

GaDOE Military Family Handbook

A guide for military families and school systems



Introduction:

Eighty percent of America's military-connected students attend public schools. In every state with a military installation, there are military-connected students transitioning into and out of nearby public schools. With an estimated 1.2 million active-duty, military-connected students enrolled in schools in the United States and abroad, the number of children affected by these transitions cannot be overstated. Georgia is home to the fifth-largest military population in the United States and has a unique opportunity to shape the educational experience for thousands of students who are the children of service members. In addition to the educational impact, the quality of K-12 schools near military facilities is used to inform future basing and personnel decisions. A focus on military-focused educational programming attracts military families who bring economic benefits to local communities.

The purpose of the Military Students and Families Handbook is to provide a current and easily accessible reference for schools, districts, and military families across the state of Georgia. The handbook offers guidance for stakeholders to ensure military students are equipped with the educational skills necessary to be life-, work- and college-ready. There are defined sections for military families, schools, and districts that provide information about Georgia's military friendly laws, policies, code, and rules.

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Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3)

It is estimated that the average military family moves three times more often than the average non-military family. These frequent moves can cause children to miss extracurricular activities and face challenges meeting graduation requirements. The Department of Defense, in collaboration with the National Center for Interstate Compacts and the Council of State Governments, developed an Interstate Compact that addresses educational transition issues experienced by children of military families. Currently, all 50 states and the District of Columbia participate in the Interstate Compact, which provides a uniform policy platform for resolving the challenges experienced by military children.

The [Military Interstate Children's Compact](#) ensures that the children of military families are afforded the same opportunities for educational success as other children and are not penalized or delayed in achieving their educational goals by inflexible administrative and bureaucratic practices. States participating in the Interstate Compact work to coordinate graduation requirements, transfer of records and course placement, and other administrative policies. ensures that the children of military families are afforded the same opportunities for educational success as other children and are not penalized or delayed in achieving their educational goals by inflexible administrative and bureaucratic practices. States participating in the Interstate Compact, work to coordinate graduation requirements, transfer of records and course placement and other administrative policies.

The Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) works to address the challenges military transitions may have on students' educational experience. Georgia adopted the Interstate Compact, placing it into statute in April 2012. The model language of the Interstate Compact was adopted for [Georgia Code](#).

MIC3 provisions allow for:

- Facilitating timely enrollment of children of military families and ensuring that they are not placed at a disadvantage due to difficulty in the transfer of education records from the previous school district or variations in entrance or age requirements.
- Facilitating student placement process through which children of military families are not disadvantaged by variations in attendance requirements, scheduling, sequencing, grading, course content, or assessments.
- Facilitating qualification and eligibility for enrollment, educational programs, and participation in extracurricular academic, athletic, and social activities.
- Facilitating on-time graduation of children of military families.
- Providing for promulgation and enforcement of administrative rules implementing the provisions of this Interstate Compact.
- Providing uniform collection and sharing of information between and among member states, schools, and military families under this Interstate Compact.

- Promoting coordination between the Georgia Interstate Compact and other compacts affecting military children.
- Promoting flexibility and cooperation between educational system, parents, and students to achieve educational success.

Click [here](#) for additional information regarding the Military Interstate Children’s Compact.

School Liaison Officers (SLO)

School Liaison Officers (sometimes called “School Liaisons”) are the points of contact on military installations and assist families of children whose education may be affected by military life. School Liaison Officers are contracted through each branch of service to provide School Support Services. They are familiar with the unique aspects of military life that can impact a student’s education. School Liaison Officers help build partnerships between military families, military installations, and schools and act as the military installation’s point of contact for all things school related. School Liaison Officers often provide assistance to relocating families and act as advocates for military connected students.

The primary role of the School Liaison Officer is to provide information, resources, and referrals to military families. School Liaison Officers provide school transition assistance and often act as a support during deployments. Since an SLO is usually familiar with the military connected students in their area and with the challenges they are facing in their local school districts, they can be a great resource for families and school/district administrators. School Liaison Officers can also provide information and assistance to military families who choose to homeschool or enroll in private, charter or online schools.

School Liaison Officers are located at each military installation. To find your School Liaison Officer, please see table below.

Georgia’s Student Liaison Officers					
Military Installation	School Liaison Officer Contact		Email	Phone	Website
Fort Benning	Ethan	Branch	ethan.d.branch.naf@army.mil	706-626-8625	Fort Benning School Liaison
	Marcus	Dubose	marcus.l.dubose.naf@army.mil	706-545-3062	
Fort Gordon	Melissa	Stover	melissa.a.stover7.naf@army.mil	706-791-7270	Fort Gordon School Liaison
	Cynthia	Bishop	cynthia.s.bishop.naf@army.mil	706-791-4168	
Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield	Gregory	Cooke	gregory.e.cooke2.naf@army.mil	912-767-6533	Fort Stewart-HAAF School Liaison
Marine Corps Base Albany	Latreesa	Perryman	latreesa.perryman@usmc.mil	229-639-7497	MCLB Albany School Liaison

Moody Air Force Base	Darren	Hill	darren.hill.4@us.af.mil	229-257-4380	Moody Air Force Base School Liaison
Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay	Clainetta	Jefferson	clainetta.t.jefferson.naf@us.navy.mil	912-573-8986	NAS Kings Bay School Liaison
Robins Air Force Base	Renee	Daughtry	robinsAFBSchoolLiaison@us.af.mil	478-327-5524	Robins Air Force Base School-Liaison

Military Flagship School Award

Georgia has the fifth-largest military population in the United States, so recognizing, implementing, and accommodating best practices for military students enriches the educational environment for **all** students. Georgia's Military Flagship School Award recognizes schools that are committed to supporting the unique educational needs of military students.

A military student can expect to move six to nine times from kindergarten through their high school graduation, with approximately 200,000 students transitioning nationwide to a new school in any given year. Military Flagship Schools ensure that staff can help manage the challenges military students face when they move between schools with different curricula, standards, course offerings, schedules, and graduation requirements. Military Flagship Schools are especially attentive to students who arrive mid-year and may miss out on the normal cycles of sports and club activities. Military families often seek out these types of schools because of the level of support they can expect and the staff's awareness of the challenges of life in a military family. Schools designated with the Military Flagship Award are recognized by the Georgia Department of Education and featured in several publication outlets throughout the year.

Military Flagship Schools are chosen through an annual application process that is open to every school in the state. There are 19 Military Flagship Schools in Georgia. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, these schools have been recognized for their dedication to meeting the unique needs of military students, making them a resource in best practices for any school serving military families stationed in Georgia.

Applications are reviewed by members of the MIC3.

For a list of schools that have been recognized with the Military Flagship Award, and for more information about award criteria please click [here](#).

Georgia Public School Information

Public School Choice Options for Military Families

According to the [U.S. Government Accountability Office](#) traditional public schools are the most commonly available schooling option for military families near or on military installations. Most local education agencies serving military students offer additional public-school options nearby, like charter or magnet schools. Many military families consider housing options and school features when choosing educational offerings for their children. Some families are willing to accept longer commutes in order to live in their preferred school district, while other families prioritize access to specific programs or services. In general military families consider academics, perceived safety, elective courses, and extracurricular activities when choosing a school district for their children.

To inform their schooling decisions, military families in Georgia have multiple options designed to best meet their needs. In 2018, the Georgia General Assembly passed [HB 224](#) (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-295) which authorizes military-school children to attend any school within a district that includes any portion of the military base at which their parent is stationed.

Example of HB 224: a service member is assigned to Fort Stewart, located in Liberty County, Georgia. The service member has two elementary aged children. The service member secures housing in Ludowici, Georgia, located in Long County about 30 minutes from Fort Stewart. The service member's children may either attend Long County Schools, the district in which they reside; or they may choose to enroll their children with Liberty County Schools utilizing HB 224.

Note: Service members who choose to enroll their family outside of their resident district are responsible for transportation.

In addition to allowing military families school choice options within their district of residence, Georgia also has multiple state charter schools with statewide attendance zones. A list of state charter schools can be found [here](#).

GaDOE has further resources to learn more about individual schools or districts.

Georgia's accountability report approved by the United States Department of Education, based on the requirements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), is the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). CCRPI is a comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all educational stakeholders that will promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students. CCRPI includes multiple components to address content mastery, progress, and readiness measures based on the state assessments. These scores help inform the academic performance of individual schools and districts. In addition to academic performance the CCRPI report includes information regarding school climate and financial efficiency. To learn more about CCRPI visit the [CCRPI website](#).

The [GaDOE Financial Transparency Dashboard](#) provides financial data, such as budget and expenditure information, for each public-school system and school. This information is beneficial to military families as it provides easily readable and accessible financial documents for all districts.

Public School Enrollment, Transfer, and Admission

A child must be five years old on or before September 1 to enroll in public school kindergarten. The child must be six on or before September 1 to enter first grade. The local school district must verify age before enrollment. Parents should expect to present documentation that confirms a child's age.

Students who were legal residents of one or more states for the two years immediately prior to moving to Georgia and who were legally enrolled in either a public kindergarten or first grade or a private kindergarten or first grade accredited by a state or regional association are eligible to enroll in Georgia schools, provided that the child will be five years old (Kindergarten) or six years old (first grade) by December 31 of that school year.

As a member of the Compact, Georgia allows military students transferring from an accredited school to continue enrollment at the current level, be eligible for enrollment in the next higher grade, and continue participation in honors, gifted and talented programs regardless of age. The receiving school DOES retain the right to verify the placement by conducting separate academic assessments. Relocating students must meet the receiving state's standards in order to retain access to specialized programs and/or services.

The Compact allows local school districts to accept unofficial records from military families for registration purposes. Local schools may enroll and place students in classes based on the information contained in the unofficial records, pending validation by the official records from the sending school. Military parents should give the sending school written notification of withdrawal and request copies of the student's academic and discipline records to be hand carried to the new school.

Public School Immunization Requirements

Georgia requires the following immunizations: diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, hepatitis B, measles, polio, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chicken pox).

Detailed information regarding immunizations may be found [here](#).

Public School Special Education

Parents of children enrolled in gifted and talented programs or who have special needs should ensure that the necessary documentation is available upon or prior to arrival, such as copies of current Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan documents, or other assessments. These documents may be presented to school officials at the time of enrollment.

Federal legislation and the Compact require that students with special needs be provided comparable services to those documented in an IEP. Schools may accept copies of important special needs documents until the official documents can be forwarded from the previous school. Families with special needs considerations may wish to contact the SLO or the local school to assist them with accessing the continuity of care needed to support the learning of children with special needs. Contact the SLO for your incoming duty installation for more details and assistance.

The military offers the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) to active-duty service members. EFMP supports families with special needs by helping them identify and access programs and services. EFMP family support includes but is not limited to:

- Information and referral for military and community services,
- Non-clinical case management;
- Assessment of family needs;
- Development of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP);
- Early Intervention Services (EIS) information.

EFMP will work with local education agencies to ensure that the needs of the child are being met through collaborative engagement.

Additional information regarding support for Special Education Services:

[Compact Rules](#)

[Exceptional Family Member Program \(EFMP\)](#)

[Georgia Special Needs Military Scholarship](#)

Public School Extracurricular Activities

Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities are available to students in elementary, middle, and high school. The types and number of programs available vary from school to school. Depending on the age of the students being served, schools may offer programs either during or after school. Information about these programs, registration deadlines, and eligibility requirements are available on most school district/school websites throughout the school year.

Secondary students wishing to participate in sporting or club activities that require auditions or try outs are advised to contact the school prior to their arrival to schedule

times to meet with program directors. The Compact states that “local school systems will facilitate the opportunity for transitioning military students to be included in extracurricular activities, regardless of deadlines, to the extent they are “otherwise qualified.” According to Section 6 the Compact; “State and local education agencies shall facilitate the opportunity for transitioning military children’s inclusion in extracurricular activities, regardless of application deadlines, in consultation with the state high school athletic association, to the extent they are otherwise qualified. Application deadlines include tryouts, summer conditioning, and other school or district pre-requisites.” While this is a great opportunity for our military community, schools are NOT required to hold a place for military children.

Most middle and high school athletic activities in Georgia are governed by the Georgia High School Association. You may visit their [website](#) for more information.

Georgia Home School Requirements

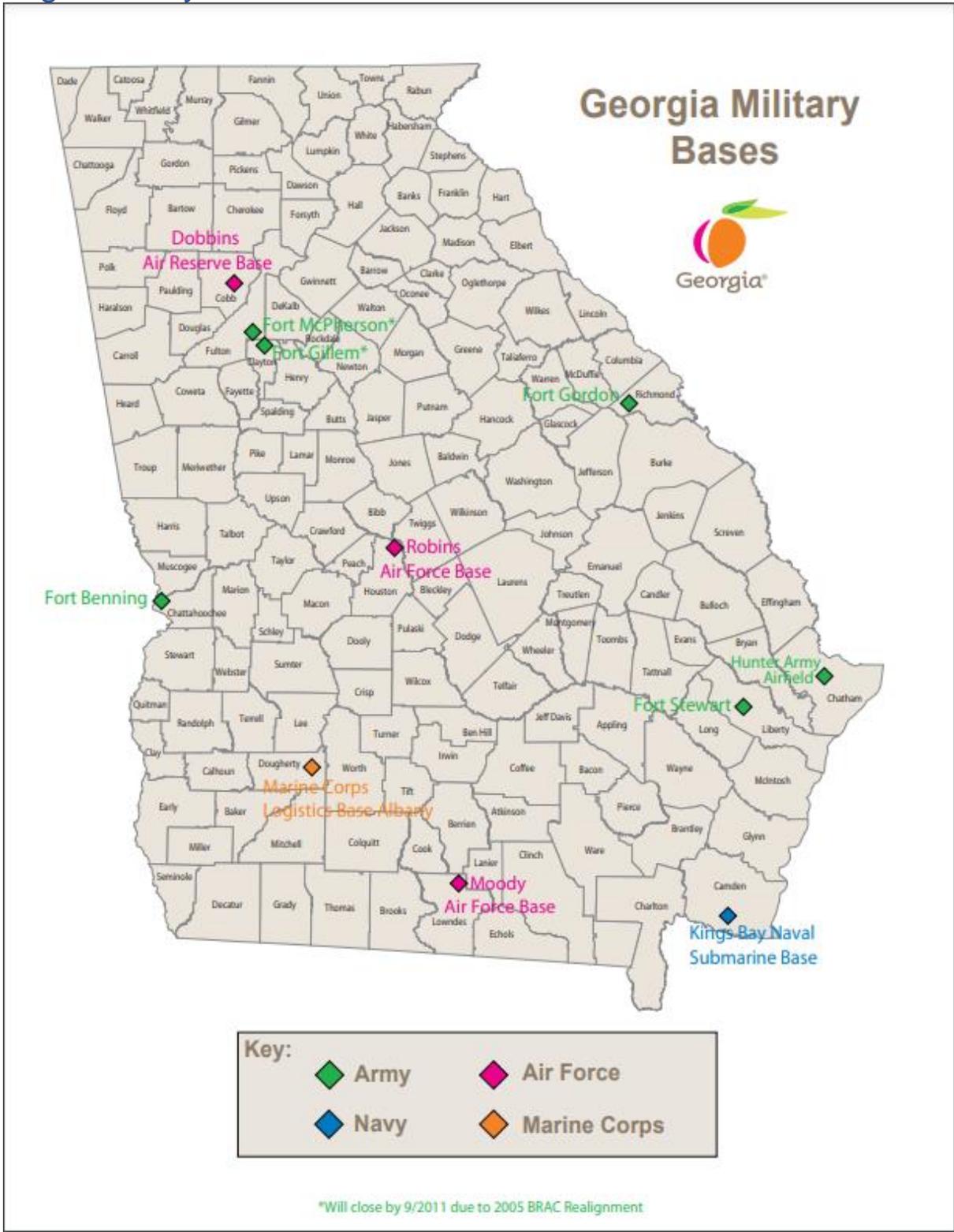
Georgia law requires parents or guardians who teach their children at home to submit to the GaDOE an annual Declaration of Intent form. The Declaration of Intent must be submitted to the GaDOE within 30 days after establishment of a home study program and by September 1 annually thereafter. For further information, please visit the Home Schools [website](#).

The Dexter-Mosley act authorizes home school students in grades 6-12 to participate in interscholastic activities in the student’s resident public school system, with the requirement of certain notification and course enrollment provisions. Home school students shall complete one qualifying course facilitated by the resident school system for each semester of the regular school year during any part of which the home school student participates in extracurricular activities.

For more information regarding the Dexter-Mosley act please click [here](#).

Appendix

Georgia Military Bases



Georgia Air Force Installations

1. **[Dobbins Air Reserve Base](#)** - Located 16 miles northwest of Atlanta, Dobbins Air Reserve Base in Marietta, Georgia supports more than 5,700 personnel from the Air Force, Army, Navy and Marine Corps. The base is home to the 94th Airlift Wing, the host unit, and tenant organizations including the 22nd Air Force headquarters, Navy Operational Support Center and the Georgia National Guard Headquarters. The population includes more than 2,000 Air Force Reservists and civilians assigned to the 94th AW and 22nd Air Force: and nearly 4,000 members of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. The largest military tenant units include the 22nd Air Force, the Georgia National Guard Headquarters and the Navy Operational Support Center. Additional units include Army Reserve aviation units, and the Civil Air Patrol. Dobbins is estimated to provide an economic impact of \$172 million annually.

Zoned School Systems: [Cobb County Schools](#), [Marietta City Schools](#)

2. **[Moody Air Force Base](#)** – Home of the Flying Tigers or 23D Wing. Moody houses about 5,000 active-duty service members and almost 1,000 civilians. Located in Valdosta, Lowndes County, GA residing on over 11,000 acres. Moody has an annual economic impact of about \$750 million.

Zoned School Systems: [Lowndes County Schools](#), [Valdosta City Schools](#), [Lanier County Schools](#), [Berrien County Schools](#), [Brooks County Schools](#), [Cook County Schools](#)

3. **[Robins Air Force Base](#)** – Located in Warner Robins, Houston County, GA. This installation is home to over 23,000 employees; 5,692 of which are military service members. It sits on 6,935 acres of which 2,200 are protected wetlands and is Georgia’s largest single-site industrial complex. Robins houses the 78th Air Base Wing. Robins Air Force Base contributes \$5.46 billion in economic impact.

Zoned School Systems: [Houston County Schools](#), [Peach County Schools](#)

Army Installations

1. **[Fort Benning](#)** – “Maneuver Center of Excellence.” Located outside of Columbus, in Chattahoochee County, GA. This military installation houses U.S. Army Infantry and Armor schools and supports a population of around 70,000 within the 182,000 acres that comprise Fort Benning. The economic impact is \$4.75 billion.

Zoned School Systems: [Muscogee County Schools](#), [Department of Defense Educational Agency \(DoDEA\) Schools](#), [Chattahoochee County Schools](#)

2. **[Fort Gordon](#)** – “Cyber Center of Excellence.” Located in Richmond County, GA, next to Augusta. Home to U.S. Army Cyber Center of Excellence since 2014. Fort Gordon employs approximately 16,000 service members and 9,000 civilian employees. This military installation supports about 80,000 people: including military families, contractors, retirees, and others. This installation is not only the largest employer in the local area, but also boasts an economic impact of \$2.4 billion.

Zoned School Systems: [Richmond County Schools](#), [Columbia County Schools](#)

3. **[Fort Stewart](#)** – “Premier Power Projection Platform on the East Coast.” Located in Hinesville, Liberty County, GA. Largest installation east of the Mississippi River. Home of 3rd Infantry Division (3rd ID). Over 288,000 acres make up Fort Stewart. Over 10,200 military service members and their families reside on Fort Stewart. They employ more than 25,500 people, creating an economic impact of \$4.9 billion* for Coastal Georgia (*Fort Stewart & Hunter Army Airfield combined impact).

Zoned School Systems: [Liberty County Schools](#), [Department of Defense Educational Agency \(DoDEA\) Schools](#), [Long County Schools](#), [Bryan County Schools](#)

4. **[Hunter Army Airfield](#)** – Located in Savannah, Chatham County GA, Hunter Army Airfield houses the Army’s longest runway and is a primary location for embarkation and debarkation for worldwide force deployment. Hunter Army Airfield is home to more than 5,700 active-duty service members, over 5,200 active-duty family members, 6,000 retirees, and over 700 civilian employees.

Zoned School Systems: [Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools](#)

Navy Installation

1. **[Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay](#)** – Located in St. Mary’s, Camden County, GA, Kings Bay is the preferred east coast home for the Ohio and Trident class submarine. Housed on more than 16,000 acres, of which 4,000 are protected wetlands. Home to over 15,000 people and creating a total \$1.1 billion in economic impact for the Coastal Empire.

Zoned School Systems: [Camden County Schools](#)

2. **Marine Installation [Marine Corps Base Albany](#)** – Located in Albany, Dougherty County, GA. MCLB Albany is leading the charge to become the first “Net Zero” military installation in the world. It is home to the Marine Corps Logistic Command and Marine Depot Maintenance Command/Production Plant. In 2022, Marine Corps Base Albany will celebrate its 70th anniversary. MCLB Albany employs more than 4,000 people and has an economic impact of \$1.7 billion.

Zoned School Systems: [Dougherty County Schools](#), [Lee County Schools](#)

In addition to zoned school systems, [State Charter Schools](#) offer educational options for military families. For more information about State Charter Schools, click [here](#).

Additional Resources

- [GaDOE](#) - The Georgia Department of Education oversees public education throughout the state, ensuring that laws and regulations pertaining to education are followed and that state and federal money appropriated for education is properly allocated to local school systems. The department also informs parents, teachers, government officials, and the media of education-related news.
- [GaDOE Military Supports](#) - link to the Georgia Department of Education's Military Home Page; this landing page has information, resources, and data that are relevant and helpful for service members and their families, schools and school districts, and community stakeholders with vested interest in Georgia's military families.
- [Georgia Department of Early Care & Learning \(DECAL\)](#) is responsible for meeting the childcare and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses childcare centers and home-based childcare, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages Quality Rated, Georgia's community powered childcare rating system. The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of childcare, and works collaboratively with Georgia childcare resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. To search for Georgia licensed childcare, view licensing reports, and check availability visit: www.qualityrated.org.
- [Georgia Family Connection Partnership](#) - is the only statewide network in the country dedicated to the health and well-being of families and communities. We empower communities in 159 counties to craft local solutions based on local decisions.
- [Georgia Professional Standards Commission](#) - Serves to simplify and make more efficient the process of certifying educational personnel in Georgia; to attract the highest possible number of qualified personnel to become educators in Georgia; to promote the hiring of qualified educators from other states; and to improve the level of preparation of educators.
- [Georgia Student Finance Commission – GaFutures](#) – The mission of the Georgia Student Finance Commission is to promote and increase access to education beyond high school for Georgians.
- [Georgia Veteran of Foreign Wars](#) (Ga VFW) - The VFW has many programs and services that work to support veterans, service members and their families, as well as communities worldwide.
- [Get Georgia Reading](#) - is a collaboration of more than 100 public and private partners that are finding new ways of working together across Georgia, across sectors, across agencies and organizations, and across the early years and early grades, using data to inform decision making to help increase literacy across the state.
- [Governor's Office of Student Achievement \(GOSA\)](#) - supports accountability and transparency through strategic data use and collaboration with education stakeholders to advance student success.
- [Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission \(MIC3\)](#) - addresses key educational transition issues encountered by military children.
- [Technical College System of Georgia \(TCSG\)](#) - oversees the state's technical colleges, adult literacy programs, and a host of economic and workforce development programs.

The Technical College System of Georgia provides a unified system of technical education, adult education, and customized business and industry training through programs that use the best available technology and offer easy access to lifelong education and training for all adult Georgians and corporate citizens.

- [The University System of Georgia \(USG\)](#) - The University System of Georgia (USG) is a part of the community in each of Georgia's 159 counties and provides services across the state. The USG is composed of 26 higher education institutions including four research universities, four comprehensive universities, nine state universities and nine state colleges. It also includes the Georgia Public Library Service, which encompasses approximately 389 facilities within the 61 library systems throughout the State of Georgia. Additionally, the USG includes the Georgia Archives which identifies, collects, manages, preserves and provides access to records and information about Georgia.

For additional information please contact:

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Educating Georgia's Future