘Filling in students' knowledge gaps’ “Providing emotional support to students” “The adjustment of the classroom due to students leaving and arriving at various times during the school year.”
2. What practices do teachers use to address the challenges?	“I utilize my military personnel assigned to our school to help in my classroom (i.e. come to read aloud to the class, tutor, etc.)”. “I know who to ask to get more information and resources about military-connected students and families.” “My school utilizes the community to help and enrich the education of students in my school.”

(continued)

Table 1 (cont.)

Research Question	Survey Question*
3. What do teachers indicate as their level of training to teach military-connected students?	<p>“I utilize what I've learned in professional development programs provided in my school about military life/families/students to help me meet the needs of my military-connected students.”</p> <p>“During the past year, indicate the approximate number of professional development training hours you have attended in regards to military-connected students and/or families.”</p>

*All survey Questions came from Mittelberg’s survey page 69

This research is also a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables (Creswell, 2009). The quantitative data were analyzed and presented, using descriptive statistics. The percentage of respondents within each level of each response was reported. Demographic data were used to provide a description of the surveyed population..

Time Line

This study was distributed in two school divisions via e-mail to K-5 elementary teachers. The survey was accessible to participants for approximately three (3) weeks. Data were collected and analyzed to bring meaning to the data.

Methodology Summary

This study was presented using descriptive statistics derived from an online survey. The survey had already been validated through its use in a study by Mittelberg from the University of Kansas in 2014. The researcher is used a study where reliability and validity had already been established. The results of the analysis are discussed in Chapter Four.

Chapter 4

Presentation of Data and Analysis

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify the challenges, if any, that teachers indicate exist while educating military connected students in public schools and their actions to address any challenges. The data were gathered through the use of the online survey Qualtrics Survey Instrument (provided by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University) and they were presented by school division. Surveys were administered in School Division 1 and School Division 2 with permission from the superintendents. Data collected from the surveys are being presented in this chapter in response to the following research questions:

Research Questions

The participants responded to 25 questions that provided insights into the following research questions:

1. What challenges do teachers identify related to educating military-connected students?
2. What practices do teachers use to address the challenges?
3. What do teachers indicate as their level of training to teach military connected students?

Description of Participant Data

One suburban and one urban school division were selected to participate in this survey. The urban school district was identified as School Division 1 and the suburban was identified as School Division 2. School Division 1 had 112 respondents complete the survey. School Division 2 had 38 respondents complete the survey.

Demographic Data

Demographic data were collected to identify the surveyed population and to describe the setting. Demographic data were identified in Survey Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7. Tables for those disaggregated data are found in Appendix F. The respondents in school divisions represented all elementary grade levels. Of the 150 teachers who completed the survey 72% had more than 6 years of teaching experience. All but 2 had at least 1 military

connected student in their classrooms, and 74% of the teachers had more than 3. Over 62% of the teachers had military connected students join their classroom after the beginning of the school year, and almost half (48%) expected two or more students to leave their classrooms prior to the end of the year. The data indicated that the teachers are actively engaged in teaching military connected students who transition in and out of the school throughout the school year. All elementary grade levels were represented by the participants and most were experienced teachers.

Data Analysis

Research question 1: What challenges do teachers identify related to educating military connected students?

Survey question 11: Teaching military-connected students creates a challenge to me in regard to ...

In response to this survey question, participants were asked to rate the statements regarding their perceived challenges as: 1 - strongly agree, 2 - agree, 3 - neither agree nor disagree, 4 - disagree or 5 - strongly disagree. Table 2 provides the mean and count related to the responses for School Division 1. Table 3 provides the count and percent by rating for School Division 1.

Table 2

Challenges Identified by Teacher Mean and Count in School Division 1.

Statement*	Mean	Count
“Creating a safe and collaborative learning environment”	3.55	112
“Assessment of student’s background knowledge”	2.64	112
“Meeting the individual learning needs of students”	3.04	112
“Communication with parents”	3.15	112
“Filling in students’ knowledge gaps”	2.33	112
“Providing emotional support to students”	2.91	112
“The adjustment of the classroom due to students leaving and arriving at various times in the school year”	2.69	112

*All survey questions came from Mittleberg’s study (2014, p.74)

The data in Table 3 represent the School Division 1 responses from the statements on the survey. The responses solicited an answer of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Table 3

Challenges Identified by Teacher Response—Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree Nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree in School Division 1

Statement* n=112	SA	A	NA/DA	D	SD
“Creating a safe and collaborative learning environment”	10 8.93%	12 10.71%	20 17.86%	46 41.07%	24 21.43%
“Assessment of student’s background knowledge”	21 18.75%	39 34.82%	17 15.18%	29 25.89%	6 5.36%
“Meeting the individual learning needs of students”	13 11.61%	30 26.79%	22 19.64%	34 30.36%	13 11.61%
“Communication with parents”	13 11.61%	21 18.75%	25 22.32%	42 37.50%	11 9.82%
“Filling in students’ knowledge gaps”	24 21.43%	50 44.64%	18 16.0%	17 15.18%	3 2.68%
“Providing emotional support to students”	14 12.50%	33 29.46%	23 20.54%	33 29.46%	9 8.04%
“The adjustment of the classroom due to students leaving and arriving at various times in the school year”	11 9.82%	46 41.07%	30 26.79%	17 15.18%	8 7.14%

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s survey (2014, p. 74)

As the data were reviewed, in response to Statement 1, creating a safe and collaborative learning environment, of the 112 participants who answered that question, 8.93% (n=10) strongly agreed, 10.71% (n=12) agreed, 17.86% (n=20) neither agreed nor disagreed, 41.07% (n=46) disagreed and 21.43% (n=24) strongly disagreed. For Statement 2, assessment of student’s background knowledge, 18.75% (n=21) strongly agreed, 34.82 % (n=39) agreed, 15.18% (n=17) neither agreed nor disagreed, 25.89% (n=29) disagreed, and 5.36% (n=6) strongly disagreed. For Statement 3, meeting the individual learning needs of students, 11.61% (n=13) strongly agreed, 26.79% (n=30) agreed, 19.64% (n=22) neither agreed nor disagreed, 30.36% (n=34) disagreed, and 9.82% (n=13) strongly disagreed. For Statement 4, communication with parents, 11.61% (n=13) strongly agreed, 18.75% (n=21) agreed, 22.32% (n=25) neither agreed nor disagreed, 37.50% (n=42) disagreed, and 9.82% (n=11) strongly

disagreed. Data from Statement 5, filling in students’ knowledge gaps, revealed that 21.43% (n=24) strongly agreed, 44.64% (n=50) agreed, 16.07% (n=18) neither agreed nor disagreed, 15.18% (n=17) disagreed, and 2.68% (n=3) strongly disagreed. For Statement 6, providing emotional support to students, 12.50% (n=14) strongly agreed, 29.46% (n=33) agreed, 20.54% (n=23) neither agreed nor disagreed, 29.46% (n=33) disagreed, and 8.04% (n=9) strongly disagreed. Finally, for the last statement, “the adjustment of the classroom due to students leaving and arriving at various times in the school year”, 9.82% (n=11) strongly agreed, 41.07% (n=46) agreed, 26.79% (n=30) neither agreed or disagreed, 15.18% (n=17) disagreed, and 7.14% (n=8) strongly disagreed. In reviewing the responses, the majority of School Division 1 participants found the following to be challenges: assessing student’s background knowledge, filling in students’ knowledge gaps, and classroom adjustments from students’ leaving and arriving at various times.

Table 4 provides the mean and count related to the responses for School Division 2. Table 5 provides the count and percent by rating for School Division 2.

Table 4

Challenges Identified by Teachers in School Division 2

Statement*	Mean	Count
“Creating a safe and collaborative learning environment”	2.37	38
“Assessment of student’s background knowledge”	2.00	36
“Meeting the individual learning needs of students”	2.03	38
“Communication with parents”	2.34	38
“Filling in Student’ knowledge gaps”	2.11	37
“Providing emotional support to students”	2.21	38

*All survey questions came from Mittleberg’s study (2014, p. 74)

The data in Table 5 represent the School Division 2 responses from the statements on the survey. The responses solicited an answer of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Table 5

Challenges Identified by Teachers—Number of Respondents who Answered the Statement in School Division 2.

Statement*	SA	A	NA/DA	D	SD
“Creating a safe and collaborative learning environment”	10 26.32%	15 39.47%	4 10.53%	7 18.42%	2 5.26%
“Assessment of student’s background knowledge”	10 27.78%	19 52.78%	5 13.89%	1 2.78%	1 2.78%
“Meeting the individual learning needs of students”	13 34.21%	16 42.11%	5 13.16%	3 7.89%	1 2.63%
“Communication with parents”	7 18.42%	16 42.11%	11 28.95%	3 7.89%	1 2.63%
“Filling in students’ knowledge gaps”	10 27.03%	17 45.95%	7 18.92%	2 5.41%	1 2.70%
“Providing emotional support to students”	11 28.95%	14 36.84%	9 23.68%	2 5.26%	2 5.26%
“The adjustment of the classroom due to students leaving and arriving at various times in the school year”	14 37.84%	14 37.84%	8 21.62%	1 2.70%	0 0%

*All survey questions came from Mittleberg’s study (2014, p. 74)

As the data were reviewed, in response to Statement 1, asking about creating a safe and collaborative learning environment, of the 38 respondents, 26.32% (n=10) strongly agreed, 39.47% (n=15) agreed, 10.53% (n=4) neither agreed nor disagreed, 18.42% (n=7) disagreed, and 5.26% (n=2) strongly disagreed. In response to Statement 2, Assessment of student’s background knowledge, 27.78% (n=10) strongly agreed, 52.78% (n=19) agreed, 13.89% (n=5) neither agreed nor disagreed, 2.78% (n=1) disagreed and 2.78% (n=1) strongly disagreed. Of the participants responding to Statement 3, meeting the individual learning needs of students, 34.21% (n=13) strongly agreed, 42.11% (n=16) agreed, 13.16% (n=5) neither agreed nor disagreed, 7.89% (n=3) disagreed, and 2.63% (n=10) strongly disagree. In response to Statement 4, Communication with parents, 18.42% (n=7) strongly agreed, 42.11% (n=16) agreed, 28.95% (n=11) neither agreed nor disagreed, 7.89% (n=3) disagreed, and 2.63% (n=1) strongly disagreed. In response to the statement, Filling in students’ knowledge gaps, 27.03% (n=10)

strongly agreed, 45.95% (n=17) agreed, 18.92% (n=7) neither agreed nor disagreed, 5.41% (n=2) disagreed, and 2.70 (n=1) strongly agreed. When presented with statement 5, Providing emotional support to students, 28.95% (n=11) strongly agreed, 36.84% (n=14) agreed, 23.68% (n=9) neither agreed or disagreed, 5.26% (n=2) disagreed, and 5.26% (n=2) strongly disagreed. In the last statement, “the adjustment of the classroom due to students leaving and arriving at various times in the school year”, 37.84% (n=14) of the participants strongly agreed, 37.84% (n=14) agreed, 21.62% (n=8) neither agreed or disagreed, 2.70% (n=1) disagreed, and 0 strongly disagreed. A review of participant responses indicates that the majority of School Division 2 participants found all the statements indicative of challenges related to military-related students.

Survey question 12: “Listed are some of the other challenge teachers may face when a new military connected student is added to their classroom. Please select any that you think are challenges. (Check all that apply.)”

Table 6 and Table 7 present data with sets of statements where respondents were asked to select all that applied to their situation. The data are presented by statement, number of times selected, and percent of respondents.

Table 6

Responses to Statements in School Division 1

Statement*	# of times chosen	% of respondents
“Assessing student’s academic needs quickly”	75	67%
“Obtaining information about the student (past school records, grades, etc.)”	85	76%
“Integrating the new student into established groups in the classroom (e.g.-teams, reading groups, etc.)”	37	33%
“Helping the student adjust socially”	42	38%
“Helping the student learn classroom rules, routines, and procedures”	38	34%
“Finding time to get to know the student on a personal level”	43	38%
“Gathering supplies and materials for the students”	34	30%

(continued)

Table 6 (cont.)

Statement*	# of times chosen	% of respondents
“Helping the student play “catch up” academically”	95	85%
“Other (Please specify):”	5	4%

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s study (2014, p. 75)

In School Division 1, of the 112 participants, 67% (n=75) chose Assessing student’s academic needs quickly, 76% (n=85) chose “Obtaining information about the students (past school records, grades, etc.)”, 33% (n=37) chose “Integrating the new student into established groups in the classroom (e.g.-teams, reading groups, etc.)”, 38% (n=42) chose Helping the student adjust socially, 34% (n=38) chose “Helping the student learn classroom rules, routines, and procedures”, 38% (n=43) chose “Finding time to get to know the student on a personal level”, and 30% (n=34) selected “Gathering supplies and materials for the students.” “Helping the students play “catch up” academically” was the most frequently selected challenge, followed closely by obtaining information about the students and assessing student’s academic needs quickly.

Table 7

Responses to Statements in School Division 2

Statement* n=38	# of Respondents	%
“Assessing student’s academic needs quickly”	25	66%
“Obtaining information about the student (past school records, grades, etc.)”	24	63%
“Integrating the new student into established groups in the classroom (e.g.-teams, reading groups, etc.)”	24	63%
“Helping the student adjust socially”	24	63%
“Helping the student learn classroom rules, routines, and procedures”	23	61%
“Finding time to get to know the student on a personal level”	27	71%
“Gathering supplies and materials for the students”	22	58%
“Helping the student play “catch up” academically”	21	55%
“Other (Please specify):”	1	3%

*All survey questions came from Mittleberg’s study (2014, p. 75)

In School Division 2, of the 38 respondents, 66% (n=25) chose statement 1, Assessing student’s academic needs quickly, 63% (n=24) chose statement 2, “Obtaining information about the student (past school records, grades, etc.)”, 63% (n=24) chose Statement 3, “integrating the new student into established groups in the classroom (e.g.-teams, reading groups, etc.)”, 63% (n=24) chose Statement four, Helping the student adjust socially, 61% (n=23) chose Statement 5, Helping students learn classroom rules, routines, and procedures, 71% (n=27) chose Statement 6, “Finding time to get to know the student on a personal level”, 58% (n=22) chose Statement 7, Gathering supplies and materials for the students, 55% (n=21) chose Statement 8, Helping the student play “catch up” academically, and 3% (n=1) chose Statement 9, Other. The majority of Division 2 participants identified all of the statements as challenges.

Survey question 13: “Again, listed are some challenges teachers may face when a new military-connected student is added to their classroom. Please select THREE that you think are the biggest challenges.”

Table 8 and Table 9 represent data in School Division 1 and School Division 2 relating to the challenges teachers face when new military-connected students are added to their classroom by statement, number of times chosen and percentage of respondents according to the top three choices. Unlike the previous survey question, this question required participants to limit their responses to their top three.

Table 8

Top 3 Choice Responses to Statements in School Division 1

Statement*	# of times chosen	% of respondents
“Assessing student’s academic needs quickly”	77	69%
“Obtaining information about the student (past school records, grades, etc.)”	54	48%
“Integrating the new student into established groups in the classroom (e.g.-teams, reading groups, etc.)”	17	15%
“Helping the student adjust socially”	25	22%
“Helping the student learn classroom rules, routines, and procedures”	14	13%
“Communicating with parents/guardians”	9	8%
“Finding time to get to know the student on a personal level”	23	21%
“Gathering supplies and materials for the students”	19	17%
“Helping the student play “catch up” academically”	86	77%
“Other (Please specify):”	0	0%

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s study (2014, p. 75)

In this section, respondents were asked to select three responses they felt were the biggest challenges. Of the 112 School Division 1 respondents, 69% (n=77) chose Statement 1, Assessing student’s academic needs quickly, 48% (n=54) chose Statement 2, “Obtaining

information about the student (past school records, grades, etc.)”, 15% (n=17) chose Statement 3, “Integrating the new student into established groups in the classroom (e.g.-teams, reading groups, etc.)”, 22% (n= 25) chose Statement 4, “Helping the student adjust socially.” Statement 5, “Helping students learn classroom rules, routines, and procedures”, was chosen by 13% (n=7) and Statement 6, Communicating with parents/guardians, was chosen by 8% (n=9). Of School Division 1 participants, 21% (n=21) chose Statement 7, “Finding time to get to know the student on a personal level”, 17% (n=19) chose Statement 8, Gathering supplies and materials for the students, 77% (n=86) chose Statement 9, Helping the student play “catch up” academically, and none chose Other. Only Assessing student’s academic needs quickly and helping the student play “catch up” academically were selected by a majority of School Division 1 participants.

Table 9

Top 3 Choice Responses in School Division 2

Statement*	# of Respondents	%
“Assessing student’s academic needs quickly”	22	58%
“Obtaining information about the student (past school records, grades, etc.)”	12	32%
“Integrating the new student into established groups in the classroom (e.g.-teams, reading groups, etc.)”	12	32%
“Helping the student adjust socially”	22	58%
“Helping the student learn classroom rules, routines, and procedures”	7	18%
“Communicating with parents/guardians”	12	32%
“Finding time to get to know the student on a personal level”	6	16%
“Gathering supplies and materials for the students”	10	26%
“Helping the student play “catch up” academically”	11	29%
“Other (Please specify):”	0	0%

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s study (2014, p. 75)

In this section, School Division 2 respondents were asked to select 3 responses they felt were the biggest challenges. Of the 38 respondents, 58% (n=22) chose statement 1, Assessing student’s academic needs quickly, 32% (n=12) chose Statement 2, “Obtaining information about the student (past school records, grades, etc.)”, 32% (n=12) chose Statement 3, “Integrating the new student into established groups in the classroom (e.g.-teams, reading groups, etc.)”, 58% (n=22) chose Statement four, Helping the student adjust socially, and 18% (n=7) chose Statement 5, “Helping students learn classroom rules, routines, and procedures.” Statement 6, “Communicating with parents/guardians”, was chosen by 32% (n=12) and Statement 7, “Finding time to get to know the student on a personal level”, was chosen by 16% (n=6). In School Division 2, 26% (n=10) chose Statement 8, Gathering supplies and materials for the students, 29% (n=11) chose Statement 9, Helping the student play “catch up” academically, none chose other. Only Assessing student’s academic needs quickly and Helping students learn classroom rules, routines and procedures were selected by a majority of the School Division 2 participants.

Research question 2: What practices do teachers use to address the perceived challenges?

Survey question 8: Please indicate your opinion on the following statements. In the survey, in response to this survey question, School Division 1 participants were asked to rate the practices used to address perceived challenges as: 1-always, 2-most of the time, 3-sometimes, 4-rarely, or 5-never. Table 10 provides the mean and count related to the responses.

Table 10

Practices Used by Teacher Mean and Count in School Division 1.

Practices used*	Mean	Count
“I use class meetings in my classroom to develop a strong classroom environment”	2.22	112
“I use team-building or class building activities with my students to develop a strong classroom environment”	2.05	112
“I use ‘getting to know you’ activities each time a new student arrives in my classroom”	2.17	112

(continued)

Table 10 (cont.)

Practices used*	Mean	Count
“I have a routine for when new students arrive in my classroom after the beginning of the school year to help the student feel welcome and adjust to the classroom”	1.45	112
“I have a routine for when students move and are leaving my classroom to help all students deal with the transition	2.38	112

*All survey questions came from Mittleberg’s survey (2014, p. 71)

Table 11 provides the count and percent by rating for practices used by teachers for School Division 1. The response choices were 1-always, 2-most of the time, 3-sometimes, 4-rarely, or 5-never.

Table 11

Practices Used by Teachers in School Division 1

Practices used* n=112	A	M	S	R	N
“I use class meetings in my classroom to develop a strong classroom environment”	43 38.39%	22 19.64%	33 29.46%	7 6.25%	7 6.25%
“I use team-building or class building activities with my students to develop a strong classroom environment”	36 32.14%	37 33.04%	36 32.14%	3 2.68%	0 0%
“I use ‘get to know you’ activities each time a new student arrives in my classroom”	47 41.96%	22 19.64%	27 24.11%	9 8.04%	7 6.255%
“I have a routine for when new students arrive in my classroom after the beginning of the school year to help the student feel welcome and adjust to the classroom”	75 66.96%	27 24.11%	7 6.25%	3 2.68%	0 0%
“I have a routine for when students move and are leaving my classroom to help all students deal with the transition”	41 36.61%	23 20.54%	23 20.54%	15 13.39%	10 8.93%

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s study (2014, p. 71)

Data revealed that the majority of the School Division 1 respondents chose response 1-always or response 2-most of the time as a response for all of the statements. For Statement number 1, “I use class meeting in my classroom to develop a strong classroom environment”, 38.39% (n=43) stated always, 19.64% (n=22) indicated most of the time, 29.46% (n=33) indicated sometimes, 6.25% (n=7) indicated rarely, and 6.25% (n=7) chose never. For Statement 2, “I use team-building or class building activities with my students to develop a strong classroom environment”, 32.14% (n=36) marked always, 33.04% (n=37) marked most of the time, 32.14% (n=36) marked sometimes, 2.68% (n=3) marked rarely, none marked never.

In response to Statement three, “I use getting to know you activities each time a new student arrives in my classroom”, 41.96% (n=47) marked always, 19.64% (n=22) marked most of the time, 24.11% (n=27) marked sometimes, 8.04% (n=9) marked rarely, 6.25% (n=7) marked never. For Statement 4, “I have a routine for when new students arrive in my classroom after the beginning of the school year to help the student feel welcome and adjust to the classroom”, 66.96% (n=75) indicated always, 24.11% (n=27) indicated most of the time, 6.25% (n=7) indicated sometimes, 2.68% (n=3) indicated rarely, none indicated never. Finally, for Statement 5, “I have a routine for when students move and are leaving my classroom to help all students deal with the transition”, 36.61% (n=41) indicated always, 20.54% (n=23) indicated most of the time, 20.54% (n=23) indicated sometimes, 13.39% (n=15) indicated rarely and 8.93% (n=10) indicated never. While all of the statements were reflected as activities at the always or sometimes level by the majority of the School Division 1 participants, only 2 of the statements has no participants select never.

In the survey, in response to this research question, School Division 2 participants were asked to rate the practices used to address perceived challenges as: 1-always, 2-most of the time, 3-sometimes, 4-rarely, or never. Table 12 provides the mean and count related to the responses.

Table 12

Practices Used by Teachers in School Division 2

Practices used*	Mean	Count
“I use class meetings in my classroom to develop a strong classroom environment”	1.61	38
“I use team-building or class building activities with my students to develop a strong classroom environment”	1.84	38
“I use ‘getting to know you’ activities each time a new student arrives in my classroom”	2.24	38
“I have a routine for when new students arrive in my classroom after the beginning of the school year to help the student feel welcome and adjust to the classroom”	2.13	38
“I have a routine for when students move and are leaving my classroom to help all students deal with the transition”	2.11	38

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s study (2014, p. 71)

Table 13 provides the count and percent by rating for practices used by School Division 2 teachers. The response choices were 1-always, 2-most of the time, 3-sometimes, 4-rarely, or 5-never.

Table 13

Practices Used by Teachers in School Division 2

Practices used*	A	M	S	R	N
“I use class meetings in my classroom to develop a strong classroom environment”	24 63.16%	8 21.05%	4 10.53%	1 2.63%	1 2.63%
“I use team-building or class building activities with my students to develop a strong classrroom environment”	17 44.74%	14 36.84%	4 10.53%	2 5.26%	1 2.63%
“I use ‘get to know you’ activities each time a new student arrives in my classroom”	11 28.95%	12 31.58%	11 28.95%	3 7.89%	1 2.63%
“I have a routine for when new students arrive in my classroom after the beginning of the school year to help the student feel wecome and adjust to the classroom”	14 36.84%	12 31.58%	7 18.42%	3 7.89%	2 5.26%
“I have a routine for when students move and are leaving my classroom to help all students deal with the transition”	11 28.95%	15 39.47%	10 26.32%	1 2.63%	1 2.63%

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s study (2014, p. 71)

It was observed that the majority of the School Division 2 respondents chose response 1-always or response 2-most of the time as an option. For Statement one, “I use class meeting in my classroom to develop a strong classroom environment”, 63.16% (n=24) stated always, 21.05% (n=8) stated most of the time, 10.53% (n=4) stated sometimes, 2.63% (n=1) stated rarely, and 2.63% (n=1) stated never. For Statement 2, “I use team-building or class building activities with my students to develop a strong classroom environment”, 44.74% (n=17) indicated always, 36.84% (n=14) indicated most of the time, 10.53% (n=4) indicated sometimes, 5.26% (n=2) indicated rarely, and 2.63% (n=1) indicated never.

In response to Statement 3, “I use get to know you activities each time a new student arrives in my classroom”, 28.95% (n=11) marked always, 31.58% (n=12) marked most of the time, 28.95% (n=11) marked sometimes, 7.89% (n=3) marked rarely, 2.63% (n=1) marked never. For Statement four, “I have a routine for when new students arrive in my classroom after

the beginning of the school year to help the student feel welcome and adjust to the classroom”, 36.84% (n=14) responded always, 31.58% (n=12) responded most of the time, 18.42% (n=7) responded sometimes, 7.89% (n=3) responded rarely, and 5.26% (n=2) responded never. Finally, regarding Statement five, “I have a routine for when students move and are leaving my classroom to help all students deal with the transition”, 28.95% (n=11) indicated always, 39.47% (n=15) indicated most of the time, 26.32% (n=10) indicated sometimes, 2.63% (n=1) indicated rarely, and 2.63% (n=1) indicated never.

Research question 3: What do teachers indicate as their level of training to teach military-connected students?

Survey question 9: Please indicate your opinion on the following statements. In the survey, in response to this survey question, School Division 1 participants were asked to rate the statements regarding the level of training to teach military-connected students as 1- strongly agree, 2-agree, 3- neither agree nor disagree, 4-disagree, or strongly disagree. Tables 14 provides the mean and count related to the responses for School Division 1.

Table 14

Level of Training to Teach Military Connected Students in School Division 1.

Statement*	Mean	Count
“I am prepared to support military connected students in my classroom and school”	1.92	112
“I am prepared to support the parents/guardians of military connected students in my classsrom”	2.02	112
“I have received adequate training from my school about how to support military connected students and their families in the classroom and school”	3.17	112
“My teacher training program has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher of military connected students”	3.04	112

(continued)

Table 14 (cont.)

Statement*	Mean	Count
“I utilize books and materials about military families/life to help me understand military-connected students”	3.12	112
“I utilize on-line resources about military connected students to help me meet the needs of my students”	3.17	112
“I utilize what I have learned in professional development programs provided in my school about military life/families/students to help me meet the needs of military connected students”	2.86	112
“I utilize military personnel assigned to our school to help in my classroom (i.e.-come to read aloud to the class, tutor etc.)”	2.91	112

*All survey questions came from Mittleberg’s study (2014, pp. 68-69)

Tables 15 provides the count and percent by rating for the level of training to teach military-connected students for School Division 1. The responses are strongly agree, agree, Neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Table 15

Level of Training to Teach Military-Connected Students School Division 1

Statement* n=	SA	A	NA/DA	DA	SD
“I am prepared to support military connected students in my classroom and school”	37 33.04%	53 47.32%	17 15.18%	4 3.57%	1 .89%
“I am prepared to support the parents/guardians of military connected students in my classrom”	35 31.25%	51 45.54%	17 15.18%	7 6.25%	2 1.79%
“I have received adequate training from my school about how to support military connected students and their families in the classroom and school”	8 7.14%	23 20.54%	33 29.46%	38 33.93%	10 8.93%

(continued)

Table 15 (cont.)

Statement* n=	SA	A	NA/DA	DA	SD
“My teacher training program has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher of military-connected students”	9 8.04%	32 28.57%	31 27.68%	25 22.32%	15 13.39%
“I utilize books and materials about military families/life to help me understand military-connected students”	6 5.41%	29 26.13%	36 32.43%	26 23.42%	14 12.61%
“I utilize on-line resources about military connected students to help me meet the needs of my students”	3 2.68%	30 26.79%	39 34.82%	25 22.32%	15 13.39%
“I utilize what I have learned in professional development programs provided in my school about military life/families/students to help me meet the needs of military connected students”	9 8.04%	40 35.71%	33 29.46%	18 16.07%	12 10.71%
“I utilize military personnel assigned to our school to help in my classroom (i.e.- come to read aloud to the class, tutor, etc)”	11 10%	32 29.09%	37 33.64%	16 14.55%	14 12.73%

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s study (2014. Pp. 68-69)

The data from statement one, “I am prepared to support military connected students in my classroom and school”, indicated 33.04% (n=37) of the 112 respondents strongly agreed, 47.32% (n=53) agreed, 15.18% (n=17) neither agreed nor disagreed, 3.57% (n=4) disagreed, and 0.89% (n=1) strongly disagreed. In response to Statement 2, “I am prepared to support the parents/guardians of military-connected students in my classroom”, 31.25% (n=35) strongly agreed, 45.54% (n=51) agreed, 15.18% (n=17) neither agreed nor disagreed, 6.25% (n=7) disagreed, and 1.79% (n=2) strongly disagreed. For statement 3, “I have received adequate training from my school about how to support military connected students and their families in the classroom and school”, 7.14% (n=8) strongly agreed, 20.54% (n=23) agreed, 29.46% (n=33) neither agreed nor disagreed, 33.93% (n=38) disagreed, and 8.93% (n=10) strongly disagreed. In response to Statement 4, “My teacher training program has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher of military connected students”, 8.04% (n=9) strongly agreed, 28.57% (n=32)

agreed, 27.68% (n=31) neither agreed nor disagreed, 22.32% (n=25) disagreed, and 13.39% (n=15) strongly disagreed. For Statement 5, “I utilize books and materials about military families/life to help me understand military connected students”, 5.41% (n=6) strongly agreed, 26.13% (n=29) agreed, 32.43% (n=36) neither agreed nor disagreed, 23.42% (n=26) disagreed, and 12.61% (n=14) strongly disagreed. When School Division 1 participants were presented with Statement 6, “I utilize on-line resources about military-connected to help me meet the needs of my students”, 2.68% (n=3) strongly agreed, 26.79% (n=30) agreed, 34.82% (n=39) neither agreed nor disagreed, 22.32% (n=25) disagreed, and 13.39% (n=15) strongly disagreed. For Statement 7, “I utilize what I’ve learned in professional development programs provided in my school about military life/families/students to help me meet the needs of military connected students”, 8.04% (n=9) strongly agreed, 35.71% (n=40) agreed, 29.46% (n=33) neither agreed nor disagreed, 16.07% (n=18) disagreed, and 10.71% (n=12) strongly disagreed. Finally, in response to statement 8, “I utilize military personnel assigned to our school to help in my classroom (ie.-come to read aloud to the class, tutor, etc.)”, 10% (n=11) strongly agreed, 29.09% (n=32) agreed, 33.64% (n=37) neither agreed nor disagreed, 14.55% (n=16) disagreed, and 12.73% (n=14) strongly disagreed. The majority of the participants either strongly agreed or agreed that they were prepared to support both the military-connected students and their parents.

In the survey, in response to this survey question, School Division 2 participants were asked to rate the statements regarding the level of training to teach military-connected students as 1-strongly agree, 2-agree, 3- neither agree nor disagree, 4-disagree, or strongly disagree. Table 16 provides the mean and count related to the responses for School Division 2.

Table 16

Level of Training to Teach Military Connected Students in School Division 2

Statement*	Mean	Count
“I am prepared to support military connected students in my classroom and school”	1.95	38

(continued)

Table 16 (cont.)

Statement*	Mean	Count
“I am prepared to support the parents/guardians of military connected students in my classroom”	1.87	38
“I have received adequate training from my school about how to support military connected students and their families in the classroom and school”	2.05	38
“My teacher training program has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher of military connected students”	2.18	38
“I utilize books and materials about military families/life to help me understand military-connected students”	1.97	38
“I utilize on-line resources about military connected students to help me meet the needs of my students”	2.26	38
“I utilize what I have learned in professional development programs provided in my school about military life/families/students to help me meet the needs of military connected students”	2.00	38
“I utilize military personnel assigned to our school to help in my classroom (i.e.-come to read aloud to the class, tutor etc.)”	2.13	38

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s study (2014, pp. 68-69)

Tables 17 provides the count and percent by rating for the level of training to teach military-connected students for School Division 2. The responses are strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Table 17

Level of Training to Teach Military-Connected Students in School Division 2.

Statement*	SA	A	NA/DA	DA	SD
“I am prepared to support military connected students in my classroom and school”	14 36.84%	15 39.47%	7 18.42%	1 2.63%	1 2.63%
“I am prepared to support the parents/guardians of military connected students in my classroom”	14 36.84%	16 42.11%	7 18.42%	1 2.63%	0 0%
“I have received adequate training from my school about how to support military connected students and their families in the classroom and school”	14 36.84%	13 34.21%	7 18.42%	3 7.89%	1 2.63%
“My teacher training program has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher of military-connected students”	12 31.58%	13 34.21%	9 23.68%	2 5.26%	2 5.26%
“I utilize books and materials about military families/life to help me understand military-connected students”	9 23.68%	22 57.89%	6 15.79%	1 2.63%	0 0%
“I utilize on-line resources about military connected students to help me meet the needs of my students”	8 21.05%	17 44.74%	9 23.68%	3 7.89%	1 2.63%
“I utilize what I have learned in professional development programs provided in my school about military life/families/students to help me meet the needs of military connected students”	14 36.84%	13 34.21%	8 21.05%	3 7.89%	0 0%
“I utilize military personnel assigned to our school to help in my classroom (i.e.- come to read aloud to the class, tutor, etc)”	8 21.05%	20 52.63%	7 18.42%	3 7.89%	0 0%

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s study (2014, pp.. 68-69)

The data from statement one, “I am prepared to support military connected students in my classroom and school”, indicate 36.84% (n=14) of the School Division 2 respondents

strongly agreed, 39.47% (n=15) agreed, 18.42% (n=7) neither agreed nor disagreed 2.63% (n=1) disagreed, and 2.635 (n=1) strongly disagreed. For Statement 2, “I am prepared to support the parents/guardians of military-connected students in my classroom”, 36.84% (n=14) strongly agreed, 42.11% (n=16) agreed, 18.42% (7) neither agreed nor disagreed, 2.63% (n=1) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. In response to Statement 3, “I have received adequate training from my school about how to support military connected students and their families in the classroom and school”, 36.64% (n=14) strongly agreed, 34.21% (n=13) agreed, 18.42% (n=7) neither agreed nor disagreed, 7.89% (n=3) disagreed, and 2.63% (n=1) strongly disagreed. For Statement 4, “My teacher training program has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher of military connected students”, 31.58% (n=12) strongly agreed, 34.21% (n=13) agreed, 23.68% (n=9) neither agreed nor disagreed, 5.26% (n=2) disagreed, and 5.26% (n=2) strongly disagreed. When responding to Statement 5, “I utilize books and materials about military families/life to help me understand military connected students”, 23.68% (n=9) strongly agreed, 57.89% (n=22) agreed, 15.79% (n=6) neither agreed nor disagreed, 2.63% (n=1) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. For Statement 6, “I utilize on-line resources about military-connected to help me meet the needs of my students”, 21.05% (n=8) strongly agreed, 44.74% (n=17) agreed, 23.68% (n=9) neither agreed nor disagreed, 7.89% (n=3) disagreed, and 2.63% (n=1) strongly disagreed. In response to Statement 7, “I utilize what I’ve learned in professional development programs provided in my school about military life/families/students to help me meet the needs of military connected students”, 36.84% (n=14) strongly agreed, 34.21% (n=13) agreed, 21.05% (n=8) neither agreed nor disagreed, 7.89% (n=3) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. Finally, in responding to Statement 8, “I utilize military personnel assigned to our school to help in my classroom (ie.-come to read aloud to the class, tutor, etc.)”, 21.05% (n=8) strongly agreed, 52.63% (n=20) agreed, 18.42% (n=7) neither agreed nor disagreed, 7.89% (n=3) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. In reviewing the data, the majority of School Division 2 participants strongly agreed or agreed with all 8 statements.

Survey question 3: During the past year, “indicate the approximate number of professional development training (hours) you have attended in regards to military-connected students and/or families.”

Survey Question three sought to determine the amount of recent professional development received by the participants. Table 18 presents data on the professional

development training hours of the teachers in School Division 1 who taught military-connected students. Data are displayed in hours, percent, and count.

Table 18

Professional Development Training Hours in School Division 1

Hours	Percent	Count
0	56.25%	63
1-3	39.29%	44
4-6	1.79%	2
More than 6	2.68%	3
Total	100%	112

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s survey (2014, p. 73)

According to the responses of participants from School Division 1, the number of professional development hours ranged from 0 to more than 6, with 56.25% (n=63) of the participants indicating 0 hours of professional development training. Of the remaining participants, 39.29% (n=44) indicated 1-3 hours, 1.79% (n=2) indicated 4-6 hours, and 2.68% (n=3) indicate more than 6 hours of professional development training hours related to military students and families.

Table 19 provides data on the professional development training hours of the teachers in School Division 2 who taught military-connected students. The data are reported in hours, percent, and count.

Table 19

Professional Development Training Hours in School Division 2.

Hours	Percent	Count
0	36.84%	14
1-3	31.58%	12
4-6	23.68%	9
More than 6	7.89%	3
Total	100%	38

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s survey (2014, p. 73)

In response to the question related to professional development hours, of the 38 participants from School Division 2, 36.84% (n=14) had 0 hours of professional development training hours, 31.58% (n=12) had 1 to 3 hours, 23.68% (n=9) had 4 to 6 hours, and 7.89% (n=3) had more than 6 hours of professional development training hours.

Survey question 10: Please indicate your opinion on the following statements. Survey Question 10 sought to determine the level of support provided for the teachers as part of their preparedness to work with military connected students effectively. In Tables 15 and 16, teachers in School Division 1 were asked to give their opinions on the provided statements. The data were reported by mean and count in Table 20. The mean was based on the numerical indicator for strongly agree (1), agree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), disagree (4), and strongly disagree (5). (see Table 19)

Table 20

Teacher Opinions in School Division 1

Statement*	Mean	Count
“I know who to ask to get more information and resources about military-connected students and families”	2.34	112
“I have actively sought information about military-connected students by searching books, websites, and other resources to understand and meet the needs of my students”	3.01	112
“My school utilizes the community to help and enrich the education of students in my school”	2.08	112
“The leadership at the school actively shows their support of military-connected students and families”	1.99	112

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s study (2014, p. 70)

The data in Table 21 indicate the responses of teachers in School Division 1 based on strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. The responses are reported by count and percent within each category.

Table 21

Teacher Opinions in School Division 1

Statement* n=112	SA	A	NA/DA	D	SD
“I know who to ask to get more information and resources about military-connected students and families”	224 21.82%	54 49.09%	9 8.18%	17 15.45%	6 5.45%
“I have actively sought information about military-connected students by searching books, websites, and other resources to understand and meet the needs of my students”	11 10%	25 22.73%	37 33.64%	26 23.64%	11 10%
“My school utilizes the community to help and enrich the education of students in my school”	28 25.45%	54 49.09%	21 19.09%	5 4.55%	2 1.82%

(continued)

Table 21 (cont.)

Statement* n=112	SA	A	NA/DA	D	SD
“The leadership at the school actively show their support of military-connected students and families”	40 36.36%	40 36.36%	23 20.91%	5 4.55%	2 1.82%

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s survey (2014, p. 70)

The data in the table above indicate how the 112 participants responded to the statements. For Statement 1, “I know who to ask to get more information and resources about military-connected students and families”, 21.82% (n=24) strongly agreed, 49.09% (n=54) agreed, 8.18% (n=9) neither agreed nor disagreed, 15.45% (n=17) disagreed, and 5.45% strongly disagreed. For Statement 2, “I have actively sought information about military-connected students by searching books, websites, and other resources to understand and meet the needs of my students”, 10% (n=11) strongly agreed, 22.73% (n=25) agreed, 33.64% (n=37) neither agreed nor disagreed, 23.64% (n=26) disagreed, and 10% (n=11) strongly disagreed. For Statement 3, “My school utilizes the community to help and enrich the education of students in my school”, 25.25% (n=28) strongly agreed, 49.09% (n=54) agreed, 19.09% (n=21) neither agreed nor disagreed, 4.55% (n=5) disagreed, and 1.82% (n=2) disagreed. Finally, for Statement 4, “The leadership at the school actively show their support of military-connected students and families”, 36.36% (n=40) strongly agreed, 36.36% (n=40) agreed, 20.91% (n=23) neither agreed nor disagreed, 4.55% (n=5) disagreed, and 1.82% (n=2) strongly disagreed.

Statement 4, which addressed the support of school leadership, had the highest level of agreement with over 72% of the School Division 1 participants strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement. Statement 2, which addressed teacher efforts to actively seek information related to military-related students, was the only statement with less than 50% agreement among School Division 1 participants.

In Tables 22 and 23, teachers in School Division 2 were asked to give their opinions on the provided statements. The data were reported by mean and count in Table 22. The mean was based on the numerical indicator for strongly agree (1), agree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), disagree (4), and strongly disagree (5). (see Table 22)

Table 22

Teacher Opinions in School Division 2

Statement*	Mean	Number
“I know who to ask to get more information and resources about military-connected students and families”	1.92	38
“I have actively sought information about military-connected students by searching books, websites, and other resources to understand and meet the needs of my students”	2.05	38
“My school utilizes the community to help and enrich the education of students in my school”	2.08	38
“The leadership at the school actively shows their support of military-connected students and families”	2.03	38

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg’s survey (2014, Pp. 69-70)

The data in Table 23 indicate the responses of teachers in School Division 2 based on strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. The responses are reported by count and percent within each category.

Table 23

Teacher Opinions in School Division 2

Statement* n=112	SA	A	NA/DA	D	SD
“I know who to ask to get more information and resources about military-connected students and families”	14 36.84%	17 44.74%	4 10.53%	2 5.26%	1 2.63%
“I have actively sought information about military-connected students by searching books, websites, and other resources to understand and meet the needs of my students”	10 26.32%	18 47.37%	8 21.05%	2 5.26%	0 0%
“My school utilizes the community to help and enrich the education of students in my school”	11 28.95%	17 44.74%	8 21.05%	0 0%	2 5.26%

(continued)

Table 23 (cont.)

Statement* n=112	SA	A	NA/DA	D	SD
“The leadership at the school actively show their support of military-connected students and families”	11 28.95%	17 44.74%	8 21.05%	2 5.26%	0 0%

*All survey questions came from Mittleberg’s survey (2014, pp. 69–70)

The data in the table above indicate how the 38 participants responded to the statements. For Statement 1, “I know who to ask to get more information and resources about military connected students and families”, 36.84% (n=14) strongly agreed, 44.74% (n=17) agreed, 10.53% (n=4) neither agreed nor disagreed, 5.26% (n=2) disagreed, and 2.63% (n=1) strongly disagreed. For Statement 2, “I have actively sought information about military connected students by searching books, websites, and other resources to understand and meet the needs of my students”, 26.32% (n=10) strongly agreed, 47.37% (n=18) agreed, 21.05% (n=8) neither agreed nor disagreed, 5.26% (n=2) disagreed and 0 strongly disagreed. For Statement 3, “My school utilizes the community to help and enrich the education of students in my school”, 28.95% (n=11) strongly agreed, 44.74% (n=17) agreed, 21.05% (n=8) neither agreed nor disagreed, 0 disagreed and 5.26% (n=2) strongly disagreed. Finally, for Statement 4, “The leadership at the school actively shows their support of military connected students and families”, 28.95% (n=11) strongly agreed, 44.74% (n=17) agreed, 21.05% (n=8) neither agreed nor disagreed, 5.26% (n=2) disagreed, and 0 strongly disagreed. In School Division 2, the majority of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with each of the four statements, with the highest percent of agreement, over 80%, associated with the first statement related to an awareness of who to ask for information related to military-related students.

Summary

This chapter began with a description of the participants and an explanation of the process used to conduct the survey. The survey responses were organized by research question, and the responses to the questions from the survey were presented using percentages, means, and counts. The purpose of this study was to identify challenges, if any, that teachers perceive exist while educating military-connected students in public schools and teacher actions to address any perceived challenges. Chapter 5 will present the findings, an interpretation of the data and conclusions. Implications for practice and suggestions for future research will also be discussed.

Chapter 5

Findings of the Study

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the purpose of this study and research questions, followed by a discussion of the findings, implications for practice, and suggestions for further studies. The researcher's reflection on the process and experience of conducting this study will conclude the chapter.

The purpose of this study was to identify challenges, if any, that teachers indicate exist while educating military-connected students in public schools and teacher actions to address any challenges. The researcher sought to examine the following research questions:

1. What challenges do teachers identify related to educating military-connected students?
2. What practices do teachers use to address the perceived challenges?
3. What do teachers indicate as their level of training to teach military connected students?

This quantitative research approach was used and a descriptive statistical methodology was followed to examine the perceptions of the teachers. The findings are presented below.

Summary of Findings

This chapter details the findings that were derived from the descriptive statistics compiled from survey responses. These surveys were completed by teachers in two different school divisions. Data from these surveys yielded the findings that are presented below. These findings are aligned with the research by Astor et al. (2013) that states “teachers working in schools that serve military-connected families should be aware of and informed about the unique situations these students and families experience in order to meet their needs.” (Astor, DePddro, Gilreath, Esqueda, & Benbenishty, 2013)

Finding 1: Teachers perceived that assessment of students' background knowledge was a challenge when teaching military-connected students. Of the teachers surveyed in School Division 1, 53.57 % responded strongly agreed or agreed that identifying assessment of students' background knowledge as a challenge. In School Division 2, 86.56% of the teachers surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that the assessment of student's background knowledge was

a challenge. This finding supports Ladson-Billings (2014) that indicates “in addition, teachers should acknowledge, value, support and respond to the cultural values, traditions, communication, learning styles, contributions and relational patterns of all students in the classroom” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 78).

Finding 2: Teachers perceived that filling in students’ knowledge gaps was a challenge when teaching military-connected students. Of the teachers surveyed in School Division 1, 66.07% strongly agreed or agreed that filling in student’s knowledge gaps was a challenge when teaching military connected students. In School Division 2, 78.92% of the teachers responded either strongly agreed or agreed that filling in student’s knowledge gaps was a challenge when teaching military connected students. The practice of filling in students’ knowledge gaps supports the research of (Becky et al, 2016) the impact of military lifestyle has a strain on military connected student’s learning. The academic standards may vary in lack of continuity in academics may lead to gaps in skills, teacher expectations vary, curricular expectations differ, accountability of students are expected to be absorbed for their own learning and students can enter the school behind or ahead of classmates.

Finding 3: Teachers perceived the adjustment to students leaving and arriving at various times in the school year were a challenge when teaching military-connected students. Of the teachers surveyed in School Division 1, 50.89% strongly agreed and agreed the adjustment to students leaving and arriving at various times in the school year were a challenge when teaching military-connected students. Likewise, in School Division 2, 75.68% of the teachers surveyed strongly agreed and agreed the adjustment of students leaving and arriving at various times in the school year were a challenge when teaching military connected students. These difficulties impacted learning (Harris, Patrick, & Ragone, 2016, p. 6). “Changing schools can be very stressful, filling students with anxiety and, depending on their age, be downright frightening. Students wonder how they will cope with their new school both academically and socially” (Alward, 2011, p. np).

Finding 4: Teachers perceived that having a routine in place when a new military-connected student arrives into the classroom after the start of the school year helps students feel welcome and adjust to the classroom environment. Of the teachers surveyed in School Division 1, 91% either used this practice always or most of the time. In School Division 2, 67% of the teachers used this practice. “Teachers can also naturally foster skills in students

through their interpersonal and student-centered instructional interactions throughout the school day. Adult-student interactions support SEL when they result in positive student-teacher relationships, enable teachers to model social-emotional competencies for students, and promote student engagement (Williford & Wilcott, p. 513).” Education practices that provide students with emotional support and create chances for students’ voice, autonomy, and mastery experiences encourage student commitment in the educational process. (Weissberg, Durlak, & Gullotta, Mindup.org, 2020)

Finding 5: Teachers perceived the use of team building or class building activities with students to develop a strong classroom environment is a measure to help students adjust. Of the teachers surveyed in School Division 1, 65% of the teachers used this measure to help students adjust to the classroom environment either always or most of the time. In School Division 2, 80% of the teachers used this measure either always or most of the time. “The more information teachers have about their students, the better they are able to meet students’ needs and support student learning. With a better understanding of their students, teachers can be more effective in their selection of instructional strategies, their adjustments for individual differences, and their interactions with students and their families.” (Burden & Byrd, 2016, p. 51)

Finding 6: Teachers perceived that using getting to know you activities each time a new student arrives in the classroom is an effective measure used. Of the teachers surveyed in School Division 1, 60% of the teachers responded either always or most of the time used this measure. In School Division 2, 59% of the teachers who responded used this measure either always or most of the time. According to Burden and Byrd (2013) Teachers would benefit from information about each student by arranging for icebreaker activities for students to get to know each other at the start of the school year. Much information about each student can be learned simply by watching students interact during these icebreakers. Informal observation and interaction with students also provide opportunities to learn more about each student.” (Burden & Byrd, 2016, p. 53)

Finding 7: Teachers indicated they have received a level of training that has prepared them to support military-connected students in their classrooms and school. Of the teachers surveyed in School Division 1, 80% of the teachers either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. In School Division 2, 76% of the teachers either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. However, while they say they are trained, the data show in School Division

1, 56.25% received zero hours of professional development training, and, in School Division 2, 36.84% indicate they received zero hours of professional development training. In 2011, Mercer of Kansas State University initiated a program with the guiding principles set forth by the Educate the Educators program that raise the awareness of the unique needs of military-connected students, laid out four initial objectives for our future teachers:

These objectives were; 1. Identify the most critical concepts future teachers should know regarding teaching the military-connected child. 2. Make suggestions of where these concepts might best be taught across our teacher education curriculum. 3. Plan professional development sessions for faculty and students. 4. Identify and/or develop resources for faculty and student development to include a documentary featuring military-connected students in our program and their stories. (Mercer, Thurston, & Hughey, 2014, pp. 7-8)

Finding 8: Teachers indicated they have received a level of training that has prepared them to support the parents/guardians of military-connected students in their classrooms. Of the teachers surveyed in School Division 1, 76% either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. In School Division 2, 78% of the teachers either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. “School liaison officers also provided support and guidance about workshop content and family engagement. MCEC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, world-wide organization, focused on ensuring quality educational opportunities for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition. (South Carolina Oversight Committee, 2018, p. 22).”

Implications for Practitioners

The results of this study indicate numerous implications for practice.

Implication 1: School leaders should investigate ways to assist teachers in assessing students’ background knowledge to not be a challenge. One way might be to provide teachers with professional development opportunities with individuals who have taught military connected students and have dealt with assessing students’ background knowledge. This implication is in response to Finding 1.

Implication 2: School leaders should consider providing additional personnel and resources that could focus on meeting the needs of students’ who have gaps in knowledge. One resource might be having school division personnel connect with other locations with

military-connected populations who have had success with similar experiences. This is in response to Finding 2.

Implication 3: Provide teachers with a welcome and departure packets to give to students as they arrive and leave to help with the transitions. If teachers have the information to give to students as they arrive, it will help students with the transition of attending a new school. This in response to Finding 3.

Implication 4: School leaders should work with teachers to develop a school division-wide routine for welcoming new students who arrive after the beginning of the school year. Guidance counselors could be useful resources. School counselors have the background knowledge to design interventions to build self-esteem and purpose in students. This skill can help develop the new students as they arrive. This is in response to Finding 4.

Implication 5: School divisions should consider developing a handbook of team-building and getting to know you resources for teachers to use throughout the school year to assist in building a strong classroom environment. Having a handbook will give teachers an additional resource to use in the classroom environment. This is in response to Findings 5 and 6.

Implication 6: School divisions should continue to provide a level of training that can prepare teachers to support military-connected students in their classrooms. This could include professional development opportunities with the school liaison officer at the nearest installation. This is in response to Finding 7.

Implication 7: Teacher preparation programs should consider addressing the challenges of military-connected students, as well as other transient populations, and ways to address those challenges as part of their professional training for teacher candidates. If teacher education programs addressed the encounters that military connected students faced as they move from place to place. Teachers will be better prepared when they enter the classroom. This is in response to Finding 7.

Implication 8: School divisions should continue to support the teachers in efforts to support the parents/guardians of military-connected students in their classrooms. One possible option could include working with the military installation MWR and school liaison to support for teachers; they will know the specific needs of the parents/guardians of the military-connected students first hand. This is in response to Finding 8.

Suggestions for Future Research

There are several areas that warrant future research as listed below.

1. The setting could be expanded to more school divisions, either within Virginia or beyond Virginia in other states.
2. The population could be expanded to include middle and high school teachers, and could expand to compare the challenges among and between school levels.
3. In this study, demographic data were used to describe the population, but not used to compare their responses. In a larger sample, comparisons could be made between experienced and inexperienced teachers, teachers with more or fewer military-related students, and teachers with more or less professional development.
4. Because DoDEA offers Grant Funding at the school district level, documentation could be collected to determine what training measures are being implemented.
5. Because DoDEA offers Grant Funding at the school district level, school divisions that utilize those grants could be surveyed to determine what they have done, how effective those actions have been, and what gaps still exist in educating military-connected students.
6. Because graduation is a major issue for transient military-connected students, identifying how states address the challenges in meeting state standards is another study to consider.

Summary

Chapter 5 provided a summary of findings from this study, including supportive data and associative prior research. Implications in response to those findings, were also provided. The chapter concluded with suggestions for future research. This initial study adds to the literature related to effectively educating military-connected students. It can be a foundation for future research.

References

- Alexander, K., & Entwisle, D. D. (1996). Children in motion: School transfers and elementary school performance. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 3-12.
- Alward, M. M. (2011, January 8). *Changing schools isn't easy: Tips for a successful transition*. Retrieved from Local School Directory.com: www.localschooldirectory.com
- Arnold, P., Garner, J., Neale-McFall, & Nunnery, J. (2011, September 30). *Needs of military connected school divisions in South-Eastern Virginia*. Norfolk, Virginia: Old Dominion University.
- Astor, R., DePddro, K., Gilreath, T., Esqueda, M., & Benbenishty, R. (2013). The promotional role of school and community contexts for military students. *Clinical Child Family Psychological Review*, 233-244.
- Biddix, J. Patrick. (n.d.). *Research rundowns*. Retrieved from https://researchrundowns.files.wordpress.com/2009/07/rriinstrumentvalidityreliability_72009.pdf
- Blazer, C. (2007, March). Information capsule. *Research Services*. Miami, Florida, United States of America: Research Services Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis.
- Bouffard, S. M. (2012). *Social and emotional learning in schools from programs to strategies*. Social Policy Report.
- Bradshaw, C., Sudhinaraset, M., Mmari, K., & Blum, R. (2010). School transitions among military adolescents; A qualitative study of stress and coping. *School Psychology Review*, 84-105.
- Bruno, J. E., & Isken, J. (1996). Inter and intraschool site student transience: Practical and theoretical implications for instructional continuity at inner city schools. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 139-252.
- Burden, P., & Byrd, D. (2016). *Methods for Effective Teaching: Meeting the needs of all students*. Pearson
- Canon, G. (2011, April 12). Military children face greater academic challenges due to relocation and emotional stress. *Education*, 2-5. Retrieved from Huffington Post: https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/military-children-education_n_847537
- Center, E. P. (2017, June 17). *Issues A-Z: Student mobility: How it affects learning*. Retrieved from Education Week: www.edweek.org/ew/issues/student-mobility/

- Cooper, F. S. (2010, May). Trauma faced by children of military families. *National Center for Children in Poverty*, pp. 3-9. Retrieved from National Center for Children in Poverty.
- Creswell, J. (2009). Research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. In J. W. Creswell, *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (p. 117). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Crooks, T. (2017, June 10). *Military children and PCS*. Retrieved from Military.com: www.military.com/spouse/military-relocation/pcs-moves/military-children-and-pcs
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hammerness, K., Grossman, P., Rust, F., & Schulman, L. (2005). Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do. In L. D.-H. Bransford, *The design of teacher education programs* (pp. 390-441). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- De Pedro, K., Astor, R., Benbenishty, R., J, E., Smith, G., & Esqueda, M. (2011). The children of military service members, Challenges, supports, and future educational research. *Review of Educational Research*, 566-618.
- Defense, D. O. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/wp.../military_child_identifier.pdf
- Defense, D. O. (2011, June). *Educational options and performance of military-connected school districts*. Department of Defense.
- Department of Defense Education Activity. (2020, February 21). *Department of defense education activity*. Retrieved from <https://www.dodea.edu/aboutDoDEA/index.cfm>: <https://www.dodea.edu/aboutDoDEA/index.cfm>
- DePedro, K., Esqueda, M., Cederbaum, J., & Astor, R. (2014, May). District, School and Community Stakeholder Perspectives on the Experiences of Military Connected Students. *Teachers College Record*, 116, 1-32.
- DODEA. (2017).
- DODEA. (2018, March 17). *Department of defense education activity* . Retrieved from Department of Defense Education Activity DoDEA Facts: www.dodea.edu
- Education, A. A. (2020, 1 14). Retrieved from Education, American Association for Colleges for Teacher: https://secure.aacte.org/apps/rl/res_get.php?fid=1256&ref=rl
- Education, U. S. (2017, 3 21). *Office of Elementary and Secondary Education*. Retrieved from U. S. Department of Education: www2.ed.gov

- Engel, R., Gallagher, L., & Lyle, D. (2008). Military deployments and children's academic achievement: Evidence from Department of Defense Education Activity Schools. *Economics in Education Review*, 73-82.
- Fisher, T., Matthews, L., Stafford, M., Nakagawa, K., & Durante, K. (2002). School personnel's perceptions of effective programs for working with mobile students and families. *Elementary School Journal*, 317-333.
- Garner, J., Arnold, P., & Nunnery, J. (2014). School wide impact of military-connected student enrollment: Educators' perceptions. *Children & Schools*, 31-39.
- Gruman, D. H., W., H. T., Abbott, R. D., Cantalano, R. F., & Fleming, C. B. (2008). Longitudinal effects of student mobility on three dimensions of elementary school engagement. *Child Development*, 1833-1852.
- Hango, D. (2006). The long-term effect of childhood residential mobility on educational attainment. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 631-664.
- Harris, B., Patrick, J., & Ragone, M. (2016, April 9). *Fairfax County Public Schools*. Retrieved from Fairfax County Public Schools: www.fcpc.k12.va.us
- Ho, J., & Suzanne, F. (2018). Promoting young children's social and emotional health. *NAEYC*, 8-12.
- Hoy, W. K., & Adams, C. (2016). *Quantitative research in education a primer*. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: SAGE.
- Ihrke, D., Faber, C., & Koerber, W. (2011). *United States Census Bureau*. Retrieved from Census: www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p20-565.pdf
- Isernhagen, J., & Nadia, B. (2010). The impact of mobility on student performance and teacher practice. *The Journal of At-Risk Issues*, 17-24.
- Jones, S., & Bouffard, S. (2012). Social and emotional learning in schools from programs to strategies. *Social Policy Report*, 3-32.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0. *Harvard Review*, 74-84.
- Lash, A., & Kirkpatrick, S. (1990). A classroom perspective on student mobility. *The Elementary School Journal*, 176-191.
- Mao, M., Whitsett, M., & Mellor, L. (1998). Student mobility, academic performance and school accountability. *ERS Spectrum*, 3-15.

- Mercer, D., Thurston, L., & Hughey, J. (2014). The college-wide military connected learner initiative in K-State's College of Education. *The Advocate*, 1-10.
- Merriam-Webster. (2020, February 21). <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/challenge>. Retrieved from Merriam-Webster Dictionary: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/challenge>
- Mittelberg. (2014). The challenges teacher's face educating military connected students. 1-95. Kansas City, Kansas: Kansas State University.
- Office, United States Government Accountability. (2011). *Education of military dependent students-better information needed to assess student performance*. Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office.
- Patricia A. Popp, P. (2014). *Tips for supporting mobile students*. Williamsburg: Project Hope Virginia The College of William and Mary.
- Pekel, K. (2016, April 5). *Solving America's crisis of academic motivation*. Retrieved from Search Institute. org: www.search-institute.org
- Richardson, A., Chandra, A., Martin, L., Claude, S., Hallmark, B., Campbell, N., . . . Grady, P. (2011). *Effects of soldiers' deployment on children's academic performance and behavioral health*. Arlington: RAND Corporation.
- Risberg, S., Curtis, L., & Shivers, L. (2014, September 1). A professional development school in action: Meeting the needs of military connected students and families. *The Kansas State University Professional Development School Partnership*, 43-48.
- Rivers, M. A. (2013). *Transforming students' lives with social and emotional learning*. New Haven: Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.
- Robinson, K. (2012). *Student mobility effects on academic achievement in grade school students*. Retrieved from ProQuest: UMI 3540662
- Rudestam, K., & Newton, R. (2014). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process*. Sage Publications.
- Rumberger, R. W. (2015, June). *Student Mobility causes, consequences and solutions*. Retrieved from National Education Policy Center (Great Lakes Center for Education Research & Practice): www.greatlakescenter.org

- Schmitt, S., Lewis, K., Duncan, R. K., & Napoli, A. (2018). The effects of positive action on preschoolers' social-emotional competence and health behaviors. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 141-151.
- Silvernail, J., & Adams, B. (2016). *Supporting military children: Tools for schools*. Military Impact Schools Association & Military Students.org.
- Sogomanyan, F., & Cooper, J. (2010, May). Trauma faced by children of military families: What every policy maker should know. *National Center for Children in Poverty*, 1-12.
- South Carolina Oversight Committee. (2018). *2018 Educational performance of military connected students*. Columbia.
- Sparks, S. D. (2016). Student mobility: How it affects learning. *Education Week*, 2-6.
- The Free Dictionary.com*. (2017, May 27). Retrieved from www.thefreedictionary.com
- Trawick-Smith, J. (2013). *Early childhood development a multicultural perspective*. Pearson.
- Utley, C. A., Obiakor, F. E., & Bakken, J. P. (2011). Culturally responsive practices for culturally and linguistically diverse students with learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities: A contemporary Journal*, 5-18.
- Vavrus, M. (2008). Culturally responsive teaching. *Teaching preparation and current issues in teaching*, 49-57.
- Weissberg, R. (2016, February 15). Why social and emotional learning is essential for students. *Edutopia*, 6.
- Weissberg, R., Durlak, J. D., & Gullotta, T. (2020). *Mindup.org*. Retrieved from Mindup.org: <https://mindup.org/why-social-and-emotional-learning-is-essential-for-students/>
- Williford, A., & Wilcott, C. (n.d.). SEL and student teacher relationships. In J. Durlak, C. Domitrovich, R. Weissberg, & T. Gullotta, *Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning*. New York : Guilford Press.
- Wood, S., Greenleaf, A., & Thompson-Gillespie, L. (2012). Promising practices for school counselors working with students of military families. *Counseling Today*, 10-14.
- Wykes, B. (2015, June). *Support and defend the K-12 education of military-connected children*.

Appendix A

Human Subjects Training Certificate of Completion



Appendix B

Survey

The Challenges Public School Teachers Face Educating Military Connected Students

Q1 “How many years have you taught students with a military connection.”

- 1 year or less (1)
- 2-5 years (2)
- More than 6 years (3)

Q2 “At what grade level are you teaching?”

- K (1)
- (2)
- (3)
- (4)
- (5)
- (6)

Q3 “During the past year, indicate the approximate number of professional development training (hours) you have attended in regards to military-connected students and/or families.”

- (1)
- 1-3 (2)
- 4-6 (3)
- more than 6 (4)

Q4 “Thinking about your class this year, how many students are military connected.”

- (1)
- 1-3 (2)
- 4-6 (3)
- 7-10 (4)
- more than 10 (5)

Q5 “How many students have joined your classroom due to military-related reasons?”

- (1)
- 2-3 (2)
- 4-5 (3)
- 6 or more (4)
- I'm not sure (5)

Q6 “How many students left (or you know are planning to leave) your classroom this year due to military-related reasons?”

- (1)
- 2-3 (2)
- 4-5 (3)
- 6 or more (4)
- I'm not sure (5)

Q7 “How many students have taken extended absences (3 or more days) this school year due to military-related reasons? (Please exclude those due to illness)”

- (1)
- 2-3 (2)
- 4-5 (3)
- 6 or more (4)
- I'm not sure (5)

Q8” Please indicate your opinion on the following statements.”	Always (1)	Most of the time (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
“I use class meeting in my classroom to develop a strong classroom environment” (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
“I use team-building or class building activities with my students to develop a strong classroom environment.” (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
“I use 'getting to know you' activities each time a new student arrives in my classroom” (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
“I have a routine for when new students arrive in my classroom after the beginning of the school year to help the student feel welcome and adjust to the classroom” (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

“I have a routine for when students move and are leaving my classroom to help all students deal with the transition” (5)

Q9 “Please indicate your opinion on the following statements”

Strongly Agree (1)

Agree (2)

Neither Agree Nor Disagree (3)

Disagree (4)

Strongly Disagree (5)

“I am prepared to support military connected students in my classroom and school” (1)

“I am prepared to support the parents/guardians of military-connected students in my classroom” (2)

“I have received adequate training from my school about how to support military-connected students and their families in the classroom and school” (3)

“My teacher training program has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher of military-connected students” (4)

“I utilize books and materials about military families/life to help me understand military-connected students” (5)

“I utilize on-line resources about military-connected students to help me meet the needs of my students.” (6)

“I utilize what I’ve learned in professional development programs provided in my school about military life/families/students to help me meet the needs of military connected students.” (7)

“I utilize military personnel assigned to our school to help in my classroom (i.e.- come to read aloud to the class, tutor, etc.)” (8)

Q10 “Please indicate your opinion on the following statements”

Strongly Agree (1)

Agree (2)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

disagree (4)

Strongly Disagree (5)

“I know who to ask to get more information and resources about military-connected students and families” (1)

<p>“I have actively sought information about military-connected students by searching books, websites, and other resources to understand and met the needs of my students” (2)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>“My school utilizes the community to help and enrich the education of students in my school” (3)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>“The leadership at the school actively shows their support of military-connected students and families” (4)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11	“Teaching military-connected students creates a challenge for me in regard to... “				
	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
<p>“Creating a safe and collaborative learning environment” (1)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

“Assessment of student’s background knowledge” (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
“Meeting the individual learning needs of students” (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
“Communication with parents” (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
“Filling in students’ knowledge gaps” (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
“Providing emotional support to students” (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
“The adjustment of the classroom due to students leaving and arriving at various times in the school year” (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12 “Listed are some of the other challenges teachers may face when a new military connected student is added to their classroom. Please select any that you think are challenges (Check all that apply)”

- Assessing student’s academic needs quickly (1)
- Obtaining information about the student (past school records, grades, etc.) (2)
- Integrating the new student into established groups in the classroom (e.g.-teams, reading groups, etc.) (3)
- Helping the student adjust socially (4)
- Helping the student learn classroom rules, routines ,and procedures (5)
- Finding time to get to know the student on a personal level (6)
- Gathering supplies and materials for the students (7)
- Helping the student play “catch up” academically (8)
- Other (Please specify): _____ (9)



Q13 “Again, listed are some challenges teachers may face when a new military connected student I added to their classroom. Please select THREE that you think are the biggest challenges (CHECK ONLY 3)”

- Assessing student’s academic needs quickly (1)
- Obtaining information about the student (past school records, grades, etc.) (2)
- Integrating the new student into established groups in the classroom (e.g. teams, reading groups, etc.) (3)
- Helping the student adjust socially (4)
- Helping the student learn classroom rules, routines, and procedures (5)
- Communicating with parents/guardians (6)
- Finding time to get to know the student on a personal level (7)
- Gathering supplies and materials for the student (8)
- Helping the student play “catch up” academically (9)
- Other (please specify): _____ (10)

Appendix C
Letter to Superintendent

November 13, 2018

Superintendent of Schools:

My name is Priscilla Hicks and I am a Doctoral Student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State Institute and University in Blacksburg, Virginia. In partial fulfillment of our requirements for the doctoral program, I must complete a research study and would like to ask for your permission to conduct a research study entitled “The Challenges Elementary Teachers Face Educating Military Connected Students”.

I am asking your school district to allow me to e-mail a survey to your elementary school teachers. Participation in the survey is entirely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study. The names of the respondents and the name of your school division will not appear in any dissertations or publications resulting from this study. The data gathered will remain confidential and is to be used for academic purposes. You may contact me by e-mail hpris70@vt.edu or by phone (804) 721.2722. Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Priscilla L. Hicks
Graduate Student
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
hpris70@vt.edu

Dr. Carol S. Cash, Co-Chair
Clinical Associate Professor
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
ccash48@vt.edu

Dr. Ted Price, Co-Chair
Assistant Professor
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
pted7@vt.edu

Appendix D
Letter to Participant

November 13, 2018

Participant:

My name is Priscilla Hicks and I am a graduate student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. I am completing a research study entitled “The Challenges Elementary Teachers Face Educating Military-Connected Students.” I am inviting you to participate in a research study by completing the attached survey. This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Your answers are completely anonymous and will be used for academic purposes. The data collected will provide useful information about the military-connected students in your area. Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors.

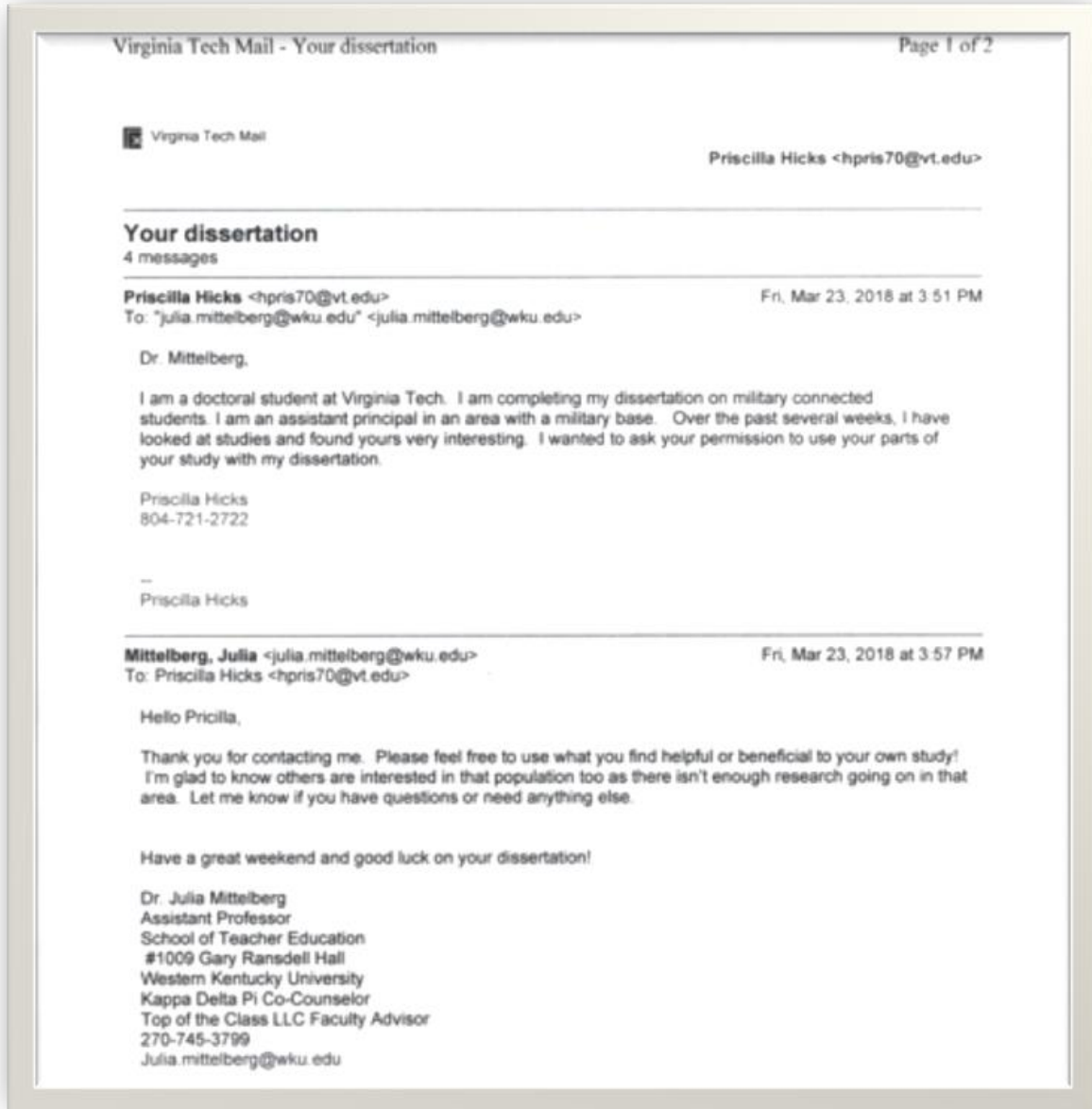
Sincerely,

Ms. Priscilla Hicks
Graduate Student
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
hpris70@vt.edu

Dr. Carol S. Cash, Co-Chair
Clinical Associate Professor
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
ccash48@vt.edu

Dr. Ted Price, Co-Chair
Assistant Professor
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
pted7@vt.edu

Appendix E
Permission of Use from Dr. Mittelberg



Appendix F
Demographic Data

Table 24

Teacher Years of Experience Teaching Military-Connected Students in School Division 1

Years of Experience*	Percentages	Count
1 year or less	2.68%	3
2-5 years	17.86%	20
More than 6 years	79.46%	89
Total	100%	112

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg's survey (2014, p. 77)

Table 25

Teacher Years of Experience Teaching Military Connected Students School Division 2

Years of Experience*	Percentages	Count
1 year or less	17.95%	6
2-5 years	33.33%	13
More than 6 years	48.72%	19
Total	100%	38

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg's survey (2014, p. 77)

Table 26

Grade Levels Taught in School Division 1

Grade Level	Percentage	Count
Kindergarten	17.86%	20
First Grade	20.54%	23
Second Grade	14.28%	16
Third Grade	13.39%	15
Fourth Grade	17.86%	20
Fifth Grade	16.07%	18
Total	100%	112

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg's survey (2014, p. 77)

Table 27

Grade Levels Taught in School Division 2

Grade Level	Percentage	Count
Kindergarten	13.16%	5
First Grade	10.53%	4
Second Grade	23.68%	9
Third Grade	21.05%	8
Fourth Grade	21.05%	8
Fifth Grade	10.53%	4
Total	100%	38

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg's survey (2014, p. 77)

Table 28

Military-Connected Students in the Classroom in School Division 1

Number of Military Connected Students	Percent	Count
0	0%	0
1-3	21.62%	24
4-6	33.33%	37
7-10	27.93%	31
More than 10	17.12%	19
Total	100%	112

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg's survey (2014, p. 76)

Table 29

Military Connected Students in the Classroom in School Division 2

Number of Military Connected Students	Percent	Count
0	5.26%	2
1-3	31.58%	12
4-6	26.32%	10
7-10	26.32%	10
More than 10	10.53%	4
Total	100%	38

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg's survey (2014, p. 76)

Table 30

Students who have Joined the Classroom Due to Military Related Reasons in School Division 1.

Joined Classroom Due to Military Related Reasons	Percentage	Count
0-1	39.29%	44
2-3	31.25%	35
4-5	8.04%	9
6 or more	11.60%	13
I'm not sure	9.82%	11
Total	100%	112

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg's survey (2014, p. 76)

Table 31

Students who have Joined the Classroom Due to Military Related Reasons in School Division 2.

Joined Classroom Due to Military Related Reasons	Percentage	Count
0-1	31.58%	12
2-3	28.95%	11
4-5	18.42%	7
6 or more	18.42%	7
I'm not sure	2.63%	1
Total	100%	38

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg's survey (2014, p. 76)

Table 32

Students Planning to Leave for Military Reasons in School Division 1.

Students Leaving for Military Reasons	Percentage	Count
0-1	59.82%	67
2-3	26.79%	30
4-5	1.79%	2
6 or more	2.68%	3
I'm not sure	8.93%	10
Total	100%	112

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg's survey (2014, p. 76)

Table 33

Students Planning to Leave for Military Reasons in School Division 2.

Students Leaving for Military Reasons	Percentage	Count
0-1	26.32%	10
2-3	31.58%	12
4-5	23.68%	9
6 or more	10.53%	4
I'm not sure	7.89%	3
Total	100%	38

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg's survey (2014, p. 76)

Table 34

Number of Students Taken Extended Absences Due to Military Connected Reasons in School Division 1.

Number of Students	Percentage	Count
0-1	66.07%	74
2-3	21.43%	24
4-5	4.46%	5
6 or more	0.89%	1
I'm not sure	7.14%	8
Total	100%	112

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg's survey (2014, p. 76)

Table 35

Number of Students Taken Extended Absences Due to Military Connected Reasons in School Division 2.

Number of Students	Percentage	Count
0-1	36.84%	14
2-3	15.79%	6
4-5	21.05%	8
6 or more	18.42%	7
I'm not sure	7.89%	3
Total	100%	38

*All survey questions came from Mittelberg's survey (2014, p. 76)