



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



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School Liaison Officers

"I have seen how school issues are a quality of life issue for Navy families. Commander, Navy Installations Command, is addressing this with School Liaison Officers who can level the playing field for transitioning military children and youth by preparing students, parents, schools and Navy leaders to respond to the issues and stress military families face due to frequent moves and extended deployments."

– Force Master Chief (SW/AW) Steve Markum, Commander, Navy Installations Command

Prior to 2007, a recognized Navy-wide program addressing the educational needs of Navy families did not exist. Installation commanders often made decisions impacting quality of life for families without support from child and youth program personnel. To help commanders in this area, School Liaison Officers (SLOs) were hired as non-appropriated funds employees to work in the Navy child and youth programs worldwide at either the installation or the Navy region level, depending on the mission requirements at each location.

Critical duties of the [School Liaison Officer](#) include:

- Facilitating communication between local school authorities and senior leadership to ensure school issues are addressed and resolved at the lowest practical level.
- Advocating for the educational needs of military children by:
 - Working cooperatively with installation and community organizations and school district leadership.
 - Educating school personnel and community organizations on school issues affecting military children.
 - Attending local school board meetings, school advisory council meetings, ombudsman assemblies, and other installation and community organizations' meetings, as appropriate.
- SLOs serve as an installation's point of contact for local child and youth education services in seven core areas:
 - [School Transition Support](#) - permanent change of station cycle
 - Deployment Support
 - [Special Education System Navigation](#)
 - Installation, School, and Community Communications
 - Partnerships in Education
 - Home-School Linkage, Support
 - Post-secondary Preparation

SLOs Help Parents Navigate the Special Needs System

Parents remain the first and primary advocates for the rights and needs of their children with special needs. SLOs offer support by providing access to information about programs and services, referring families to special education professionals, and helping families navigate the administrative systems within local education agencies. Providing these services enables parents to make informed decisions for their children.

Key Messages

School Liaison Officers:

- Serve as a link between Navy families and their military or civilian schools.
- Ensure local school personnel are aware of the stress military families may face due to frequent moves and extended deployments.
- Help Navy families be the best "advocates" for their child's education.

Facts & Figures

- Navy children move an average of every 2.9 years and attend up to 9 different schools by the time they graduate high school.
- According to an Argus survey, the fourth most cited reason for Sailors leaving the Navy is impact on family.
- Contact information for the 58 SLOs stationed worldwide can be found at:
militaryk12partners.dodea.edu/docs/slo_navy.pdf