Welcome to day two of the Virtual Military Spouse Symposium and the second session in our Your Career Options track. As it's been all week, my name is Eddy Mentzer, and I lead the Department of Defense’s Spouse Education and Career program, the host for the week’s symposium. Yesterday, we dove into careers in health care and had some great interactions with participants regarding the opportunities and challenges the military spouses encounter as they move their career with them. The education field, especially for K-12 educators, is another popular field for employment of military spouses. Our next presenter is Trinka Polite, one of our amazing career coaches with the Spouse Employment and Career Opportunities Program. Trinka is going to offer quick tips to help you start your path to becoming a K-12 teacher. Welcome, Trinka.

Thank you, Eddy, for that introduction and hello, everyone. Welcome to Go to the Head of the Class webinar, where we will discuss teaching careers, K-12 specifically, and other careers in the education field. I am Trinka Polite, and as Eddy mentioned, I have been a career coach with the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program for over five years and I have the pleasure of presenting today’s webinar. And by the way, Happy Military Spouse Appreciation Month, everyone. Thank you all for your service and dedication to our nation. I'm truly grateful for all you do and also appreciate each of you for joining us today. So, let's get started. And I do want to thank everyone for answering the poll questions. I do see that we have a few of you who already have teaching experience. And a couple that are already working in the K-12 field, okay. And working in higher education, okay. As you can already see, there may be a couple of potential directions to go with the K-12 career field. For those of you who answered yes to working in the K-12 field, would you mind sharing your specific job in the chat pod? That would be great, if you don't mind. And thank you again for answering the questions. I see we have a few people typing here. All right, latchkey directors, okay. And working in higher education, okay. As you can already see, there may be a couple of potential directions to go with the K-12 career field. As you read in this webinar’s description, the U.S. Department of Labor is reporting that more preschool, elementary, and secondary school teachers will be needed to meet the demand of the growing enrollment trends. Which is why we will focus a bit more on teaching today along with other reasons which we’ll move into right now. We do have a teacher's assistant and a music teacher. Thanks, Kyle. Okay, so moving along, we all know an increase in need usually equals more job opportunities. According to a nationwide survey, the most prevalent occupation and number one licensure requirement for military spouses is pre-kindergarten through 12th grade teacher with 5.2% of
military spouses in the workforce. If you could answer this next poll question. By a show of hands, and the raise hand icon is in the upper left corner of your screen, how many of you are enrolled in a teacher prep program or training leading to a K-12 occupation? That could be your associates degree, your bachelors, masters, if you're actually in the certification stage. And again, the raise hand icon is in the top left of your screen. All right. All right. All right, thank you so much for responding. It's great to see that some of you may have started the training for your career. And this webinar will definitely provide you with additional guidance to keep you moving forward. For those who are setting a goal to launch your career, I hope this webinar gives you the jumpstart that you need.

So, to give you an idea of what to expect during our time together, here's what we'll cover today. Why consider a career in teaching, is teaching the right career field for you, tips for exploring the teaching field, entry level careers in education, other careers in K-12 education, designing a roadmap to accomplish your goals, and getting ready to work. And finally, the K-12 coaching package. So, why consider a career in teaching? First of all, the future looks awesome for teachers. And an important factor to consider is job growth rates. This number tells you how many jobs are projected to be created over a 10-year period. As we explore different careers today, I want you to keep in mind that the current average job growth rate is between 3% and 5%. So looking at job growth rate by grade level, we see that preschool teachers have a job growth rate of 10%, kindergarten and elementary are at 7%, and middle school and high school are seeing an 8% job growth rate. However, when we look at special education teachers who also work with K-12 students, you see a job growth rate of 14%. So, high demand for special education teachers projected over the next 10 years. And the 10-year cycle we're looking at now is 2016-2026. For our self-enrichment education teachers, which includes music, dance and gymnastics teachers, has a job growth rate even higher. We're looking at a 15% job growth rate for self-enrichment teachers. Now we're going to go over to visit the occupation outlook handbook to show you where I retrieved this information and demonstrate how you can explore on your own. In case this website is new to some of you or are unfamiliar, the occupation outlook handbook can help you find career information on duties, education and training, pay, and outlook for hundreds of occupations. Just taking a quick look here at preschool teachers, whenever you open an occupation, it's going to give you some quick facts. As you can see, the job outlook range here is 2016-2026. You can look at what they do, you can look at how to become one, which is a tab that we as career coaches use a lot to help you with your academic planning. The steps that are required to work in the career field. You can even look at the pay, depending on where you work. And you can look at the state and area data. So, the figures I'm sharing with you today are the national average. If you want to see how your career is performing by state, then you can use the projection central or the occupational employment statistics. You can also see other careers that are related to the occupation that you're reviewing. This can also show you some other careers that are related to K-12 education. And also, professional organizations. Very important for career development. Connecting to those organizations that are related to your career field, so you can stay up to date on any trends or changes or training that may be beneficial to your career. Of course, you can search, you can use your little search handbook box here and you can put in other careers that you may be interested in. And it will give you a list of results that you can click on and explore. Okay. And let me show you one more while we're here. This is ONET. ONET is another Department of Labor website THAT you can use to explore different careers. And here we're looking at special education teachers at the preschool level. And again, this is a career with a bright outlook. This is more details than the occupational outlook handbook, as you can see. It gives you a full report. So, everything you wanted to know about preschool teachers is here. If you wanted to know what you'll be doing on a daily basis, what type of software you need to learn, what are your specific detail work activities. We'll talk more about the credentials section later, but you can look for different certifications. You can search to see what are the licensure requirements for the state where you want to teach, all from this page. You can also look at wages and employment trends. This is another way to look at salary trends by state. Okay, so let's head back to our
Another reason to consider a career in teaching is the fact that there is a great improvement in license reciprocity for military spouses. Making teaching truly a more compatible career for your military lifestyle. 48 states have established agreements through the National Association of State Directors or of teacher education and certification to assist military spouses in obtaining certification from state to state. Of course, you can always work with a career coach one on one to learn more about those policies. But I want to hear from you again. Could you please share in the chat pod why you’re considering teaching or another career in K-12? Genevieve is interested in teaching art or maybe paraeducated teaching, okay. Looking for job opportunities closer to home. Yes, we hear that a lot. Having the same hours and vacation as your children. Very important. Portability, yes. And with the new licensure portability policies, that is more of a reality for you. All right. I see you, Tabitha, okay. Okay, you want to teach Spanish. All right. All of these are great topics, and I do want to remind you that SECO offers the option of ongoing coaching sessions to assist you with career planning. We call them coaching packages, and I’ll give you more information during our wrap-up about how to get started with the K-12 coaching package. This will give you an opportunity to discuss today’s information, your reasons for wanting to go into teaching in more detail, one on one, with a career coach. We have talked about, so far, what’s happening in the labor markets. Why you should consider a career in teaching. But is teaching the right career for you? And we can work together to find out. Your career coach can suggest career assessments to assist you in learning more about your compatibility with the teaching field. Or working in any capacity of K-12 education. Career exploration is a valuable tool, and I will even say it’s the foundation in helping you determining the right career for you. Via the MySECO website, you have access to several types of assessments. We have skills assessments, interest and personality inventories that you can take. And from those inventories, the results will show you careers based on your interest in fields, college majors based on your results, and even some suggestions for career-related volunteer opportunities. That way would be an opportunity for you to get an introduction to a career course before you make a permanent commitment.

Let’s take a look at some sample results to give you an idea of what I’m talking about here. This is the strong interest inventory. And this strong interest is an assessment that helps guide you towards careers, education programs, and even leisure activities, all based on your interests. The highest things here represent your work personality, and yes, you do have a work personality, which sometimes is quite different from your off-work personality. Just using myself as an example, of course, I enjoy working with people. I’m having fun right now being here with all of you. But off work, I just want a cup of tea, I want a book. I want some quiet time. And some of you may be the total opposite. But most people, their interests are reflected by two or three things like we see here. Working with your career coach, you can use these results to determine career and education options that are likely to be most meaningful to you by knowing your work personality. And then your top interests and strong occupations. They indicate industries or careers you may find fulfilling and rewarding. You may even want to consider one of these occupations in your top 10 list. And in a moment, we’ll discuss some ways to help you make your final decision. And lastly, you have your personal style scale which I think is very useful in determining if a career is right for you because it gives you insight on other factors that can be important in making decisions about your career in education. It really helps you narrow down your choices more effectively and examine your opportunities.

In the previous slide, I mentioned we would discuss other ways to help you make your final decision, and here we have five. The first being research which is kind of obvious here. You want to look up information
on teaching and education careers on trusted websites like the ones that we just used through the Department of Labor. And also, ONET. Keep in mind both sites can be accessed through MySECO. Informational interviews. Has anyone ever heard of this term before? I didn't know it quite had a term, but it's basically just that. It's an interview to gather information. You want to meet with someone who is currently working in your field of interest to seek advice on their career, the industry, and any other key questions you would like to ask. And here we are, back at volunteering. Volunteering has multiple benefits. Not only are you getting to preview your future career, but you're building your professional network. You're putting your professional skills to use and learning new ones, perhaps. And that's a great entry to put on your resume. Social media. There's so much you can say about social media. But think about it. You're making a life decision that is going to require a time and financial investment. And that's why I highly recommend immersing yourself in the industry and via social media is a great and easy way to do that. Consider following reputable professional organizations such as teach.org and National Education Association. Follow school districts of interest. If there's a particular school that you're looking to work with, see if they have a Facebook page. And if you're looking to teach on the military installation, follow the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity, DODEA. I know we work a bit with acronyms in the military world. And they are present on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. I think one of the best resources that military spouses have are other military spouses. And you have the Spouse Ambassador Network. It's a group of organizations united to help military spouses achieve their educational and career goals. Some examples include the Blue Star Educators, and that is a group open to teachers, counselors, social workers, all educational professionals on Facebook. You have the Military Spouse E-Mentor Program. That's an online community where spouses share information and provide support and inspiration to each other. That is one of our more popular resources, according to MySECO ratings. And you can join at any level in your career. And spouses on the e-mentor program who are more seasoned, they volunteer to mentor other spouses. So that's also a great networking site for you. And you will receive a Spouse Ambassador Network fact sheet today as well.

Earlier, you shared whether you had teaching experience, and a few of you do have teaching experience. But there are other ways to build the required skills to work in the education field. If you could answer this next question for me. Have you worked with or currently working with children in any capacity, whether you are a school volunteer, through your church ministry, if you're a coach? Oh, awesome. Okay, so quite a few of you have already worked with or are currently working with children. That's awesome, and that's probably also part of your desire to be in education. All right, well, thank you for responding. And for those who have worked with children, just a quick tip, make sure that this experience is reflected on your resume. So, at this point, some of you may be thinking, yes, I think teaching is right for me, but not sure if I'm ready to go right into a teacher prep program, or I want to start an education field, but can I take smaller steps towards my goal. I totally understand. Before I became a licensed counselor, I assisted and shadowed other licensed professionals until one day I decided, okay, this is the job I want. And 15 years later, here I am. And another example, we do have military spouses using their benefits to pursue certified nursing assistant programs and clinical medical assistant programs who want to become R.N.s, so they're starting with those entry-level careers before enrolling in a nursing program. And you have those options as well. Before going to the head of the class, you can consider these entry-level careers. You have teacher's assistant, also known as a paraprofessional, paraeducator or instructional assistant. Most school districts require applicants to have completed at least two years of college coursework or an associates degree. Substitute teaching. With substitute teaching, you could potentially have a day to day or long-term contract, depending on the type of absence of the permanent teacher, like maternity leave or a sabbatical. Just a side note. Elementary and secondary schools employ the most substitute teachers nationwide according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Education requirements here include a minimum of a high school diploma, a bachelor's degree is recommended, and it may be required. Next, we have
child care worker. This includes our daycare teachers, our after school program assistants, private caregiver, et cetera. Education and training requirements of course will vary by setting, by state, and employer. They range from no formal education to a certification in early childhood education. And most often, states require the child development associate credential offered by the council for professional recognition. So, today we focus on teaching because, as I shared in the beginning, pre K-12 grade teacher is the most prevalent occupation for military spouses. However, there's plenty of opportunity in K-12 education. Here are three career fields that are currently in high demand. We have instructional coordinators. They oversee school curriculums and teaching standards. They develop instructional material. They coordinate its implementation with teachers and principals, and they assess the effectiveness of these curriculums. Next, this is probably no surprise here, distance learning coordinators. They coordinate the day to day operations of distance learning programs and schedule courses. And then last, guidance and school counselors. They're projected to grow faster than average over the next 10 years. Again, due to the rising student enrollments in elementary, middle and high schools. The job growth rate here is 13%.

All right. So, you've completed assessments, you've done your due diligence in learning about the teaching field. You've explored MySECO. You've googled, you've binged and checked out YouTube, and you decided, yes, I want to go into education. So what is next? And that will be your roadmap. By designing your career roadmap, you have a detailed plan on how to reach your goal. This plan will include evaluating your academic background. So, if you've completed previous college courses, some of those credits may transfer to your new degree, shortening the time it would take to complete your education program. You want to identify the required credentials and find recognized training providers. You would do this with consulting with the relevant state Board of Education which will list requirements and options to become a teacher in their state, along with approved education programs. This is so important because without the proper degree, you will not be able to sit for the teaching certification exam.

Understanding the admissions process. Here at SECO, we're all about the process and taking the correct steps and the right steps to reach your goals. Once you've selected your school, be sure to visit the admissions section of their website to understand all the required steps. And keep in mind you can always schedule an academic planning session with a SECO career coach for additional support. And they could definitely help you in designing your career roadmap. Funding the dream. Here are several options to cover school costs. You have your My Career Advancement account for eligible spouses. You have the SECO scholarship finder which lists organizations and agencies which offer grants and scholarships to military families. You also have FAFSA, that's the free application for federal student aid. I also highly encourage you to visit your local base education office. That's an excellent place to find a wide range of support including local scholarships, computer access and workshops. Just like taking a road trip, unexpected issues or temporary obstacles may pop up. And do you normally turn around and go back home if you're on a road trip? You usually don't. You've gone too far to turn around, you know your destination is ahead of you. And so you find another route or find a way to overcome that obstacle. Think of your career roadmap in the same way. You can alter it when needed. You can find resolutions for any roadblocks that may pop up. And what's so awesome is that for you, you can build a roadmap via online in your MySECO account. It's called the individual career plan. And again, that's something you can work on with your career coach. By the way, how many of you are familiar with the My Career Advancement Account, often referred to as MyCAA? You can click on the raised hand icon again in the upper left side of your screen. Awesome. Okay, great. All right, so a few of you are familiar with the My Career Advancement Account, okay. Just to let you know what it is, it is a scholarship program, the My Career Advancement Account Scholarship Program, is a workforce development program that provides up to $4,000 of financial assistance to eligible military spouses. And with this scholarship, you can pursue a license, certification or associate degree in the portable career field and occupation. And spouses of service members on active duty and pay grades E1-E5, W1, W2, O1, O2 who have successfully completed
a high school diploma are eligible. I'll provide you contact information to our office later in the presentation if you want to discuss this scholarship and your eligibility.

So as we move into our wrap-up, let's talk about getting ready for work. Whether you're applying for a volunteer opportunity, obtaining an entry level position, or seeking a K-12 position, you'll need to focus on the following. And that's creating an education-focused resume. We have resume samples on MySECO, and you can also build your resume within your account. You can work with a career coach to identify your transferable skills. Especially if education is a new career for you. We want to help you identify those key skills that's going to be useful in different jobs and situations. And then also helping you utilize those strong key words in your resume that are related to the job you are applying for. Next, after we have your resume is together, we help you plan your job search. Know where to search for jobs. If the potential job is local, I recommend visiting the school or the office where you're interested in working or volunteering. It will give them a chance to meet you and maybe remember you as they're reviewing your application or resume later. And of course, there are online sites such as your career portal, the Military Spouse Employment Partnership, of course you have LinkedIn, and also the school district's job portal as well. The last step, but not least, is for you to ace the interview. You can review tips and techniques for different types of interviews, you can address growth opportunities such as maybe building a knowledge of Microsoft or time management skills. And you can participate in a phone and or a live mock interview with a career coach to practice answering questions and get valuable feedback on your responses. The last feedback I received from our spouses who use the live mock interview, they all got offers after their interviews. So, it's a great resource for them to practice with. And of course, the last step, secure the position and then contact SECO to let us know because we love success stories. All right. Everything that we've talked about today is part of what I was saying is called the coaching package. You can connect with a career coach, have an initial consultation, all the way through employment readiness to explore opportunities in K-12 education. A career coach can help you with everything that I mentioned today. Research schools and programs, accreditations, licensure, and financial resources. Get advice on your resume. And also, networking tips as well. If you would like, we do definitely invite you to schedule your first or your next coaching package session by calling the SECO Career Center. And that is the end of our presentation, but I would like to now give you all time to ask questions in the general chat pod.

[Eddy]
Trinka, thanks so much. Great presentation. A ton of information and resources for spouses to consider. Not just in the K-12 arena, but in any field that they may be looking at. But of course, we're focusing in on the idea of education and teacher educators or spouse educators. We had a number of good questions and comments during the session. But there's one I want to focus in on here towards the end. Brianna, she really wants to get into this field, but she's concerned about those challenges of getting the credentials and then moving every two years. Having to do this time and time again. I wanted to just kind of touch on that a little bit and then ask Trinka if you've got any ideas as well. Licensure portability is a huge challenge for military spouses in any field that requires a license. And it seems like more and more fields require licensure as opposed to fewer and fewer. So for teachers specifically, there is a great deal of work being done at the state level to break down some of these barriers to employment. For teachers, for anybody that requires a certification, whether it's a cosmetologist or a teacher, a lawyer, a lot of times this starts at the grassroots level. And we have a great example of that recently, specifically to K-12 educators in the state of Nebraska. We had a military spouse there that recognized spouse educators were having challenges in transferring their licenses. By the time they got their credentials certified in the state of Nebraska, it was time to leave again, and they weren't able to be employed. She
spoke with legislators in Nebraska, the governor, her state representatives. The state of Nebraska has recently passed a law that says that any military spouse that P.C.s into Nebraska to Offutt Air Force Base, in most cases, that has a valid teaching credential in another state, they are automatically granted temporary license to teach in the state of Nebraska. So, we've seen other states that are taking this up. And taking this challenge on. There's more going on there. The National Military Family Association has a group of military spouse educators that they've stood up. So, there's a lot behind this. We've got some senior leaders with the department and spouses of senior leaders. The spouse of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, this is something she's very interested in. She's herself a first grade teacher and has experienced over a 30-plus-year career those challenges. There's a lot being done, there's much more to do. But it's something that's being taken on. It's not perfect, but it's baby steps in many cases. But again, it really starts with the grassroots. I think a great example of that is an organization called the Military Spouse Juris Doctorate Network. These are military spouse lawyers. They have their own organization that they have stood up and over just the last few years, they have convinced 26 states to sign on to accept bar exams from other states for military spouses. It's a great example of the power of military spouses getting together to make a difference. And they're working with some of the different teacher organizations to start similar efforts around educators. So again, a lot going on there, but Trinka, what kind of thoughts do you have?

[Trinka]
Thanks, Eddy. Just similar to what you answered there in the chat pod. As soon as you know where you're going, reach out to us so that we can help you start doing the research and just like with the policy that Nebraska passed, you are seeing that more in different states. Some other policies that have been implemented is expedited applications for military spouses. So when your spouse finds out his or her next orders, some states may have an expedited application process. Another example, and every state is different, another example is allowing you, if your license is in good standing in the previous state, they will grant you a temporary license for the first year of your spouse's orders to allow you to prep for the license for that state. So there are a lot of different combinations of options around the country. And there's a cohesive resource on MySECO. If you go to the MySECO website, click on the little search icon in the upper right-hand corner, and you can search for license professions. And it will take you to a comprehensive resource, the U.S.A. for military families, where you can review a map to see the state regulations and where they are in the process.

[Eddy]
That's great, and we've got another question in regards to access military spouse legal help. That would be something that a military spouse, if you need legal assistance, would need to do through your local installation through the Judge Advocate General's Corps, the JAG office. If you're not located near an installation, if you were to call military one source at 800-342-9647, they would be able to point you to that legal or law information, those resources. They're not able to provide you with legal advice, but they can point you to the resources that can do that. So if you ever need legal assistance as a military spouse, your local law office on the installation would be your first step to start. Any other questions? This has been a great session. I really want to thank Trinka for everything. The information she's provided. I said this several times over the last couple days, but your key resource really are folks like Trinka, our SECO career coaches. They are there for you any time you need them to provide you with this information. It's great to get it through a webinar, but I tell you what, when you get to interact with these guys one on one, the information they provide not only is it amazing, but it's personalized to whatever your situation
is. We have so many different opportunities to provide you with personalized information, personalized resources. So, I implore you to take us up on this opportunity.

As we wrap up this session, we have one more left today. Really looking exciting towards to this next session. Another one of our great career coaches on tips to jump-start your job search. You would not believe how many resources there are out there to search for jobs and look for opportunities. As always, we have a number of handouts and information including these slides available for download. You can provide us information with feedback on the session itself so that we can make this stronger and better for you. We have our certificate of participation, as well as a couple different links up there. If you've been doing this all week, there are two links specific to this session. There's a link to the National Education Association as well as the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity. If you have any problems downloading any of the information, we do have links also over in the chat pod so you can click on those for the feedback and certificate. But if you do have challenges, feel free to provide your email, and we will get those emailed out to you. Appreciate everybody attending this session. Great information.

As a military parent myself of a young child, who better to teach my child than a military spouse. So, a lot going on here. As we get ready to wrap this up, I do want to throw one other plug of something that we will be doing in the near future through the Military Spouse Employment Partnership. And that is a new initiative we have called MSEP ED. And the ED stands for education. What we're doing is working with military impacted schools to be able to bring their job feeds into the MSEP platform so that spouse educators will be able to look for employment opportunities as soon as they find out where they're going.

I think this kinda gets back to some of the comments we had earlier from the participants. Brianna, you know, that challenge of once we find out where we're going, by the time we get there, it might be too late to apply. We know that military families, traditionally P.C.S. more or more heavily in the summertime, by the time you get to that new location they've already filled the jobs because they fill those teacher jobs in the spring based on their projected enrollments. What MSEP ED is gonna do, it's gonna provide military spouses with the opportunity to get in early to find out what employment opportunities there are at that new location. I think the most heartening part of this, the schools that we're working with so far are very excited about this. They also see the import employing military spouses to work with the military children that they have. So some new things always on the horizon within the SECO program. We're excited about that one, where it's gonna go. I should mention that while the focus of MSEP ED is gonna be on K-12 educators, it's also gonna include all different employment opportunities within a school system. So, it'll be administrators and counselors and nurses and food service workers. So a lot of different opportunities coming up in the near future with the MSEP program. With that, we're gonna go ahead and wrap it up. Thanks again to the team that's putting all this together, and we will talk to everybody in about 19 minutes. Hope you can join us then, bye-bye.