



Illinois State Board of Education

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James T. Meeks
Chairman

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State Superintendent

Military Recruitment Access Reminder

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has been in contact with representatives from the Department of Defense regarding the implementation of the portion of ESSA that refers to Armed Forces recruiter access to students regarding recruiting information. The Department of Defense has raised some concerns regarding the implementation of this provision. As a result, we wanted to take this opportunity to remind you of your obligations.

The Department of Education published a Dear Colleague letter on this topic in 2016. The Dear Colleague can be accessed [here](#). As stated by the Department of Education (DOE), there were changes to schools obligations under the elementary and secondary education act from No Child Left Behind to the Every Student Succeeds Act. Most notably, ESSA makes clear that schools must notify parents and students that military recruiters will have equal access to their directory information unless the students opt out in writing. Based on our reading of the statute and the guidance, parents and students must actively opt out of this provision in writing. A passive opt out is not sufficient. Additionally, school districts must provide this information to military recruiters even if their student records policy does not include the information within the definition of directory information.

As the State Educational Agency, we are more than happy to support schools in properly implementing this law. As we have engaged the ISBE student advisory council over the last year, we have learned that high school students believe that they are not given enough information about post-secondary options other than college. The student advisory council was specifically interested in distributing more about military options and vocational options available after high school. By providing military recruiters with equal access to all students who do not opt out, we are helping our high school students further their goal and promoting post-secondary options for a number of students who would not otherwise have access.

If you have questions about this or the DOE's guidance, please contact me directly at jaranows@isbe.net or (217) 782-5270.

With Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey A. Aranowski".

Jeffrey A. Aranowski, Executive Director
Safe and Healthy Climate
Illinois State Board of Education