


# From Access to Action: Rethinking How We Support Military Related Students

Tracy Teater - Associate Director, Adult Attainment | Kentucky Student Success Collaborative
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Jan Goldman- Senior Fellow, Strategic Initiatives Workforce & Economic Development | Executive Director, KCLN
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

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# Learning Objectives

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|---|---|
| By the end of today's session, participants will be able to: | Identify common characteristics and challenges of military-connected students |
| | Apply best practices for initial advising conversations |
| | Understand the importance of early Joint Services Transcript (JST) evaluation |
| | Help military students develop realistic academic plans |
| | Recommend time management and success strategies for nontraditional learners |
| | Connect military students with appropriate campus resources |

**Admissions questions:**

- What classes have you already completed?
- Any AP credit or dual credit?
- How much prior coursework, military training, or work experience can count toward the degree?
- Do schedules, online options, and military benefits fit their lives now?
- Can an advisor offer a clear, realistic path back?

Age 36 average — nearly half are 35 or older

1 in 5 has a military connection

1 in 10 is a military veteran

# Where Engagement Starts

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# Military Connected Students Are Unique




- ❑ We need advising built for active military related students, adults or veterans.
- ❑ We need clear transfer guidance.
- ❑ We need a focused plan for the final stretch of high school and college completion of a credential.

# Who Are Military-Connected Students?

**Military-Connected Students May Include:**

- Active Duty Service Members
- Active Duty High School Dependents
- National Guard Members
- Reservists
- Veterans
- Military Spouses
- Dependents using transferred educational benefits

**Key Reality**

Military students are not a monolithic group.

Each student's:

- Service experience
- Age
- Family situation
- Career goals
- Academic preparation

may be dramatically different.

# Understanding Today's Military Related Student

- ✓ Older than traditional students
- ✓ Working full-time
- ✓ Supporting families
- ✓ (Active-Duty) High Schoolers who are new to a school
- ✓ First-generation college students
- ✓ Returning to school after several years
- ✓ Balancing military obligations with academics

**Pair & Share Discussion Question**

"What assumptions do we often make about military related students that may not be accurate?"

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# Strengths Military Related Students Bring

**Assets They Bring to Campus**

- ✓ Leadership experience
- ✓ Cultural Awareness
- ✓ Diversity
- ✓ Teamwork skills
- ✓ Discipline and accountability
- ✓ Resilience
- ✓ Goal orientation
- ✓ Experience managing complex situations
- ✓ Strong work ethic

## Let's Reframe the Narrative

Military students are not "at-risk."

They are often **high-capacity learners navigating complex life demands.**

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## Academic Challenges



- Time away from education
- Transfer differences between states & countries
- Placement testing anxiety
- Unfamiliarity with higher education systems
- Transfer credit confusion

## Life Challenges



- Employment
- Childcare
- Family responsibilities
- Deployments or training requirements & effects
- Financial stress

## Institutional Challenges



- Complex processes
- Multiple offices
- Unclear or lack of knowledge and/or communication

# The First Meeting Matters:

## Guidance Counselors, Admissions Counselors, Advisors

**Goal #1:**

Build Trust Before Building a Schedule! **Why?** Military connected students relate to:

- Responsiveness
- Clarity
- Respect for prior experiences
- Ability to navigate bureaucracy

**First Impression Question**

"Tell me about your goals and what brought you to this school."

# Questions Every Counselor/Advisor Should Ask

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| What are your educational and career goals? | Are you connected to the military in any way? | Are you working currently? | Do you have family or caregiving responsibilities? |
| What educational benefits are you using? | Have you submitted your JST? | Have you attended college before? | How many hours realistically fit your schedule? |

# The JST Conversation

**Joint Services Transcript (JST)**

Many students can receive college credit for military training and experience.

**Advisors Should Encourage:**

✓ Submit JST immediately after admission
✓ Request evaluation before registration
✓ Meet with registrar/transfer evaluator early
✓ Understand that evaluation takes time

**Why It Matters**

Without a JST evaluation, students may:

❖ Take unnecessary courses
❖ Spend GI Bill benefits unnecessarily
❖ Extend time to degree

Breakouts:

Academic Planning Example #2

**Student Profile**

- ❑ Incoming 10th grader
- ❑ Transferred from Puerto Rico
- ❑ Strong academic history

**Discussion:**

**What would you recommend for this student?**

# Breakouts:

# Academic Planning Example #2

**Student Profile**

- ❑ Incoming 10th grader
- ❑ Transferred from Puerto Rico
- ❑ Strong academic history

- ✓ General Education
- ✓ Review AP & Dual Credit course taken
- ✓ Identify additional support needs
- ✓ Tutoring resources identified early

Breakouts:

Academic Planning Example #1

**Student Profile**

- ❑ Veteran
- ❑ Part-time employment
- ❑ Strong academic history

**Discussion:**

**What would you recommend for this student?**

# Breakouts:

## Academic Planning Example #1

**Student Profile**

- ❑ Veteran
- ❑ Part-time employment
- ❑ Strong academic history

- ✓ General Education
- ✓ Major course
- ✓ Online/In-Person balance
- ✓ Tutoring resources identified early

# Early Warning Signs

**Watch For:**

- Missing assignments
- Frequent absences
- Poor LMS engagement
- Requests for extensions
- Withdrawal conversations
- Financial aid concerns

**Best Practice:**

Intervene early.

A quick outreach email can prevent a withdrawal.

# Faculty Support Strategies

**Faculty Can Help By:**

- Providing clear expectations
- Using consistent LMS organization
- Posting deadlines early
- Offering office hours
- Understanding military obligations
- Connecting students to resources

**REMEMBER!**

**Small Actions**
**Create Significant Impact**

# Campus Resource Ecosystem




**Important!**

Do not assume students know these services exist or that they are open to them.

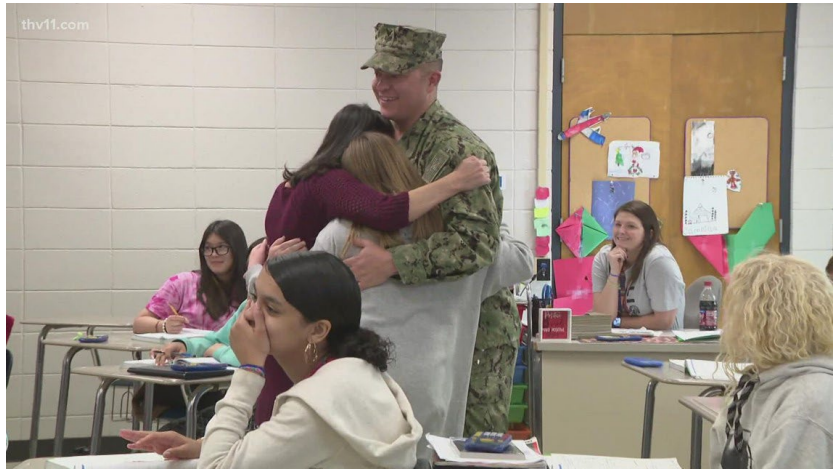
# Key Takeaways

- Build trust first.
- Recognize the value of military related experiences
- Request JST evaluation early.
- Help students create realistic academic plans
- Connect students to resources before they need them.
- Focus on strengths, not deficits.



# Final Reflection

"What is one change you can make tomorrow that would improve the experience of military-connected students at your school?"






# Questions & Further Support

**Thank You for Supporting Those Who Serve and Their Families!**


Tracy Teater
Associate Director, Adult Attainment
Kentucky Student Success Collaborative
Tracy.Teater@ky.gov

Jan Goldman
Senior Fellow, Strategic Initiatives, WFED
Executive Director, KCLN
Jan.Goldman@ky.gov

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